



April 26, 2017

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The Leadership Conference Urges You Not to Support the Confirmation of Alex Acosta: Vote No

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 210 national organizations committed to promoting and protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we are writing to express that we cannot support the nomination of Alex Acosta for U.S. Secretary of Labor and urge you to vote no on his confirmation. We believe that he has failed to adequately respond to our many concerns about protecting and improving basic workplace standards for all workers, particularly workers in low wage jobs, people of color and migrants.

Fundamental to the Department of Labor's (DOL) mission is protecting the welfare, health, and safety of workers and insuring compliance with labor standards. While DOL is expected to serve as a voice and advocate for all workers, its role is particularly critical in ensuring that those most vulnerable, including migrant workers and other workers of color, are treated fairly. Unfortunately, Mr. Acosta was evasive in his testimony, refusing to answer specific questions posed at the hearing about the fiduciary rule, silica standards, and pay equity for women and he failed to address the need to increase the minimum wage, which is so critical for workers of color and other low-wage workers.

While acknowledging that the overtime salary threshold was out of date, Acosta not only refused to commit to keep the current rule in place and defend it against a pending legal challenge. Moreover, he took the unprecedented step of questioning the authority of DOL to even set a salary threshold for overtime, despite the fact that DOL has been exercising this authority since the 1938 passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act. We also have concerns about the commitment of DOL to the vigorous enforcement of the anti-discrimination requirements of Executive Order 11246; existing wage and hour laws, particularly wage theft; and protections for migrant workers.

The Leadership Conference is committed to advancing the civil and human rights of all workers in America and believe it is critical that the American public and Department of Labor (DOL) employees can trust that the civil service will not be politicized. This issue was raised due to the finding of political hiring in the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division by the Inspector General under Mr. Acosta's watch.ⁱ We urged him to put policies and practices in place to ensure that the laws the Department is mandated to implement and enforce will be carried out effectively.

Given that Mr. Acosta refused to make any specific commitments on the record either about basic workplace protections or about how he will ensure that DOL's policy and enforcement work will be effectively carried out to further the interests of all workers, we cannot support

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his nomination and urge you to vote no on his confirmation. If you have any questions, please contact June Zeitlin, Director of Human Rights Policy at The Leadership Conference, at zeitlin@civilrights.org or at 202-263-2852.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President

ⁱ “An Investigation of Allegations of Politicized Hiring and Other Improper Personnel Actions in the Civil Rights Division.” *U.S. Department of Justice*. January 13, 2009.

<https://oig.justice.gov/special/s0901/final.pdf>