

**Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.)
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
On Executive and Judicial Nominations
January 8, 2014**

Today, the Judiciary Committee welcomes two executive and three judicial nominees to testify before us. Debo Patrick Adegbile is nominated to be the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the Department of Justice. He currently serves as Senior Counsel on the Judiciary Committee, where he has done exceptional work and provided me with prudent counsel on numerous matters. Like other members of this Committee who have had staff members nominated to positions in the administration or to the judiciary, these nominations come with mixed emotions. As I am sure Senators Hatch, Cornyn, Lee, and Schumer can attest, it is no surprise to us when our staffers are tapped by the administration to serve as federal prosecutors but it is nonetheless difficult to part with their wise counsel.

Anyone who knows Debo appreciates that he is an excellent choice to lead the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice. He will bring a wealth of experience and good judgment to the office. Many of us on the Senate Judiciary Committee met Debo in 2006 when he testified before the Committee as an expert on voting rights. Debo has earned a reputation for his calm demeanor and for working to build consensus. He is a careful lawyer and a good listener. These skills have made him one of the country's most prominent appellate advocates. Former Solicitor General Paul Clement under President George W. Bush said the following about Debo: "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."

Like Justice Thurgood Marshall, Debo served as Acting President and Director Counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and also as Associate Director-Counsel and Director of Litigation. During his time at LDF, Debo argued two significant cases on voting rights before the United States Supreme Court. Before joining LDF, Debo also litigated in private practice at the esteemed law firm of Paul, Weiss for seven years.

In addition to his many professional successes, Debo's earlier experiences are also inspiring. Born in the Bronx to an Irish mother and a father from Nigeria, Debo grew up in poverty and experienced periods of homelessness. Through hard work and grit, Debo graduated from Connecticut College and then earned his law degree from the New York University School of Law. And although his two daughters who are here with us today may not appreciate it yet, his journey from the Bronx to this nomination is a remarkable example of the American Dream. I know he has been shaped by these experiences and will fight to uphold the rights of all Americans when he is confirmed to lead the Civil Rights Division at the Justice Department.

Today, the Committee also welcomes John Carlin, who has been nominated to serve as the Assistant Attorney General for the National Security Division at the Department of Justice, along with three judicial nominees: Indira Talwani for the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts; James Peterson for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin; and Nancy Rosenstengel for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois. I

welcome the families of the nominees who have joined us today and look forward to the nominees' testimony.

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