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Statement on Senate Judiciary Committee Action on the Nomination of Priscilla Owen
September 5, 2002

The Senate Judiciary Committee today voted to deny the American people the service of an outstanding individual with a record of accomplishment and a brilliant legal mind. The committee has voted down Justice Priscilla Owen, my nominee to serve as a judge on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, and is preventing the full Senate from voting on her nomination.

I know Justice Owen well. She is an outstanding judge and a woman of integrity who has received outspoken bipartisan support. Based on her distinguished service with the Texas Supreme Court for 7 years, the American Bar Association unanimously rated her "well qualified," the highest rating the organization can bestow upon a nominee. She is known to be a fair and impartial judge who strives to interpret the law fairly.

What the Democrat members of the Senate Judiciary Committee have done to Justice Owen is shameful, even by Washington standards. They have distorted her record and misconstrued her opinions. They have determined that a nominee's experience, academic credentials, and character are inconsequential.

Justice Owen's nomination should be brought to the floor of the Senate for a vote. If the full Senate were to vote on her nomination today, I am confident she would be confirmed. The Democrats on the Judiciary Committee know this and, therefore, voted to prevent it.

As I have said before, today's vote is about more than one woman or one seat on an individual court. The committee's action today continues its pattern of obstruction at a time when there are too many vacancies in our Federal courts, a problem that the Chief Justice of the United States has called "alarming." Today's action by this small group of Democrat Senators is wrong. It has harmed a good person, harmed our courts, and harmed the American people.

Remarks to the Community in South Bend, Indiana
September 5, 2002

Listen, thank you all for coming. What a warm welcome. I appreciate this Indiana hospitality. I'm thrilled to be back here again. I wanted to come and talk to you about some of the problems we face and our—this Nation's great character and our ability to overcome anything that stands in our way. See, we're all going to work together to make America a safer place, a stronger place, and as importantly, a better place.

I appreciate John Barnes for introducing me. I appreciate all the good folks who put this event on. I want to thank my fellow citizens for coming out. I particularly want to thank those of you who brought your family members with you. I love to see our Nation's young. I love to be with our children.

I want to thank the mayor, Mayor Luecke of South Bend, Indiana, for greeting me here. I want to thank Mayor Beutter for coming as well. I want to thank Mayor David Miller for being here. I want to thank any local official who has taken time out of your busy day to come and