

Bettis Rainsford has chronicled for you the history of the Edgefield County Courthouse. There may not be many other courthouses in America, certainly not in South Carolina, with a pedigree to match that of this building. I am certain that there is no courthouse anywhere with so many portraits of notable leaders—statesmen, generals, lawyers and judges. I distinctly remember my first visit to this courthouse with my father. The portraits on the walls left a lasting impression on me. I particularly remember my father singling out Senator STROM THURMOND, pictured on these walls when he was a young Circuit Judge, as well as his father, John William Thurmond, one of the most able lawyers our state has ever produced.

But what does all this history mean to us as we are about to embark on a new century? As South Carolinians and, especially as Edgefieldians, we have a rich heritage. We are each of us the sum total of generations of growing, yearning, of planning and failing, of building and destroying and building again.

This is an exciting time for Edgefield County. Our area is growing, our young people have a place to come back to, our schools are moving ahead, industry is recognizing the virtues of small town life and good work ethic that goes with it. Edgefield County is on the move.

This building is a monument to the hands, hearts and minds of our forebearers. Not just the dignitaries on these walls—not just the statesmen, the generals, the lawyers and the judges—but also the public servants behind the scenes, like Miss Martha Rich, the merchants, the ministers, the school teachers, the sharecroppers, the industrialists, the artists and the artisans who have gone before us to help make this corner of God's earth a special place in our hearts.

Thank you again for inviting me.

OPERATION GRADUATION WEEKEND

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, Operation Graduation is a six-state campaign devoted to the safety of high school seniors on graduation night. The campaign is designed to fund alcohol-free/drug-free graduation parties that are safe, memorable, and fun.

In an effort to encourage high schools to hold alcohol-free/drug-free graduation parties, local cable systems in the Midwest are donating money to corresponding area high schools. This project also provides high schools with information kits containing an Operation Graduation How-to-Guide, pamphlets, and brochures on the dangers of drunk driving, and other resources for promoting Operation Graduation.

Together, local cable system employees in Missouri are fighting to stop needless deaths on our roads and highways that result from reckless behavior on graduation night.

I would like to commend all the people working to make the weekend of May 29, 1998, "Operation Graduation Weekend."

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday, XAVIER BECERRA, JOSÉ E. SERRANO and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus called upon the Republican leadership to vote upon the Latino nominees to

judgeships who have languished in the Senate far too long. I welcome the views of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to the debate and I ask unanimous consent that a copy of their letter be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
(See Exhibit No. 1.)

Mr. LEAHY. I have spoken often, too often, about the crisis in the Second Circuit and our need for the Senate to move forward to confirm the nominees pending on the Senate calendar to that important court.

Judge Sonia Sotomayor is a qualified nominee who was confirmed to the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York in 1992 after being nominated by President Bush. She attended Princeton University and Yale Law School. She worked for over four years in the New York District Attorney's Office as an Assistant District Attorney and was in private practice with Pavia & Harcourt in New York. She is strongly supported by Senator MOYNIHAN and Senator D'AMATO. She is a source of pride to Puerto Rican and other Hispanic supporters and to women. When confirmed she will be only the second woman and second judge of Puerto Rican descent to serve on the Second Circuit.

By a vote of 16 to 2, the Judiciary Committee reported the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Senate. That was on March 5, 1998, over two months ago. No action has been taken or scheduled on that nomination and no explanation for the delay has been forthcoming. This is the oldest judicial nomination pending on the Senate Executive Calendar. In spite of an April 8 letter to the Senate Republican Leader signed by all six Senators from the three States forming the Second Circuit urging prompt action, this nomination continues to be stalled by anonymous objections. Our bipartisan letter to the Majority Leader asked that he call up for prompt consideration by the Senate of the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor. That was over one month ago. I request unanimous consent that a copy of that letter be included in the record at the conclusion of my remarks.

Nor is Judge Sotomayor the only woman or minority judicial nominee who has been needlessly delayed. Indeed, if one considers those nominees who have taken the longest to confirm this year, we find a disturbing pattern.

Hilda Tagle, the only Hispanic woman the Senate has confirmed this year, took 32 months to be confirmed as a District Court Judge for the Southern District of Texas—that was over two and one-half years. As I have noted, Judge Sotomayor's nomination to the Second Circuit is the longest pending on the Senate calendar, another qualified Hispanic woman nominee. Judge Richard Paez, currently a District Court Judge and a nominee to the Ninth Circuit, was first nominated

in January 1996. Twenty-eight months later, Judge Paez's nomination remains pending on the Senate calendar. Nor have we seen any progress with respect to the nomination of Jorge Rangel to the Fifth Circuit or Anabelle Rodriguez to the District Court for Puerto Rico, although her nomination was received in January 1996 almost 28 months ago.

For that matter, we have seen the President's nomination of the Judge James A. Beaty, Jr., the first African-American to the Fourth Circuit stalled for 29 months, since December 1995.

We have seen the attack on Judge Frederica Massiah-Jackson, who would have been the first African-American woman to serve on the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, but who was forced to withdraw. We have seen the nomination of Clarence Sundram held up since September 1995, almost 32 months.

With the delays in the Senate consideration of Margaret Morrow and Margaret McKeown earlier this year, we had the opportunity to consider why it is that the Senate takes so much longer to consider and confirm so many woman nominees. That question has yet to be answered adequately.

Margaret Morrow was targeted by some and debate on her nomination was delayed for more than a year. She was first nominated in May 1996 and was not voted on for 21 months. When we finally got a vote, she was confirmed by a vote of more than two to one. Margaret Morrow was the first and only woman to serve as the President of the California State Bar. The ABA gave her its highest rating. She had strong bipartisan support. She was held up for a judicial emergency vacancy for many months without cause of justification.

Nor was Margaret Morrow an isolated case. Consider the nomination of Judge Ann Aiken to the District Court in Oregon. That nomination was received in November 1995 but not considered by the Senate until January 1998, 26 months later. She, too, was confirmed by a vote of more than two to one.

Then we had the case of Margaret McKeown who was nominated to a vacancy on the Ninth Circuit in March 1996 but not considered until two years later in March 1998. When she received a Senate vote, she was confirmed by a vote of 80 to 11.

We still have Susan Oki Mollway pending before the Senate without a vote although she was first nominated back in December 1995 for the vacancy on the District Court in Hawaii—that was more than 29 months ago and still she is without a vote.

In his annual report on the judiciary last year, the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court observed: "Some current nominees have been waiting a considerable time for a Senate Judiciary Committee vote or a final floor vote. The Senate confirmed only 17 judges in 1996 and 36 in 1997, well under the 101 judges it confirmed