

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2010*

**Remarks on Senate Confirmation of Elena Kagan as a Supreme Court Associate Justice in Chicago, Illinois**

*August 5, 2010*

Good afternoon. I am very pleased that the Senate has just voted to confirm Elena Kagan as our Nation's 112th Supreme Court Justice. And I want to thank the Senate Judiciary Committee, particularly its chairman, Senator Leahy, for giving her a full, fair, and timely hearing.

Over the past 2 months, the committee has scrutinized Elena's record as a scholar, as a law school dean, as a Presidential adviser, and as Solicitor General. And after 17 hours of testimony, during which she answered more than 540 questions, I'd say they got a pretty good look at Elena Kagan. They've gotten a sense of her formidable intelligence, her rich understanding of our Constitution, her commitment to the rule of law, and her excellent—and occasionally irreverent—sense of humor. And they have come to understand why, throughout her career, she has earned the respect and admiration of folks from across the political spectrum, an achievement reflected in today's bipartisan vote.

But today's vote wasn't just an affirmation of Elena's intellect and accomplishments. It was also an affirmation of her character and her temperament, her openmindedness and evenhandedness, her determination to hear all sides of every story and consider all possible arguments. Because Elena understands that the law isn't just an abstraction or an intellectual exercise. She knows that the Supreme Court's decisions shape not just the character of our democracy, but the circumstances of our daily lives—or, as she once put it, that "behind the law there are stories—stories of people's lives as shaped by the law, stories of people's lives as might be changed by law."

So I am confident that Elena Kagan will make an outstanding Supreme Court Justice. And I'm proud also of the history we're making with her appointment. For nearly two centuries, there wasn't a single woman on our Nation's highest court. When Elena takes her seat on that bench, for the first time in our history, there will be three women.

It is, as Ruth Bader Ginsburg recently stated, "one of the most exhilarating developments," a sign of progress that I relish not just as a father who wants limitless possibilities for my two daughters, but as an American proud that our Supreme Court will be more inclusive, more representative, and more reflective of us as a people than ever before.

Thanks very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:56 p.m. in the Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Supreme Court Associate Justice Elena Kagan, remarks on Senate confirmation in Chicago, IL.

*Locations:* Chicago, IL.

*Names:* Ginsburg, Ruth Bader; Kagan, Elena; Leahy, Patrick J.; Obama, Malia; Obama, Natasha "Sasha".

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