

bit of order being restored to the caucus room, when it occurs that you leave, to the American Bar Association which has been traditional under Democratic and Republican leadership in the Senate. They are the first public witnesses we hear from.

Then we will hear from a panel of legal scholars who support your nomination, and we will see how far along we are this evening. But, again, it is my intention to finish the public witnesses by Friday. So I want everyone to know that.

Again, thank you all. Thank you and your family for your cooperation. We will recess for 5 minutes.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will resume.

Our first panel is a panel of distinguished members of the American Bar Association, and I would like to welcome them all: Mr. Ronald Olson, Mr. Best, and Mr. Watkins, all of whom are here to do as the ABA has done in the past, I don't know for how many years, give us their best judgment as to the qualification of the nominee, as they have with all nominees, to the Supreme Court.

Mr. Olson, I understand you are speaking for the committee, and I would ask you to keep your statement to 10 minutes or less, and then the panel of Senators will have questions for you all.

Again, welcome and thank you for being here.

**STATEMENT OF RONALD L. OLSON, CHAIR, STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, ACCOMPANIED BY JUDAH BEST, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT REPRESENTATIVE, AND ROBERT P. WATKINS, FEDERAL CIRCUIT REPRESENTATIVE**

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Thurmond, honorable members of the Judiciary Committee; I will meet that 10 minutes.

I would first like to elaborate a little bit on our introduction. My name is Ron Olson. I am a practicing lawyer in Los Angeles, CA, and since August of this year, I have been the chairman of the ABA's standing committee on the Federal judiciary.

I am accompanied today by two of my colleagues: Mr. Judah Best on my left, and Mr. Robert Watkins on my right. Both are practicing lawyers here in Washington, DC. Because of their location, they were the primary investigators on behalf of the committee insofar as the investigation of the Honorable Clarence Thomas is concerned.

The three of us are here in a representative capacity on behalf of the American Bar Association committee, and further our committee on behalf of the legal profession as a whole. I would like to say, Senator, at the outset that it is a high honor to be here and be able to participate in this proceeding, and we would like to express our appreciation for the work of this committee, not only with regard to this very important nomination, but every nomination to every Federal court in the land.

Second, I would like to say that it has been a distinct privilege for all of us on this committee to revisit the professional credentials of the Honorable Clarence Thomas. With regard to our investigation, we were requested by the Attorney General of the United

States to commence an investigation of Judge Thomas' integrity, temperament, and professional competence. We did that, beginning July 3, and we carried it through until August 19.

That investigation consisted of over 1,000 interviews. We talked to some 400 different judges, over 300 practicing lawyers, and over 150 academics.

Our investigation included careful examination of colleagues with whom Judge Thomas associated at each stage of his career, from the attorney general's office in Missouri right up to his present position. We especially concentrated on the work that he has performed as a U.S. Court of Appeals judge for the District of Columbia. We spoke with his judicial colleagues. We spoke with lawyers who appeared before him. We spoke with academicians who reviewed his opinions.

The three reading committees that we have identified in our submission to this committee were especially helpful to us, and I want to pay particular respect to their work and express appreciation on behalf of the committee.

At all turns, Mr. Chairman, we focused on three criteria: Integrity, temperament, and professional competence. In conclusion, a substantial majority of the committee is of the view that Judge Thomas is qualified for appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court. The substantial majority concluded that Judge Thomas' integrity is above reproach, his temperament outstanding, and that he has demonstrated professional competence sufficient to meet the committee's qualified standard.

A minority of two on our committee concluded that Judge Thomas does not have the depth or the breadth of professional experience and competence necessary for appointment to the Supreme Court. There was one recusal.

Our rationale, Mr. Chairman, is set forth in a written statement that we have submitted to the committee. I would respectfully request at this time that that written statement be received by the committee as part of the written record of this proceeding.

The CHAIRMAN. It will be placed in the record without objection. Mr. OLSON. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Olson follows:]