

**Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),  
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Hearing On The Nomination Of Sally Yates To Be Deputy Attorney General  
March 24, 2015**

Today the Judiciary Committee considers the President's nomination of Sally Yates to be Deputy Attorney General. The Deputy Attorney General is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Department and is an essential partner to the Attorney General in safeguarding Americans.

The duties and responsibilities of the Deputy Attorney General are as diverse as the components of the Justice Department. In addition to coordinating the work of the U.S. Attorneys' offices, the Criminal Division, the National Security Division, and the other component divisions at the Department, the Deputy Attorney General also oversees the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and the Marshals Service. Through the efforts of the dedicated prosecutors, agents, and civil servants in these components, the Department of Justice has increased its efforts to fight terrorism and combat crime, particularly violent crime and fraud. Unfortunately, these efforts are hampered by the unsustainable growth of our Federal prison population and the fact that nearly a third of the Department's operating budget goes to the Bureau of Prisons – money that could be spent on prosecutorial and investigative resources. I will continue to work with the Justice Department and other Senators on a bipartisan basis to push common sense legislative reforms to our sentencing laws. I trust that the next Deputy Attorney General will also reaffirm her commitment to the clemency initiatives started under the leadership of Attorney General Holder.

I am confident that Sally Yates is eminently qualified for the job of Deputy Attorney General. For more than 25 years, Ms. Yates has served as a prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia. For the past five years, she has served as the U.S. Attorney in that district, following her unanimous confirmation by the Senate in 2010. And since January 2015, she has served as the Acting Deputy Attorney General. She is an experienced prosecutor with a well-deserved reputation for fairness, integrity, and toughness. She knows how the Department of Justice works, and understands the issues at the center of the Deputy Attorney General's job. I thank Ms. Yates for her willingness to serve, and her family for their support of her service.

Her nomination is supported by a broad array of individuals from across the political spectrum. For instance, six former U.S. Attorneys from the Northern District of Georgia, who were appointed during both Republican and Democratic administrations, wrote a letter to express "strong support" for Ms. Yates and lauded her "unimpeachable integrity and exceptional judgment." One of the signatories to the letter was Larry Thompson, who also served as Deputy Attorney General during the George W. Bush administration.

Ms. Yates has also received letters of support from Georgia's Republican Attorney General, Samuel Olens; Atlanta's Chief of Police, George Turner; former senior Justice Department officials who served in Republican and Democratic administrations, including three former Deputy Attorneys General from the Bush administration and former Acting Deputy Attorney

General Gary Grindler; the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives; the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys; 16 partners at the law firm of King & Spalding; 41 current, former, and future Presidents of the Atlanta Bar Association; the Urban League of Greater Atlanta; Reverend Raphael G. Warnock, Senior Pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church; and Reverend C.T. Vivian.

I want to thank my friend John Lewis for coming to this side of the Capitol to introduce Ms. Yates today. I also appreciate Senator Isakson coming this morning to introduce Ms. Yates. As Senator Isakson noted when Ms. Yates was first nominated this past December, “Sally Yates is an exceptionally skilled attorney with a strong record of public service and a well-qualified nominee to be deputy attorney general. She has served with distinction as U.S. attorney for Georgia’s Northern District and throughout her career has demonstrated her abilities as a talented prosecutor in a wide array of challenging cases.”

I could not agree more and I look forward to working with Senator Isakson to ensure a swift and fair confirmation process for this outstanding nominee. This nomination should not be an occasion for further partisanship. The responsibilities of the Deputy Attorney General are too important to the safety and security of all Americans for that. The dedicated public servants at the Justice Department deserve a confirmed leader in this crucial position, and we should work to confirm Ms. Yates without unnecessary delay.

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