

News From U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski Democrat from Maryland



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MIKULSKI PRAISES NOMINATION OF THOMAS PEREZ TO BE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR DOJ'S CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

WASHINGTON, D.C. – **U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD)** today praised the nomination of **Thomas E. Perez** to be the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice. Perez currently serves as the Secretary of Labor, Licensing & Regulation for the State of Maryland.

Senator Mikulski, together with former **U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.)**, provided formal introductions for Perez at today's nomination hearing. **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-Md.)**, a member of the Judiciary Committee, presided over the hearing. Senator Mikulski's introductory remarks, as prepared for delivery, follow:

"I am proud to introduce Secretary Thomas Perez, President Obama's nominee to lead the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. Secretary Perez is well suited for this crucial position, though we will be sorry to lose him in Maryland.

"As Maryland's Secretary of Labor, he inherited a department that had been neglected and minimized. He quickly took control and reenergized and reinvigorated the Department. He will do the same for the Civil Rights division.

"The Civil Division was created in 1957 and was a key force in desegregation and protecting minority rights, including the right to vote. It was a source of pride at the Department of Justice. Under the previous Administration, the civil rights division was decimated and caught up in political hirings. Civil rights enforcement was put on the back bench and productivity plummeted. More than ever, the Department of Justice needs someone to restore morale to hardworking career employees and public confidence in the Department. Tom Perez is the right man for the job.

"Tom Perez also meets my criteria for nominees, which includes integrity, competence and commitment to the mission of the agency. Secretary Perez passes all of those tests with flying colors. Secretary Perez has demonstrated the utmost competence. He is a cum laude graduate of Harvard Law School. He has extensive experience in civil rights laws. He served as Chief of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and Director of Civil Rights Office for Health and Human Services.

Secretary Perez is committed to the mission of the agency. As a civil rights attorney at the Department of Justice, he worked to combat racial profiling. He secured convictions in a high profile race-motivated hate crime in Lubbock, Texas, where the defendants in the case went on a killing spree directed at African Americans. Secretary Perez also shows great integrity. He comes from a hardworking immigrant family and has a history of prosecuting public officials involved in corruption.

“I am confident Tom Perez will get the Civil Rights Division back on track. He will ensure our country’s civil rights laws combat discrimination, protect minorities and hold accountable those who practice hate of acceptance. He will restore our reputation as embodying this country’s value of tolerance and equal rights and protection for all. I urge the Judiciary Committee to move this nomination out of committee to the Senate floor for a vote.”

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