



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

NYS Senator Hoylman's Comments on the Nomination of Justice Sheila Abdus-Salaam to the NYS Court of Appeals

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL May 6, 2013

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On May 6, 2013, the New York State Senate unanimously confirmed Justice Shelia Abdus-Salaam to the New York State Court of Appeals. Following is a transcript of comments Senator Hoylman made on the Senate floor prior to the confirmation vote.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee of the State Senate it is a great honor to say a few words about the ascension of Justice Shelia Abdus-Salaam to the Court of Appeals

First, I must note the historic nature of today.

It took 166 years, but thanks to Governor Cuomo and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, we will now have an African-American woman on New York's highest court.

I have been impressed, like so many of my fellow senators, on so many aspects of Justice Abdus-Salaam's background, experience, and composure.

I think Justice Abdus-Salaam's background will serve her extremely well. Her journey from a large, working class family in Washington, D.C. to top schools in New York City was made possible not because someone handed it to her, but because she worked hard for it.

Because of her upbringing, Justice Abdus-Salaam will forever have a bond with and deep understanding of the issues facing working New Yorkers. She will have their backs.

She will also serve as an inspiration to future generations of young people in the law and elsewhere -- maybe some who might have thought they couldn't get ahead because of their gender or skin color.

And it is an extraordinary testament to the Justice's commitment to public service that, out of an Ivy League law school, she chose to begin her legal career by representing low income clients at Brooklyn Legal Services, when she probably could just have easily taken a high paying job with a Wall Street firm.

In addition Justice Abdus-Salaam's impressive opinions and letters of support, which show her to be fair-minded with just the right legal temperament, I want to point out the fact that she rose up the legal ranks all the way from being a Civil Court Judge in New York City to our state's highest court.

This is not a typical path. And again, it is a testament to the Justice's determination, hard work and commitment to the judicial system.

These 21 years of experience will serve Justice Abdus-Salaam well, but the real beneficiaries, Mr. President, will be the people of this great state.

I vote "aye" Mr. President.