

Senator THURMOND [presiding]. We are pleased to have you here, Sheriff Rice.

STATEMENT OF BOB E. RICE

Mr. RICE. Mr. Chairman, it is a distinct honor and a privilege to come before you and the members of this committee to share with you reasons why the National Sheriffs' Association wholeheartedly supports the nomination of Judge David Souter for the U.S. Supreme Court.

I am Bob Rice, Sheriff of Polk County, Des Moines, IA. I am a career law enforcement professional with a background in police and sheriff's departments dating back to 1956. For the last 14 years, I have held the office of sheriff. I have been president of the Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association, and it is my pleasure this year to serve as president of the National Sheriffs' Association. The National Sheriffs' Association was established in 1940, representing the Nation's sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, police executives, corrections personnel, and other criminal justice officials. The National Sheriffs' Association, with its 25,000 members, represents the 3,096 sheriffs of this country. Because of my background in law enforcement and because of the concerns of the association's members, I am especially grateful for the chance to address you today.

As law enforcement battles in the drug war and struggles with a rising tide of violent crimes nationwide, we need an anti-crime Justice with the qualifications of Judge Souter.

We believe that Judge Souter's distinguished career as a trial court judge and his fine background in law enforcement makes him an excellent choice.

Sheriff Wayne Vetter of Rockingham County, NH, has known Judge Souter for 17 years, since Judge Souter's term as attorney general for the State. He states that Judge Souter is very articulate—something we have all observed—and he cites Judge Souter's outstanding track record, both while attorney general and when sitting on the bench. Sheriff Vetter goes on to say, "Judge Souter puts a great deal of effort into interpreting laws correctly. Because of his high level of intelligence and his knowledge, he can recite case laws from the top of his head. Judge Souter is already an asset to law enforcement, and sitting on the Supreme, he will be even more so."

Sheriff Chester Jordan of Merrimack County, NH, who has known Judge Souter for many years, states emphatically that he is very knowledgeable, "in fact, the best just to come along in a long time." High words of praise.

Police Chief Thomas King of the Manchester Police Department, who also knows Judge Souter professionally and personally, states that, "Judge Souter brings a balanced, scholarly approach to the bench. He is unfailingly fair and objective. The judge seems to be totally lacking in prejudice."

You hear these words from law enforcement executives to whom a person of the highest caliber, an anticrime man, a judge who recognizes the tough job facing law enforcement professionals today is critically important. Those who know him and those who read of

his credentials are equally enthusiastic. Our Nation's sheriffs shoulder their position of responsibility in the criminal justice system with pride. They fully recognize and hope for the invaluable assistance of a man of Judge Souter's acknowledged talents and qualifications. Frankly, we need and we want a man like Judge Souter and what he has to offer the entire criminal justice system.

Never in our Nation's history have we needed more desperately to add to our highest judicial body a totally fair, impartial, brilliant new Justice. Unquestionably, now is the hour for this man. He has our admiration and our respect. On behalf of our Nation's sheriffs and the National Sheriffs' Association, let me urge you to proceed with all due haste to see that Judge Souter is seated on that bench.

Once again, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before this distinguished panel and voice the views of the Nation's sheriffs. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rice follows:]