

January 7, 2014

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of People For the American Way's hundreds of thousands of members, we write to strongly support the nomination of Debo Adebile to be the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice.

Because of its importance in enforcing laws eliminating barriers to equality and opportunity, the Civil Rights Division is a critical means by which Americans protect the promises and values of the United States Constitution. Among many other things, the Civil Rights Division is charged with helping to eliminate discrimination in employment, housing, and education. The Division also has the responsibility to protect the right to vote, which Thomas Paine rightly observed over 200 years ago is "the primary right by which other rights are protected."

It is fitting, therefore, given the enormity of the Civil Rights Division's responsibilities, that President Obama has nominated one of this generation's preeminent civil rights litigators, the supremely qualified Debo Adebile, to lead the Division. Adebile's career exemplifies a dedication to advancing the civil rights of all Americans. Before becoming senior counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee, he spent more than a decade in various leadership positions at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, overseeing civil rights litigation at both the trial and appellate level. As director of litigation, then as acting president, Adebile not only developed expertise in the areas of education, economic justice, criminal justice, and nonpartisan political participation, he also exercised the type of significant administrative and leadership responsibilities that will serve the Civil Rights Division well. Firefighters, school custodians, public parks employees, and Katrina evacuees are just some of the ordinary people all across the nation whom Adebile has helped.

Adebile has special expertise in voting rights, and he has twice defended the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act before the United States Supreme Court. He also worked extensively on the 2005-2006 legislative effort to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act, which led to overwhelming bipartisan majorities voting to renew the law in 2006.

Before his work with LDF, Adebile spent seven years at the New York firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, where he represented major corporations, not-for-profit entities, and individuals. While there, he found time to offer pro bono service, coach public high school moot court teams, and make presentations to high school students regarding higher education, law school, and the importance of the United States Constitution.

Adebile would bring to the Civil Rights Division his formidable litigation skills, his unquestioned integrity, a commitment to equality, his dedication to helping ordinary Americans, and a demonstrated ability to bridge partisan differences. It is no surprise that he has earned the admiration of leading attorneys spanning the ideological spectrum. Paul Clement, Solicitor

General under President George W. Bush, has said, “I have litigated both with and against Debo and have heard him argue in the Supreme Court. I have always found him to be a formidable advocate of the highest intellect, skills and integrity.” Drew Days, Solicitor General and head of the Civil Rights Division under President Clinton, has cited “Adebile’s strong leadership, intelligence, dedication, and broad legal experience involving legal matters of government, private, and not-for-profit sectors [as proof] that he has the skills to lead the Civil Rights Division effectively.”

Debo Adebile is an excellent choice for the critically important position of leading the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. We urge you to support the nomination.

Sincerely,

Marge Baker
Executive Vice President for Policy and Program

Paul Gordon
Senior Legislative Counsel

web: <http://www.pfaw.org/sites/default/files/2014-01-07-PFAWletter-ADEGBILEsupport.pdf>