

Testimony of

The Honorable Harry Reid

U.S. Senator
Nevada
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U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
Remarks on Nomination of Ron Weich
Wednesday, April 1, 2009

As the members of the committee know, United States Senators have the opportunity over the course of our careers to work with a tremendous number of staff members.

We are grateful for every one of them. But among this dedicated group of men and women, a few stand out -- with intellect, dedication and work ethic that make them indispensable.

On my staff, Ron Weich stands out. As part of my senior staff since 2005, he has been by my side for every critical legal question we have faced.

I recommend Ron for the position of Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs with some measure of sadness to lose him in my office, but with absolute confidence that he will serve Attorney General Holder and the American people with the utmost skill and dedication.

Like his mother, who was one of the first women to graduate from Brooklyn Law School, Ron began his legal career in the courtroom.

After attending Columbia University and Yale Law School, Ron tried cases involving violent crimes as an Assistant District Attorney in Manhattan.

There is no question that part of what makes Ron so effective at his job is the "real-world" experience he learned in those courtrooms. This experience gives him the perspective to understand how to make legal policy that will actually work in practice.

While many of his colleagues were entering the private sector, Ron has spent almost his entire career in public service. We become a better country when men and women like Ron make the choice to make a difference.

After his tenure in the Manhattan District Attorney's office, Ron served at the U.S. Sentencing Commission and for Senator Specter and Kennedy. Following a stint at a law firm, Ron returned to government service to work as my senior and then chief counsel after I became Democratic leader following the 2004 elections.

Ron's work for Senators Kennedy and Specter are indicative of a character trait that will serve him well as Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs: he has built a foundation of trust and friendship among key Members of Congress and staff on both sides of the aisle.

For example - Ron was a voice of reason during debate over the "nuclear option" and worked closely with members of the "Gang of 14" as they negotiated a solution to that potential legislative crisis. Ron also took a lead role in the landmark ethics and lobbying reform legislation we passed last year, working to pass a bill that would be both meaningful and practical.

In his new role, Ron will be responsive to requests from both sides. In the best tradition of our Department of Justice, he will serve in a manner blind to partisanship, blind to politics, with a clear eye only toward ensuring equality in our laws.

Ron's parents, Robert and Cecile, his wife, Julie, and their two daughters, Sophie and Sara, are all here today. I am grateful that they have shared Ron with us so generously through the years. In his new role, Ron will be an integral role of rebuilding the Department of Justice to be once again a place where all are equal under the law, all are protected by the law, and no one is above the law.

I am confident that he will serve President Obama, Attorney General Holder, and most importantly, the American people, exceptionally well.