

**STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER, A U.S. SENATOR  
FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK, PRESENTING SONIA  
SOTOMAYOR, NOMINEE TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF  
THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES**

Senator SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today is a great national opportunity. It's an opportunity to recognize that the nomination of one of the most qualified candidates to the Supreme Court in American history could not have happened anywhere else in the world.

Judge Sotomayor's story is a great American story and, I might add, a great New York story as well. Consider this: in no other country in the world could a woman from a minority group who grew up in a working-class family have received an education at the best institutions, and having thrived there, gone on to be a judge, and now a nominee to the highest court in the land.

This is because we don't have a caste system in this country, or even a class system. Two hundred fifty years ago, we threw away the centuries-old framework of gentry and nobility. We started fresh, with no ranks and no titles. Less than four score and seven years later, a farmer and self-taught lawyer from Illinois became, perhaps, our greatest President. And so the American story goes, and Judge Sonia Sotomayor from the Bronx, daughter of a single-parent practical nurse, has written her own chapter in it.

Judge Sotomayor embodies what we all strive for as American citizens. Her life and her career are not about race, or class, or gender, although, as for all of us, these are important parts of who she is. Her story is about how race and class, at the end of the day, are not supposed to predetermine anything in America. What matters is hard work and education, and those things will pay off no matter who you are or where you have come from. It's exactly what each of us wants for ourselves and for our children, and this shared vision is why this moment is historic for all Americans.

Judge Sotomayor was born to parents who moved to New York from Puerto Rico during World War II. Her father was a factory worker with a third grade education; he died when she was nine. Her mother worked and raised Sotomayor and her brother, Juan, now a doctor practicing in Syracuse, on her own.

Sonia Sotomayor graduated first in her high school class at Cardinal Spellman High School in 1971. She has returned to Cardinal Spellman to speak there and to encourage future alumni to work hard, get an education, and pursue their dreams the same way she did. When Sonia Sotomayor was growing up, the Nancy Drew stories inspired her sense of adventure, developed her sense of justice, and showed her that women could, and should, be outspoken and bold. Now in 2009, there are many more role models for a young Cardinal Spellman student to choose from, with Judge Sotomayor foremost among them.

Judge Sotomayor went on to employ her enormous talents at Princeton, where she graduated summa cum laude, and received the Pyne Prize, the highest honor bestowed on a Princeton student. This is an award that is given not just to the smartest student in the class, but to the most exceptionally smart student who has also given the most to her community. She graduated from Yale Law School, where she was a Law Review editor.

And because we have such an extensive judicial record before us, I believe that these hearings will matter less than for the several previous nominees, or at the least that these hearings will bear out what is obvious about her, that she is modest and humble in her approach to judging.

As we become even more familiar with her incisive mind and balanced views, I am certain that this hearing will prove to all what is already clear to many. This is a moment in which all Americans can take great pride, not just New Yorkers, not just Puerto Ricans, not just Hispanics, not just women, but all Americans who believe in opportunity and who want for themselves and their children a fair reading of the laws by a judge who understands that while we are a Nation of individuals, we are all governed by one law.

Mr. Chairman, people felt at the founding of America that we were "God's noble experiment." Judge Sotomayor's personal story shows that today, more than 200 years later, we are still God's noble experiment.

Thank you.

Chairman LEAHY. Thank you, Senator Schumer.

Now, Senator Gillibrand, the other Senator from New York. Please go ahead, Senator Gillibrand.

**STATEMENT OF HON. KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK, PRESENTING SONIA SOTOMAYOR, NOMINEE TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES**

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Sessions, and the other distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, for the privilege to speak on behalf of Judge Sonia Sotomayor.

President Obama has chosen one of the country's outstanding legal minds with his nomination of Sonia Sotomayor to the United States Supreme Court. As a New Yorker, I take great pride in Judge Sotomayor's nomination, along with the rest of my State and our delegation, including Senator Schumer and my colleagues from the House, Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, who was the first person to introduce me to Judge Sotomayor and her record, and Congressman José Serrano.

As a woman, I take great pride in this historic nomination. In the words of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, "It took a very long time, about 171 years, to get the first woman on the Supreme Court," and I thought that we'd very likely always have two, and eventually more. I'm very thankful for President Obama in his recognition of the importance of women's voices on the Nation's highest court.

Sonia Sotomayor's life and career are a study in excellence, commitment to learning, a dedication to the law, and the constant pursuit of the highest ideals of our country and Constitution. Her story is also the quintessential American and New York story: born to a Puerto Rican family, growing up in public housing in the South Bronx, and raised with a love of country and a deep appreciation for hard work.

Judge Sotomayor demonstrated a devotion to learning, graduating summa cum laude from Princeton, and serving as an editor