

years to not only this committee but to major news and talk shows in America making the position of Planned Parenthood known.

And Ms. Sarah Weddington, an attorney in private practice in Austin, TX, who has done a number of very significant things, but one of the things that maybe is most poignant for the purposes of this hearing is that she was the attorney in *Roe v. Wade*.

With that, let me begin with you, Ms. Weddington. I am told the panel would like to move that way. Then we are going to move across, and we will go to Ms. Michelman, Ms. Wattleton, and the Governor will conclude.

Welcome, again, and please, if you can help us, try to keep your comments to 5 minutes. There will be questions. You will have more than 5 minutes to speak, I assure you. Any longer statement that you may have, we will at your request be delighted and anxious to put it in the record for the record.

Good morning, welcome, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENTS OF A PANEL CONSISTING OF SARAH WEDDINGTON, ATTORNEY, AUSTIN, TX; KATE MICHELMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ABORTION RIGHTS ACTION LEAGUE; FAYE WATTLETON, PRESIDENT, PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA; AND MADELEINE MAY KUNIN, FORMER GOVERNOR, STATE OF VERMONT, AND DISTINGUISHED VISITOR FOR PUBLIC POLICY, BUNTING INSTITUTE, RADCLIFFE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, MA, AND PRESIDENT, INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES, VERMONT LAW SCHOOL, SOUTH ROYALTON, VT

Ms. WEDDINGTON. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Senator Thurmond, I want to express appreciation for the opportunity to be part of this distinguished panel and to contribute, even if only for a few minutes, to the importance of this deliberation. My name is Sarah Weddington. I am the attorney who litigated and won *Roe v. Wade*.

In 1969, abortion was illegal in my home State of Texas and, in fact, outlawed except to save the life of the woman. However, women did find a way to get abortions—those with money who flew to California and New York, those without resources who often went to Mexico, where it was illegal, or back alleys. And the result was women who died or were seriously injured. It is not a day I ever want to go back to.

A group of women then were trying to provide information about the safest places to go and were afraid they would be prosecuted as accomplices to the crime of abortion. They asked me to look it up. I was the only woman lawyer they knew, and they needed someone who would do it for free. And so I ended up being the person whose research led to *Roe v. Wade*.

It will soon now be 20 years since that decision, and yet I am fearful for its health and well-being because I believe, if the Senate confirms Judge Thomas, that he will vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and that laws as extreme as those in Texas will once again be enforced in this land.

I have tried to watch these hearings very carefully. They have been frustrating, not very enlightening, and I tried to find a way to express my frustration. In the attorney general's office in Texas,

there are posters in our child support and paternity section whose caption is, "Would you be more careful if it was you that got pregnant?" The headlines in the Austin paper said Judge Thomas had a sense of humor, and so I thought he would not mind if I altered the poster a little bit to ask if he wouldn't have been more careful about what he has been saying if he were the one who could have gotten pregnant.

Saying things like, "Oh, I just wrote that about Lehrman's article, it was a throw-away line"; or "I have never really thought about this issue. I have never discussed it with anyone although I was in law school when *Roe v. Wade* was decided"; "I really don't have an opinion"—you see, I find that very hard to believe, and I think you should, too.

In fact, his record provides clear indication of the opposite. I think, for example, that when he talked about Lehrman's article, the "right to life" of the fetus as a "splendid example of applying natural law," and other things that the article said that were so extreme that it would require abortion to be outlawed in every State, we have to take that seriously.

I think if he had said something like that about a Supreme Court opinion, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, separate but equal, we would not accept it. And so right now all I can see is he has had wonderful coaching from that great Texan over in the White House. I think he has learned to say very little. Newsweek this week said he has been "a master of evasion." But I am worried about that because I believe that the women of this country deserve a fundamental right. I think there is a constitutional right of privacy. I do not want to see it endangered.

He has avoided saying even that an individual has a fundamental right to privacy based on the Due Process Clause of the 14th amendment. I ask you to say no to his nomination.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Weddington follows:]