

January 6, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley,

On behalf of the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), its Board of Directors, and its member organizations around the country, I write in strong support of the nomination of Debo P. Adegbile to the position of Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice. Mr. Adegbile is a nationally renowned civil rights litigator and bipartisan consensus builder whose talents and commitment to justice make him an extraordinarily qualified candidate for the nation's top civil rights post.

Founded in 1988, NFHA is a consortium of more than 220 private, non-profit fair housing organizations, state and local civil rights agencies, and individuals from throughout the United States. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the National Fair Housing Alliance, through comprehensive education, advocacy and enforcement programs, provides equal access to apartments, houses, mortgage loans and insurance policies for all residents in the nation.

Mr. Adegbile embodies the American Dream. From humble beginnings as the son of European and African immigrants, even living through periods of homelessness as a child, Adegbile worked his way through law school and eventually reached the highest court of the land to defend a key tenet of democracy at the Supreme Court.

Mr. Adegbile's legal career has been both impressive and varied, including positions of leadership at every stop along the way. Following law school, Mr. Adegbile was a litigation associate at the law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, where he was elected to serve as Chairperson of the firm's Associates Committee. As an associate, Mr. Adegbile represented clients including corporations in cases involving real estate developer interests, international transactions, antitrust claims, and patent violations, and a New York State Comptroller in a case involving employment-related First Amendment claims. During his decade-long tenure at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF), Mr. Adegbile served as Director of Litigation, Associate Director-Counsel/Director of Litigation, and Acting President and Director-Counsel. At LDF, Mr. Adegbile was responsible for supervising legal



staff and maintained principal responsibility for oversight of the Fund's litigation before trial and appellate courts in many civil rights cases. Today, Mr. Adegbile is Senior Counsel to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

While at LDF, Mr. Adegbile was involved in a wide range of complex civil and criminal litigation in voting rights, education, economic justice, criminal justice, and housing matters. Most notably, Mr. Adegbile has argued two of the most important civil rights cases in a generation before the Supreme Court, defending the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act's pre-clearance provisions in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. ____ (2013), and in *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District No. 1 v. Holder*, 55 U.S. 193 (2009). As one of the nation's pre-eminent civil rights litigators, Mr. Adegbile brings with him unparalleled and broad-ranging expertise in civil rights law, making him an exceptional choice to be the nation's top civil rights law enforcement officer. Few candidates have such qualifying experience as Mr. Adegbile's to effectively uphold the civil and constitutional rights of all Americans.

It is with great enthusiasm that I urge you to support the confirmation of Debo Adegbile as the next Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the Department of Justice. Please contact Deidre Swesnik, Director of Public Policy and Communications, at dswesnik@nationalfairhousing.org or 202-898-1661 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Shanna L. Smith
President and CEO

cc: Senate Judiciary Committee