The CHAIRMAN. Let me make a few very brief closing statements. I would like to personally thank the nominee and the witnesses who appeared before this committee, and my colleagues. As I indicated at the outset of this hearing, I have never imposed and I will not impose a gag rule on any Senator asking any questions. And there were some questions asked that I am sure the nominee would rather have not had asked. And there were some questions asked, in my view, of some of the witnesses that became very contentious, and I am sure from the standpoint of the witnesses they had reason to believe that and found them offensive.

Nonetheless, I think the witnesses and all those who testified conducted themselves with a great deal of decorum and respect. And I hope that on those occasions when they felt that any member of the committee was being overzealous that they put it in the same context in which they were giving their testimony.

This is a nomination that has obviously stirred a great deal of interest and concern. It would not matter, quite frankly, who was nominated by the President at this moment in our history, for this is one of those crossroads, one of those crossroads in American jurisprudential history, because, to state the obvious, whomever is put on the Court in the near term will determine by himself or herself the course of action, the policy this Nation will follow in the near term on some extremely important issues. That seldom happens so graphically, so clearly, and, quite frankly, without any ability to be refuted—the statement, that is, that the course of America will be affected by whomever we put on the bench.

There are so many split decisions, and when you take Justice Brennan off the bench, there are a number of significant decisions that, in fact, are now 4 to 4. And what this Justice, whomever he or she may be, does—the next Justice—will impact in a way that few other nominations have in our history. And so the emotion, the intellectual curiosity and concern, sometimes the anger, always the commitment of those who spoke before us over these last days in my view are totally and completely understandable.

I hope the witnesses and the public feel that they have had every opportunity to make their case and have not in any way been curtailed in expressing their emotion. As I said, I want to thank the witnesses because they have, quite frankly, contained themselves. You can see in the eyes of some of the witnesses who testified here today, not only a concern but a fear—a fear that that which they hold dear is now in jeopardy, from both sides of the spectrum. And that is understandable.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues—notwithstanding the moment being the exception—for their incredible attendance during this process. And I want to thank the staffs, of the minority and the majority. As I know the professionals in this room who follow these processes know, an incredible amount of work goes in to setting up the mere logistics as well as the intellectual framework within which this debate, discussion, and inquiry takes place. Hundreds and hundreds of hours, and I want to thank you all, all of you, on both sides of the aisle, for the phenomenal job that you did.

And I want to thank the stenographer. She is always, I think, when she sees me—and we have more than one stenographer, obvi-

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ously—but when she sees me or when most of them see me, they see Biden, they say, oh, my God, I suspect you might think there is Old Ironpants, he is going to just keep going and going and going until it gets done. And so I want to thank you today for staying through lunch, and I know it is not easy.

And I want to thank the photographers because, in fact, I did initiate something that they pray will not become a practice, and that is, by not allowing any photographer anywhere here in the well when the primary witness was here, when the nominee was here. And I hope they will forgive me, but we will soon know in time whether or not how many pictures you see with me with my finger pointed and my mouth open, compared to those which you do not see that way. But, all kidding aside, ladies and gentlemen, photographers, I want to thank you very much. You were gracious about it. Although you were persistent, you were gracious.

And, lastly, I want to indicate that, as has been my practice as chairman—and not only my practice, I suspect. I think it goes back further than that. Several of my colleagues have questions that they wish to submit to Judge Souter, colleagues who are not on the committee. And I have indicated in the past, as I do now, as long as they are not questions designed to delay the process, I will submit those questions. Senator Levin has submitted some questions, and there are a few others. There are not more than half a dozen questions, some of which I may submit as well, that will be submitted. And we will give the nominee plenty of time to answer them prior to this consideration before the committee.

[The questions follow:]