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working for women's equality

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Feminist Daily News Wire
July 1, 2005

Statement of Eleanor Smeal on the Resignation of Justice O'Connor

Statement of Eleanor Smeal
President, Feminist Majority

July 1, 2005

With Sandra Day O'Connor's resignation, President Bush could reverse 32 years of freedom and progress for women. Women who have the most to lose will be the strongest voice in the debate over this Supreme Court fight. This time, for once, we will not be ignored.

Let there be no mistake about it, the feminist movement today is declaring a state of emergency to save the court for women's rights. Twenty four years ago, as president of the National Organization for Women I testified for Sandra Day O'Connor before the Senate Judiciary Committee. I knew then that O'Connor, although a conservative voice, would be one who would not permit the elimination of women's fundamental rights, including the right to privacy.

Indeed the National Organization for Women played a pivotal role in the nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor – she was nominated in 1981 at the height of the Equal Rights Amendment campaign. One of the reasons she was nominated is that NOW stood outside the White House with thousands of people demanding that President Reagan nominate a woman, and a woman who would not turn her back on the women of the nation. Even a very conservative President heard our voices. And we must make our voices so loud today another ultra conservative President will hear our voices.

We had then, and we have now, the power of the gender gap to save women's lives ... and we intend to use it. We will begin from this conference by a march Saturday, July 2nd to the Tennessee legislative capital so that Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) will hear our voices.

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