

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR RUTH BADER GINSBURG
FROM SENATOR HERB KOHL

1. My home state of Wisconsin has taken a lead in allowing televised court proceedings. So I was especially pleased with your support for allowing cameras in the courts when you discussed this matter with Judge Heflin yesterday and with Senator Hatch today. But I'm not sure precisely where you stand with respect to televising Supreme Court oral arguments.

Almost two years ago, Justice Thomas told this Committee that "it would be good for the American public to see what's going on there" -- meaning the Supreme Court.

QUESTIONS: Do you agree with Justice Thomas? Do you personally support televising Supreme Court oral arguments?

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT
WASHINGTON, DC 20001

RUTH BADER GINSBURG
UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE

July 27, 1993

The Honorable Herbert Kohl
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kohl:

Your written question, dated July 22, 1993, was forwarded to me yesterday. I enclose a response, which I hope you will find satisfactory.

With appreciation for your interest.

Sincerely,



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Enclosure

Response by Ruth Bader Ginsburg to Written Question
of Senator Herbert Kohl, dated July 22, 1993

As I suggested at the Hearings, televised appellate proceedings can convey at once a picture not easily drawn in words spoken outside the courtroom. One can also view televised proceedings as an extension of the U.S. tradition of open proceedings.

I am sensitive, however, to concerns about distortion, and consider essential court control of any editing. Furthermore, I appreciate the need for good will among colleagues, and would not push my own preference without first hearing the views of others on this subject.

Just now an experiment with televised proceedings is ongoing in the federal courts, with several district courts and courts of appeals as participants. A report based on experience will be made to the U.S. Judicial Conference and the Conference may thereafter adopt a resolution on cameras in courts. It would be judicious to await the Conference report so that Supreme Court practice can be developed in light of the Conference discussion and recommendations.