

Statement on Withdrawal of the Nomination of Zoe Baird To Be Attorney General

January 22, 1993

Tonight I received a letter from my Attorney-General-designate, Ms. Zoe Baird, asking that I withdraw her nomination to lead the United States Department of Justice from further consideration by the Senate.

Ms. Baird is a gifted attorney and a woman of decency and integrity. She responded to the call to public service with energy and a firm dedication to the mission of the Justice Department. Her candid disclosure of the child care matter to officials of my transition and to the

Senate Judiciary Committee led to the circumstances we face today.

Clearly, our review process prior to her selection failed to evaluate this issue completely. For that, I take full responsibility. I hold Zoe Baird in the highest regard, and I believe she has much to give to her profession and to our country. I hope to continue to seek her advice and counsel. With sadness, I have accepted her request that the nomination be withdrawn and have so informed the Senate majority leader, George Mitchell.

Letter on Withdrawal of the Nomination of Zoe Baird To Be Attorney General

January 22, 1993

Dear Zoe:

I have received your letter asking that I withdraw your nomination as Attorney General of the United States from further consideration by the Senate. With sadness, I accept your request that the nomination be withdrawn.

You are an exceptionally gifted attorney, and a person of great decency and integrity. You have responded to the call of public service with energy and a firm dedication to the mission of the Justice Department. I realize that it was your candid disclosure of the child care matter that led to the circumstances we face today. I believe that the concerns raised about your child care situation were unique to the position of Attorney General.

You are highly qualified to be Attorney General. Your stated goals for a nonpartisan, independent and strongly managed Department of Justice were fully in accord with my own. I believe you would have been a fine Attorney General.

Hillary and I value your and Paul's friendship. We look forward to seeing you often. I hope that you will be available for other assignments for your country in my Administration.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: The White House also made available Ms. Baird's letter requesting that her nomination to be Attorney General be withdrawn.

Remarks on the Swearing-In of Cabinet Members

January 22, 1993

The President. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Today I am proud to present to you and to the American people a Cabinet of talented, diverse, and seasoned leaders.

I'm deeply gratified to the United States Senate for their quick confirmation of 18 nominees only 2 days after the Inauguration. The Senate acted with historic dispatch because it recog-

nizes that our Nation needs action now on our problems. I very much appreciate that, and like them I am ready to get to work.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to now present the Chief Justice to administer the oath of office. Mr. Chief Justice.

Chief Justice Rehnquist. Would you each raise your right hands and repeat after me. And the first phrase is “I, blank,” and obviously there you insert your name—[*laughter*]—“do solemnly swear.”

[*At this point, the Chief Justice administered the oath of office.*]

The President. Let me, first of all, say I’m glad no one said “I, blank.” [*Laughter*] There will be time enough for those blanks in the days ahead. [*Laughter*]

I think now we’re supposed to adjourn to the State Dining Room, is that correct? Is that right?

I also want to recognize my Ambassador to the United Nations-designate, Madeleine Albright, who has not quite been confirmed by the Senate, but I think she will be soon. Because she teaches at my alma mater, I thought she ought to have a separate swearing-in ceremony. [*Laughter*]

So I think that’s it. Let’s adjourn, please, to the reception in the State Dining Room. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks at a Cabinet Meeting

January 22, 1993

I’d like to open our first meeting with a brief prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the unique opportunity which has been given to us to serve our country to thy ends. Please be with us and guide us. Keep us humble and eager. And help us to proceed with wisdom. Amen.

Well, good morning. I want to say again how very proud I am of all of you and how pleased I am to be off to what I think is quite a good start. And I think we have an enormous reservoir of good will out in the country and a fair amount of elbow room to face the issues that are before us. In the next several days we will have to make a lot of tough economic decisions that some of you have been more involved in than others—that everybody will be involved in.

This should be a fairly good meeting today. I just wanted to make a few remarks and then introduce Mack McLarty and let him talk a little

bit. First of all, we’re going to have this Cabinet retreat, as you know, in a few days. And some of the issues that we might ordinarily hash out here over an hour or two I think would be better put off until that retreat. If I might begin with sort of a major substantive decision. I basically very much believe in teamwork. And I think that over time you make better decisions if you get good input from a reasonable number of people who have different perspectives. Therefore, for example, when I was Governor, I didn’t have a lot of Cabinet meetings, but I had a fair number in which people had the opportunity to comment on matters of public interest that were sometimes outside the narrow confines of what they were doing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.