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Remarks on Senate Confirmation of Sonia Sotomayor as a Supreme Court Associate Justice and an Exchange With Reporters

August 6, 2009

The President. Well, I am pleased and deeply gratified that the Senate has voted to confirm Judge Sonia Sotomayor as our Nation's 111th Supreme Court Justice. I want to thank the Senate Judiciary Committee, particularly its chairman, Senator Leahy, as well as its ranking member, Senator Sessions, for giving Judge Sotomayor a thorough and civil hearing. And I thank them for doing so in a timely manner so that she can be fully prepared to take her seat when the Court's work begins this September.

The members of our Supreme Court are granted life tenure and are charged with the vital and difficult task of applying principles set forth at our founding to the questions and controversies of our time. Over the past 10 weeks, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the full Senate have assessed Judge Sotomayor's fitness for this work. They've scrutinized her record as a prosecutor, as a litigator, and as a judge. They've gauged her respect for the proper role of each branch of our Government, her commitment to faithfully apply the law to the facts at hand, and her determination to protect our core constitutional rights and freedoms.

And with this historic vote, the Senate has affirmed that Judge Sotomayor has the intellect, the temperament, the history, the integrity, and the independence of mind to ably serve on our Nation's highest court.

This is a role that the Senate has played for more than two centuries, helping to ensure that "equal justice under the law" is not merely a phrase inscribed above our courthouse door, but a description of what happens every single day inside the courtroom. It's a promise that, whether you're a mighty corporation or an ordinary American, you will receive a full and fair hearing, and in the end, the outcome of your case will be determined by nothing more or less than the strength of your argument and the dictates of the law.

These core American ideals—justice, equality, and opportunity—are the very ideals that have made Judge Sotomayor's own uniquely American journey possible. They're ideals she's fought for throughout her career and the ideals the Senate has upheld today in breaking yet another barrier and moving us yet another step closer to a more perfect union.

Like so many other aspects of this Nation, I'm filled with pride in this achievement and great confidence that Judge Sotomayor will make an outstanding Supreme Court Justice. This is a wonderful day for Judge Sotomayor and her family, but I also think it's a wonderful day for America.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Breakdown of Senate Vote on Confirmation

Q. Are you happy with the 68 votes, sir?

The President. I'm very happy.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:38 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Supreme Court Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Senate confirmation; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

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