

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Metzenbaum of Ohio.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HOWARD M. METZENBAUM

Senator METZENBAUM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Judge O'Connor, I look forward to this hearing with an open mind and with a deep sense of inward gratification. I am open-minded with respect to the confirmation process but I would be less than frank if I did not admit a high degree of enthusiasm over the fact that President Reagan has seen fit to appoint the first woman to the U.S. Supreme Court.

I come to this hearing with no preconceived notions. If I happen to disagree with you on any specific issues, it will in no way affect my judgment of your abilities to serve on the Court. It is a matter of concern to me, however, that there are certain groups who have spoken adversely about this appointment by reason of some of your votes or actions as a State legislator.

I have some very strong feelings about judicial appointments. Basically, I think that the appointee must be a person of integrity; a person strong enough to stand up for his or her point of view; a person who has been shown to be a highly qualified legal scholar; and a person who will have the kind of character that reflects well on the judiciary in general.

Your being a woman appointee would not, in and of itself, be sufficient reason for me to vote to confirm. However, your being a qualified and able woman of character and ability would provide me with a great amount of satisfaction in knowing that I had a part in the historic process of your confirmation to the Supreme Court.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Dole of Kansas.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROBERT DOLE

Senator DOLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I, like everyone else in this committee, welcome Judge O'Connor to the committee. I want to commend the chairman for the fine attendance we have this morning, an indication of strong leadership. We appreciate that.

However, as I think has been said, we are all aware of the uniquely historic occasion that we are participating in, particularly those of us who are privileged to serve on this committee. Whatever else these hearings may tell us, I have a sense already of your own feeling for the institution to which you have been nominated by President Reagan.

The Supreme Court stands at the very center of American life. Its decisions define public policy for decades to come. The words used to explain its reasoning shape the law and its practice for thousands of practitioners and millions of citizens.

Not least of all, the Court in recent times has been called upon to render judgments in cases of almost bewildering complexity, fraught with delicate moral or social implications. Should you be confirmed and take your place alongside our other brethren, you will undoubtedly find yourself confronted with issues Solomon himself might agonize over.

It is not my job, nor does it fall within the realm of senatorial prerogative as I understand it, to nail down precisely your views on