



The National Voice of the Hispanic Legal Community.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF RAMONA E. ROMERO ABOUT THE NOMINATION OF
THE HONORABLE SONIA SOTOMAYOR TO THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
JUNE 23, 2009 – DIRKSEN SENATE BUILDING, ROOM 226**

Good morning and thank you for being here. My name is Ramona Romero and I am the National President of the Hispanic National Bar Association (“the HNBA”). The HNBA is a nonprofit, national membership organization. The Association represents the interests of the more than 100,000 attorneys, judges, law professors, legal assistants, and law students of Hispanic descent in the United States and Puerto Rico. It was founded in 1972 to serve as the national voice of the Hispanic legal community.

We look forward to a smooth and expeditious confirmation of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court of the United States. Her compelling background, extraordinary intellect, commendable credentials, and principled jurisprudence make her a worthy successor to retiring Justice David H. Souter.

Raised in a working-class family in a housing project in the Bronx, Judge Sotomayor displayed excellence at an early age, graduating as the valedictorian of her high school class. She earned a scholarship to Princeton University – one of the best schools in the country -- and went on to graduate with the highest possible academic honors. At Yale Law School – again one of the best schools in the country – she excelled and served as an editor of the Law Journal. Having grown up in a working class neighborhood in NYC and having attended two similar institutions, I can tell you from personal experience that her achievement is indicative of an extraordinary intellect, an unwavering work ethic, and the personal fortitude to thrive in environments that can be both isolating and challenging for people of her background. Judge Sotomayor excelled at Princeton and Yale because she has what it takes. If confirmed, she will distinguish herself on the Supreme Court for the same reason.

Judge Sotomayor’s professional experience is broad, deep and well-rounded. Before becoming a judge she was both a prosecutor in New York City and a litigator representing companies in complex commercial matters. These experiences are important because they contribute to her understanding of the practical impact of judicial decisions on the people and businesses that come before the courts.

Judge Sotomayor has spent seventeen years on the federal bench, six as a trial judge and eleven as an appellate judge. Based on our analysis of her jurisprudence, she is fair and adheres to precedent. She applies the law narrowly and seems keenly aware of the importance and limits of judicial review.

In short, through both her life history and her legal career, Judge Sotomayor has demonstrated intelligence, integrity, strength of character and a commitment to excellence. If confirmed, she will bring these same qualities to her role as a Supreme Court Justice.

As the “national voice of the Hispanic legal community,” the HNBA is invested in promoting a fair, independent and diverse judiciary. As stated by retired Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court, “our society benefits immeasurably from a climate in which all persons, regardless of race or gender, may have the opportunity to earn respect, responsibility, advancement and remuneration based on ability.” As her history and career trajectory illustrate, our great country has afforded that opportunity to Judge Sotomayor and she has demonstrated her ability in spades. She has *earned* the seat President Obama has offered her at the Supreme Court conference table.

We thank President Obama for nominating Judge Sotomayor, a judge with demonstrated intellectual rigor and more federal judicial experience than anyone nominated to the high court in the last 100 years. We also express, in advance, our gratitude to the U.S. Senate for what we expect will be a fair, respectful and expeditious confirmation process. Finally, my thanks to you and to the American public for your interest and for according Judge Sotomayor the respect she has earned. The confirmation of Judge Sotomayor will be an historic moment for all Americans to celebrate.

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