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July 15, 2013

Executive Branch Nominees Deserve Up or Down Votes

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of over 200 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we urge you to vote "yes" on cloture to allow an up or down vote on the nominations to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Thomas Perez as Labor Secretary, and Richard Cordray as Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). The long term blockage of the NLRB nominees and Cordray is an unprecedented effort to cripple two vital agencies. Tom Perez' months' long wait for confirmation deprives the Labor Department of leadership at a time of economic uncertainty for workers.

The Leadership Conference believes that every president is entitled to Senate consideration of his executive branch nominees. It is up to the Senate to fulfill its constitutional responsibility to advise and consent by fully debating each nominee instead of systematically blocking them. In fact, from 1949—when Senate rules were changed to provide for cloture on nominations through 2008—cloture votes were forced on only 20 executive branch nominations; yet in just the first four and a half years of the Obama administration, there have already been 16 such cloture votes. The Senate Republican leadership is on pace to force 28 cloture votes by the end of the Obama administration – more than under all previous presidents combined.

We reject in the strongest terms the ongoing threat by a minority of the Senate to filibuster the confirmation of these nominees. The senators threatening to block cloture do not appear to have fully thought out the long-term consequences of such a move – particularly how the precedent they are setting, if it stands, is likely to be applied to other agencies and future presidential administrations. Therefore, we urge you to vote to confirm these nominees.

Thomas Perez has shown a commitment to advancing opportunity for all Americans, and his outstanding career in public service makes him well qualified to ensure the well-being of our nation's workforce as the next Secretary of Labor. We believe the next Secretary of Labor must ensure that the voices of working families are heard and can bring the perspective, values, and needs of employees, and job seekers to policymaking. Based on his distinguished career, there is no doubt that as Labor Secretary Mr. Perez will promote the welfare of wage earners, job seekers, and retirees; improve working conditions and workplace safety; advance opportunities for employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights.

Similarly, Richard Cordray possesses a stellar background and a wealth of experience that make him extraordinarily well-suited to run the CFPB. Since becoming the Chief of Enforcement and then Director of the CFPB, Mr. Cordray has earned widespread acclaim for the way he has carried out his duties. Consumer and civil rights advocates and financial service providers alike have praised Mr. Cordray for creating an atmosphere in the CFPB in



which their views are not only heard but are taken seriously. In short, any concerns that may have initially been raised about the independent nature of the CFPB have not only failed to materialize under Mr. Cordray's leadership, they have been debunked. Indeed, the Senate should be clamoring to confirm far more nominees like him to serve the public interest.

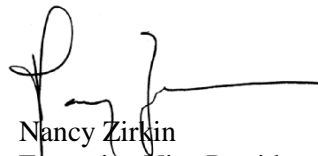
We also believe it is imperative that the nominations to the NLRB be confirmed quickly. Currently, two of the five seats on the Board are vacant and the term of one of the three current Board members will expire in August. Without swift confirmation, the NLRB will be left without the quorum of at least three members that is required in order for the Board to perform its important functions. Without a functioning NLRB, employers may fire or retaliate against workers with impunity for what should be protected activity. Workers need the NLRB to enforce laws aimed at protecting workers' rights to form unions and bargain collectively with their employers. The Senate now has the opportunity to approve the nominations and ensure the NLRB will be able to operate, protecting the vital rights of employees to collectively improve their job standards.

We strongly urge you to vote "yes" on cloture to allow an up or down vote on these nominations. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Nancy Zirkin at (202) 263-2880 or zirkin@civilrights.org, or Lexer Quamie, Senior Counsel at (202) 466-3648 or quamie@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President