

Statement on AIDS Relief Legislation *May 1, 2003*

The fight against AIDS is a moral imperative our great Nation must confront decisively and boldly.

I applaud the House of Representatives for acting quickly to pass historic legislation that is consistent with the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief that I announced earlier this year. Today's action is an important step toward providing critically needed

treatment and care for millions of people suffering from AIDS and proven prevention programs for millions more who are at risk.

Time is of the essence, and I urge the Senate to act quickly so that we can turn the tide against this disease and give the hope of life to millions of people in the world's most afflicted countries.

Statement on Senate Action To Block a Vote on the Nomination of Priscilla Owen To Be a United States Court of Appeals Circuit Judge *May 1, 2003*

Priscilla Owen is an extraordinarily well-qualified nominee to the U.S. Court of Appeals. She has served with distinction on the Texas Supreme Court since 1995 and has strong bipartisan support including from three former Democrat Texas Supreme Court Justices with whom she served. She was unanimously rated "well-qualified" by the American Bar Association.

Justice Owen has been waiting nearly 2 years for an up-or-down vote in the United States Senate. The decision today by 44 Senators to filibuster and block a vote on her nomination is shameful. This obstructionist tactic is an injustice and unfair to this good woman and unfaithful to the Senate's own obligations.

Senate Democrats are now simultaneously filibustering two well-qualified

nominees to the U.S. Courts of Appeals. The Senate has a constitutional responsibility to exercise its advice and consent function and hold up-or-down votes on all judicial nominees within a reasonable time after nomination. Some Senate Democrats who once insisted that every appeals court nominee deserves a timely vote have now abandoned that responsibility in favor of partisan obstructionist tactics.

In October of last year, I announced my plan for timely consideration of judicial nominees. Today I again call on the Senate to end the delays and to ensure that every judicial nominee receives an up-or-down vote, no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate. Let each Senator vote as he or she thinks best, but give the nominees a vote.