

TESTIMONY OF GENE W. LAFITTE AND JOHN D. LANE, STANDING COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL JUDICIARY, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Mr. LAFITTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

My name is Gene Lafitte. I practice law in New Orleans, LA. I am a member as the Fifth Circuit Representative of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Federal Judiciary. With me today is John D. Lane, of Washington, DC, another member of our committee. And Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lane and I are pinch-hitters for our chairman, Robert B. Fiske, Jr., the chairman of our committee, who is involved in some litigation in New York City and regrettably was unable to be with us this morning.

The CHAIRMAN. Speak into the mike so we can hear you better.

Mr. LAFITTE. All right, sir. I was just saying, Mr. Chairman, that Mr. Lane and I are substituting this morning for Robert B. Fiske, Jr., who is chairman of our committee but could not be here because of some litigation in New York.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. LAFITTE. We appear here to present the views of the American Bar Association on the nomination of the honorable William H. Rehnquist, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States to be Chief Justice of the United States. At the request of the Attorney General, our committee investigated the professional competence, judicial temperament and integrity of Justice Rehnquist. Because the nominee is a sitting Justice of the Supreme Court and is being nominated for the position of Chief Justice, we were particularly interested in his administrative abilities, his leadership qualities and collegiality.

Our work included discussions with more than 300 persons, including first, all Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, and many Federal and State judges throughout the country; second, a national cross-section of practicing lawyers; third, many law school deans and faculty members, including constitutional law and Supreme Court scholars; fourth, a group of practicing lawyers who studied Justice Rehnquist's other judicial opinions; and finally, Justice Rehnquist himself, who was interviewed by three members of our committee.

Based on our investigation, the committee is unanimously of the opinion that Justice Rehnquist is entitled to the highest evaluation of the committee: well-qualified.

Under our committee guidelines, that evaluation is reserved for those who meet the highest standards of professional competence, judicial temperament, and integrity. It is reserved for those persons who are among the best available for appointment.

I have filed with this committee a letter describing the results of our investigation and shall not repeat its content in detail here, Mr. Chairman. I do request that that letter be included in the record of these proceedings.

The CHAIRMAN. It will be made part of the committee record.

[Document follows:]