

percent to 27 percent in 14 years. What, in your view, explains that drop?

Judge O'CONNOR. I am not sure that I can explain it. I suppose that a portion of it would have to be reflective of public perceptions of the results of particular decisions which have been widely publicized and would cause concern.

Perhaps it is a reflection, if you will, of the manner in which the Court has been treated in some form in the media; I do not know.

Perhaps we have more public discussion of the Court, or perhaps we have less. I am not sure which aspects have led to the change in the polls.

SUPREME COURT PRESS CONFERENCES

Senator BAUCUS. Do you think the Court should have press conferences?

Judge O'CONNOR. Do I think they should as a general rule have press conferences?

Senator BAUCUS. Yes.

Judge O'CONNOR. As a personal view only, I probably do not think that that is a good plan.

The Court does attempt to speak by explaining its reasoning and rationale in the published opinions that it issues, and the hope at least is that in that process the reasons will be sufficiently expounded.

EPITAPH

Senator BAUCUS. Finally—I told you I would ask you this question, which is: How do you want to be remembered in history?

Judge O'CONNOR. The tombstone question—what do I want on the tombstone? [Laughter.]

Senator BAUCUS. Hopefully it will be written in places other than on a tombstone.

Judge O'CONNOR. I hope it might say, "Here lies a good judge."

Senator BAUCUS. What does that mean to you? Do you want to be known as the first woman judge or the judge from the West, the judge who upheld civil liberties—just what does that mean to you?

Judge O'CONNOR. If I am confirmed I am sure that I would be remembered, no doubt, as the first woman to have served in that capacity; and I hope that in addition if I am confirmed and allowed to serve that I would be remembered for having given fair and full consideration to the issues that were raised and to resolving things on an even-handed basis and with due respect and regard for the Constitution of this country.

I would hope that on occasion my opinions could reflect clarity of thought and of word and be a reflection of the appropriate values and analysis that I think is merited of these constitutional issues to come before the Court.

Senator BAUCUS. Are there any institutional changes that you think should be made within the Court?

Senator BIDEN. You might as well let them know before you get there. [Laughter.]

Judge O'CONNOR. As the newcomer on the block I would hesitate to offer all those opinions. It would probably be inappropriate.