Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the right honorable

gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Gingery). I consider it a privilege to call

him a friend and colleague; and I appreciate the time, Mr. Speaker, to

address a couple of issues here together.

First of all, we know 2 days ago the cradle of civilization took

initial steps towards becoming a democracy. Citizens of Iraq, which

today includes parts of the former Mesopotamia and Babylon, cast

ballots as free people to elect their own leaders. We must join the

rest of the world and salute the extraordinary courage it took for

these people to cast their votes.

Each of them had to endure adverse conditions and the threats of

death to go to the polls, stand in line and let their voices be heard.

The people of America and the free world should be inspired. As with

the words paraphrased from Les Miserables, ``We should hear their

spirits sing as it is the music of a people who will not be slaves

again.''

They have joined in the fight that secures them the right to be free.

These brave souls have ventured out in sheer defiance of terrorists and

insurgents who want to harm them and keep them enslaved. I join the

rest of the world as we salute them, the brave voters of Iraq.

In sharp contrast, right here in this democratic Republic, where

hundreds of thousands have sacrificed their lives and millions more

have sacrificed so much to secure our right to be a free people, we

have a group of Democratic Senators who know the sacrifice it took to

secure that right and obligation. They know the words they spoke in an

oath sworn to God, with history and citizens watching, to support and

defend the Constitution of the United States. They know the

Constitution mandates they vote on the nominations to Federal courts,

those nominations made by the President. Yet they fail and refuse to do

their sworn obligations, and it is as if they never intended to keep

their oaths when they were sworn.

Not only has this group intentionally failed to follow their sworn

oaths, they have taken the job of questioning good, honorable and

decent people and turned it into abusive inquisitions. These Senators

would never tolerate these unfair inquisitions if they were treated in

the same manner. Many of these nominees have pulled themselves up by

the bootstraps and have worked hard to become the top in their field.

There are nominees who have lived ethical, moral, honorable lives; yet

they are brutalized and had their lives publicly smeared and demeaned

in the most vile and disgusting manner.

In the ancient Roman Empire, Christians were thrown to the lions, but

many were at least allowed to fight back. When a conservative or a

moderate Christian Hispanic or African American nominee is dragged

before the Democratic Senators' inquisition, they are not allowed to

fight back. These are nominees who have never been accused of cheating

in college or plagiarizing speeches or surgically changing their

appearance or being involved in the death of fellow party-goers. These

are decent people who are who they are and who they appear to be, and

they deserve better treatment.

These folks have not lied under oath by completely refusing to do

their sworn duty. These nominees have simply agreed to subject

themselves to the torture chamber of the certain Democratic Senators in

order to try to help this Nation. The judicial nominees only wish to

help the Nation without legislating from the bench, and they believe in

the true intentions of our Founders.

Having been a district judge and a chief justice, I know some of the

nominees that the President has made over the years. They have been

attacked and stymied, and I believe what has been done to them is

simply unconscionable. Were the attacks made out in the civilian

sector, those nominees, some of them, would certainly be entitled to

huge verdicts by juries who would understand the malice.

Some nominees have had their lives put on hold for years while some

Democratic Senators not only refuse to follow their oath but do all

they can to block others from keeping their oaths. When one Democratic

Senator was chairman of the Judiciary Committee in 1992, the average

length of time to get a vote before the Senate after being nominated

was basically very short months. This same Senator wrote to nominees

saying basically he would not play politics with their nominations.

Then he turned right around and played politics, dragged out such

hearings and votes for nearly a year, at which time the nominations

died when the President was defeated in November 1992.

Now those certain Democrats have effectively prevented votes on

qualified nominees such as that of Priscilla Owen, Carolyn Kuhl,

Charles Pickering, Miguel Estrada, Henry Saad, David McKeague and

Terrance Boyle, not for months but for years. Those were all nominated,

and I mentioned, in 2001. Miguel Estrada could wait no longer and

finally had to withdraw. In fact, my law school classmate, Justice

Priscilla Owen, was one of those who was nominated for the 5th Circuit

Court of Appeals. That was on May 9, 2001, and then she was coldly and

callously left without the constitutionally required vote for over 3 1/

2 years.

I have some Democratic friends back home who understand truth and

fairness, and right and wrong; and that is why these actions of certain

people have hurt not only this country; they have hurt their party.

Please understand, when an attorney is nominated for the bench,

clients are normally reluctant to send new cases their way. When judges

are nominated, there is a reluctance by colleagues to send involved

cases to them because they may not be around to finish them. The

nominees are normally reluctant to make major purchases or make

decisions about schools for their children because of all of the

uncertainty. These qualified individuals who are ready and willing to

serve their country have theirs and their families' lives put on

indefinite hold.

When the average length from nomination to vote was just a matter of

months, that was not a major problem. It is now a critical problem.

Nominees' lives are incarcerated in an unfair and unnecessary

purgatory. Some Senators have complained about how long we held brutal

and threatening terrorists, yet these same Senators uphold the

honorable judicial nominees' lives as a matter of routine.

These handful of Senators often act out as brutal lions hiding behind

the safety of their perches where they cannot be attacked by their

victims. Then they maul and brutalize their victims and leave them and

their families in a suspended animation for years. It is high time they

were held accountable for such outrageous conduct. I believe we have

begun seeing recently in this country in the last election some

Senators pay for their abusiveness.

It is my intention to begin a judicial observance at least once a

month from the floor of this House until all the previous nominees from

the President's last term who are renominated are all voted on.

May God grant peace and certainty to those to whom these Senators are

persecuting or made to suffer some for their religious beliefs.

In conclusion, some may want to fire shots across my bow. That is

fine. So long as they quit attacking good decent nominees and give them

their vote.

May the still small voice of fairness and conscience that has been

stifled for far too long finally be heard in the soul of the

prosecuting Senators. May those who are too afraid to vote take

inspiration and courage from the brave Iraqis who ventured out to vote

despite the threats on their own lives.

I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Gingrey) for yielding.