

# **PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW**

**U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington – September 30, 2005**

## **A Difficult "Yes" on Roberts**

On Thursday, I voted for Judge John G. Roberts, Jr. to be the 17<sup>th</sup> Chief Justice of the United States. I did not cast this vote lightly. I want to encourage you to read my full statement – or watch the speech at:

**<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=246591>**

For days, I have struggled with whether or not this nominee represents the fear I have of the worst motives of this Administration or whether he represents the best hopes of a country for wise decisions that protect our rights and freedoms and responsibilities. No one of us can know for sure. There is no doubt that anyone I would have nominated would have come from a different background with a different history, but that was not my choice.

Some have suggested that I use my vote to register my disapproval at things the Bush Administration has done or that I use my vote to send a message to the President. While I am angry about the mistakes, miscalculations, misrepresentations and misdirected priorities of the Bush Administration, this vote is not the place to vent those frustrations. Fairness requires that I evaluate each nominee on his or her own merits without a pre-determined outcome – just as I expect every judge to do when a case comes before them.

My vote is based on the same standards I've used for years – not on anger or on sending messages or ignoring a nominee's actual record. I examine their record, and their experience and their testimony, and see if they meet the basic standards of honesty, ethics, qualifications, and fairness. Then I evaluate if they will be independent, even-handed in deciding cases, and if they will uphold our rights and our liberties. I reviewed all of the information that was available, and then examined how Judge Roberts measured up to my criteria for judicial nominees. I followed the Judiciary Committee hearings closely. I read the transcripts. And I've spoken directly with Judge Roberts twice - once in a meeting in my office and once by phone.

Looking at my standards, I found Judge Roberts to be honest, ethical, qualified and fair. I believe he will be even-handed in deciding cases. On those criteria, Judge Roberts clearly met my test.

It was my last criteria – upholding the rights and liberties of all Americans – where I had a harder time evaluating Judge Roberts. I wish the White House had been more forthcoming in making available more documents that would have shed light on some of his more recent work and opinions. I wish the nominee himself had been more responsive to questions in his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Through this process, I have concluded that Judge Roberts is a decent person with keen intellect and high ethical standards. I believe he does know the difference between the role of advocacy, which he has held in the past, and the role of judge. I think he has the capacity to be fair, and I think he aims to serve all of the American people.

On the question of upholding the hard-won rights and liberties of the American people, I believe Judge Roberts has a healthy regard for precedent and intends to apply a thoughtful approach to interpreting the law.

I know some people in Washington state will be disappointed in my decision – regardless of what that decision may be. I've heard from friends, colleagues, constituents and strangers on all sides of the question. Many of them have surprised me in their candor and in their position. All of this has led me to struggle with the decision for many days now.

I've had deep, lasting concerns. But I have had strong, heartfelt hopes as well. In the end, I've returned to the basic criteria I use on any tough question, and to the values that the people of Washington state sent me here to protect.

In examining that criteria and those most important values, I've made a decision that I hope everyone can understand, and appreciate, and even be proud of. I am satisfied that John Roberts meets my long-held criteria, and therefore voted to confirm his nomination.

I believe Judge Roberts is well-qualified to serve. I believe that he is intelligent, honest and fair. Is he wise? Only time can answer that. I cast my vote with the hope that John Roberts will be an individual who will combine common sense and decency with a real respect for how the law affects each American as he serves out his tenure on the Supreme Court. In spending time with him and reviewing the available record, I believe John Roberts has the capacity to be that kind of Justice.

My vote is a vote for hope. Hope that, despite our differences, we can unite around the common good – hope that equal justice under the law means something powerful to every American, regardless of background or political persuasion.

And hope that John Roberts responds to the need of the nation to have a Supreme Court that honors our past and helps secure the rights and liberties – of every American – into the future. I hope that my vote along with a diverse group of my Senate colleagues, reminds him every day that he must be a judge for ALL Americans.

## **411 New Defense Jobs for WA State**

On Wednesday, I announced that I have secured \$87 million in federal defense work for Washington state companies in the Fiscal Year 2006 Defense Appropriations bill. I serve on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

This funding supports leading-edge technologies to protect and equip our men and women in uniform, and it creates \$87 million in economic activity for our state.

These contracts will create 411 high-skill, high-wage jobs in our state, and I'm so proud to partner with the great companies we have working to bring the best technologies to our military.

*See a complete list of projects by region:*

**<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=246540>**

## **Honoring Sam Volpentest**

This week, our state lost an influential leader with the passing of Sam Volpentest on Wednesday at the age of 101. Sam was an unstoppable advocate for the Tri-Cities and is largely responsible for creating HAMMER, a world-class facility that protects Hanford workers. Sam was a one-person Chamber of Commerce, a visitor's center and a cheerleading squad all wrapped into one. Sam Volpentest was the heart and soul of the Tri-Cities. He was one of a kind. Sam will be dearly missed, but never forgotten.

*Read my tribute:*

**<http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=246678>**

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