

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PAUL LAXALT

Senator LAXALT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, it is with great pleasure that I join with you and my colleagues in welcoming Judge Sandra O'Connor on this occasion of her confirmation hearings.

Although Judge O'Connor is no stranger to public life, she has received the full glare of the national attention given to a nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court, to say the least. In that spotlight, it is apparent that she enjoys overwhelming popular support from the varied and diverse people of our great Nation. This support must be heartening as you prepare for what we will all appreciate might be a necessarily grueling ordeal.

Judge O'Connor brings to this office a wealth of experience in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of State government. However, it is not on one issue or one political question that the support of the American people is to turn. Rather, I think the people have expressed their confidence in Judge O'Connor's legal background, her professional record, and her personal abilities and integrity. I think that is an important distinction to make. I think you are here, Judge O'Connor, because you have been a fine judge and you have been a fine lawyer ahead of that, not a political activist.

On this committee we have Senators representing the entire spectrum of political thought in this country. However, we can all agree that the person chosen to fill the current vacancy on our Nation's Supreme Court must meet the highest standards of judicial temperament and integrity.

The purpose of these hearings is to inquire into these areas so that we and the American people can be assured that this lifetime appointment is filled by a person with the requisite character and skill to meet the challenges the Court will face in the decades ahead.

Therefore, Judge O'Connor and your very justifiably proud family, I welcome you to Washington and I look forward to the opportunity to join in the questioning. I wish you well, not only in the hours ahead but in the many distinguished years you will enjoy on our highest Court.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Byrd of West Virginia.

I do not believe he is here.

Senator Hatch of Utah.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ORRIN HATCH

Senator HATCH. Judge O'Connor, we are very happy to have you and your good husband here today. I am very pleased to support President Reagan in your nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court. I am proud of a President who, whether you agree fully with his campaign promises or not, is at least trying to live up to them, and I think it is long overdue to have a woman on the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

Having spent over an hour with you and in other conversations with you, I am convinced that you meet many of the highest qualifications and standards that are essential to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States of America. I look forward to