

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HISPANIC NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION

Good morning. The Hispanic National Bar Association is appreciative of the long-standing relationship that our organization has had with many of the members of this committee and its staff. In particular, we would like to thank the chair, Senator Biden, and Senator Hatch, for their public statements in support of a Hispanic for the Supreme Court.

When Justice Blackmun announced his resignation, I received many calls for Hispanics around the country. It was universally believed by the members of our organization that the 108th Justice of the United States Supreme Court was surely going to be a Hispanic. We believed the promise that the face of justice would include ours. Not because there exists some numerical imperative for sitting on the Supreme Court, but because there exists a moral imperative that all who are judged have the right to be judges themselves.

I was personally awed by the possibility that I would be the president of the Hispanic National Bar Association when the first Hispanic was named to the Supreme Court.

I truly believed that I would be sitting here speaking about the qualifications of a Hispanic nominee.

I relate this to you so that you may sense the difficulty our organization has had in coming to grips with this latest disappointment.

Nevertheless, as lawyers we believe that we cannot abdicate our responsibility to consider and evaluate the credentials of the person who is actually nominated.

We have set our subjective feelings aside so that we may fairly consider the credentials of Judge Stephen G. Breyer.

As the lawyers from the Hispanic community we must represent our community before you; as Americans we owe the Nation the benefit of our thoughts. In fairness to a nominee who is not responsible for our disappointment, and who has worked hard to earn this nomination in his own right, we come before this committee fully prepared to support the nomination of Judge Stephen G. Breyer.

Many on this committee know better than most about the intellect and the compassion that Judge Breyer takes to the Supreme Court. His achievements thus far are truly remarkable.

Our organization has looked at his ample record. We have discovered, in his work, a judge who is forthright and who accomplishes something in his opinions which very few judges even try: his is readable. He is understood.

As you know, Judge Breyer is the Chief Judge of the circuit which encompasses the Federal Courts of Puerto Rico. As such, many of our members from Puerto Rico have appeared before him. Our member there speak very highly of Judge Breyer as do some of our members from Massachusetts. Many have indicated their belief that he is someone who understands the need to make justice a reality for all Americans. The presidents of the Puerto Rico Region of the Hispanic National Bar Association and the Puerto Rico Federal Bar are effusive in communicating their colleagues' opinion regarding Judge Breyer's intellect and his capacity to understand the nature of our legal system and the reasons for which it was set up as it is. They have observed that he has been very deferential to the decisions of the Puerto Rico courts.

It is this first hand knowledge on the part of many of our members coupled with his record, that makes us believe that Judge Breyer will make an excellent addition to the Supreme Court.

It is our hope that the words of our members in Puerto Rico will be echoed by our members throughout the country in the years to come.

It is our further hope that our high regard for our duty is not misunderstood. As we praise the obvious credentials of Judge Breyer, we remind the Nation of the need to have the face of justice be reflective of all of the people of this country.

We should never ration justice or judicial positions; thus demeaning the importance of selecting the best and the brightest to serve, but, it is important to remember that the best and the brightest come from all races and ethnic groups. It is time for the Nation to see a Hispanic as among the best and the brightest.

Senator KENNEDY. Well, thank you very much, all of you, for being here and for your testimony. Let me just ask very, very briefly a couple of questions—basically, really, one.

Richard Monet, how many Native American graduates do you have from law schools this year?

Mr. MONET. I teach at the University of Wisconsin Law School, and every year I would say anywhere from 60 to 70 students start