I can only really say that about two people, and, strangely enough, by irony, both of them are from small towns in New Hampshire. One is David Souter, and the other is my wife.

Lastly, I want to talk about an issue——

The CHAIRMAN. We all have to think that of our wives. Otherwise, they wouldn't have married us. [Laughter.]

Mr. DIAMOND. Last, Senator Biden, I want an opportunity to address an issue that really is, to me, the most important issue involving his nomination.

The CHAIRMAN. General, I don't want to push you too far, but I don't want to get myself in trouble the rest of the day. You are way over your 5 minutes. So if you could summarize, we would appreciate it.

Mr. DIAMOND. I will, indeed.

To me the issue of civil rights and a commitment to the guarantee and protection of civil rights is the most important issue facing this committee and its decision on a nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court. When I had an opportunity to work with Pat Leahy for 6 years as a State's attorney in Vermont, we came to know that our grandparents as immigrants to this country—his Catholic, mine Jewish—made us extremely aware that the guarantee of those civil rights was the difference between this country and all others and what made this country great.

I am coming to this committee to say to you that I believe there could be no fairer person than David Souter to sit on the Supreme Court and to judge and to guarantee the civil rights to me and to all my fellow citizens in this country. And, without reservation, I hope that this committee will ultimately unanimously endorse his nomination to the Court.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, General.

Senator Thurmond.

Senator THURMOND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am impressed. I don't know when we have had four more impressive witnesses before this committee sitting at one time: a former U.S. circuit judge and former U.S. Attorney General, able former attorney general and able Senator from Washington State, able former attorney general and able Governor of Virginia, and able attorney general of Vermont. We thank you for coming here and testifying. We appreciate your taking the time to do so.

I am just going to ask you one question. I will ask it, and then each one of you can answer it. Is it your opinion that Judge Souter has the competency, the dedication, the courage, the integrity, and the fairness to be a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States? We will start with you.

Mr. BELL. That is my opinion.

Senator GORTON. Yes, sir.

Mr. BALILES. Yes.

Mr. DIAMOND. Yes, sir.

Senator THURMOND. That is all. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Heflin.

Senator HEFLIN. Judge Bell, we are delighted to see you back here again. You add an element of trust to these proceedings. Knowing your background on the fifth circuit in dealing with judges and dealing with the Constitution while serving in the fifth

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