

Statement on Senate Judiciary Committee Action on the Nomination of
Priscilla Owen
September 5, 2002

The Senate Judiciary Committee today voted to deny the American people the service of an outstanding individual with a record of accomplishment and a brilliant legal mind. The committee has voted down Justice Priscilla Owen, my nominee to serve as a judge on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, and is preventing the full Senate from voting on her nomination.

I know Justice Owen well. She is an outstanding judge and a woman of integrity who has received outspoken bipartisan support. Based on her distinguished service with the Texas Supreme Court for 7 years, the American Bar Association unanimously rated her "well qualified," the highest rating the organization can bestow upon a nominee. She is known to be a fair and impartial judge who strives to interpret the law fairly.

What the Democrat members of the Senate Judiciary Committee have done to Justice Owen is shameful, even by Washington standards. They have distorted her

record and misconstrued her opinions. They have determined that a nominee's experience, academic credentials, and character are inconsequential.

Justice Owen's nomination should be brought to the floor of the Senate for a vote. If the full Senate were to vote on her nomination today, I am confident she would be confirmed. The Democrats on the Judiciary Committee know this and, therefore, voted to prevent it.

As I have said before, today's vote is about more than one woman or one seat on an individual court. The committee's action today continues its pattern of obstruction at a time when there are too many vacancies in our Federal courts, a problem that the Chief Justice of the United States has called "alarming." Today's action by this small group of Democrat Senators is wrong. It has harmed a good person, harmed our courts, and harmed the American people.

Remarks to the Community in South Bend, Indiana
September 5, 2002

Listen, thank you all for coming. What a warm welcome. I appreciate this Indiana hospitality. I'm thrilled to be back here again. I wanted to come and talk to you about some of the problems we face and our—this Nation's great character and our ability to overcome anything that stands in our way. See, we're all going to work together to make America a safer place, a stronger place, and as importantly, a better place.

I appreciate John Barnes for introducing me. I appreciate all the good folks who

put this event on. I want to thank my fellow citizens for coming out. I particularly want to thank those of you who brought your family members with you. I love to see our Nation's young. I love to be with our children.

I want to thank the mayor, Mayor Luecke of South Bend, Indiana, for greeting me here. I want to thank Mayor Beutter for coming as well. I want to thank Mayor David Miller for being here. I want to thank any local official who has taken time out of your busy day to come and

say hello. There's one Member of the Congress who is here today. That's Steve Buyer. I appreciate Buyer being with us.

As you can see, I had some folks meet me out there at this unbelievable airplane that you provide for the President. [*Laughter*] I want to thank our long-time friend Digger Phelps for being here. I appreciate him coming to say hello. And as importantly, I want you to know that if you're a Fighting Irish fan, which I presume some people are, that this great university hired a really good man to be its head coach, Ty Willingham. I appreciate Ty coming over.

And what's interesting about my administration, at least one person in my administration: One of the finest women in America, one of the smartest women in America, is my close adviser on foreign policy. That happens to be Condoleezza Rice. She was a former student here at Notre Dame, a former trustee at Stanford. She went and saw Notre Dame's first victory. She's constantly telling me to watch out for the Irish, because she knows Tyrone Willingham.

But anyway, I want to thank you all for coming. We've got some big challenges facing this great Nation. The first challenge is to make sure that there is economic security in America. See, a better America and a stronger America is an America in which people are able to find work. If they're looking for work and can't find work, we've got a problem, and we need to do something about it. Our country was in recession—when I got sworn in, it turns out the first three quarters of my time in Washington was in recession. Secondly, the enemy hit us, which shocked our economy. Thirdly, it turns out we had some people that thought they could cook the books in America, people that were—thought the best way to get ahead was to kind of shade the truth, to mistreat employee and shareholder. And we're dealing with all of them.

We're dealing with the latter by passing law that says to those who want to cheat people, there's no easy money in America,

just hard time. We're going to find you, and we're going to hold you to account. We expect high standards. We expect high standards in America. And Democrats and Republicans came together. We passed the most comprehensive corporate reform bill since Franklin D. Roosevelt was the President. It's a good piece of legislation. By the way, it shows what's possible in Washington when we set aside our political parties and focus on what's doing right for the American people.

But our economy got hurt—was hurting and got hurt, but we're recovering. See, the foundations for growth are strong. Interest rates are low. Inflation is low. We've got the best workers in the world. The worker of the American—the productivity of the American worker is up. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. The foundation for growth is solid. It's solid.

One way to make sure that if people want to find work is to do more on the tax front. Let me tell you something about my view of taxes. Here's the textbook I read—and by the way, some in Washington aren't reading this textbook; they're reading another chapter. I believe if you let a person keep their own money, that person is more likely to demand a good or a service. And when they demand a good or a service, in our society somebody is more likely to produce it. And when somebody produces that good or service, somebody is more likely to find work.

The tax relief we planned came at the right time in American economic history. It was the right thing to do. It was good for small business. America must understand that 70 percent of new jobs are created by small-business people. And when you cut the tax rates like we did, and you understand most small businesses are sole proprietorships or limited partnerships—in other words, they pay tax at the personal income tax level—what we did was infuse capital into the small-business sector of our society. People are more likely to find work because of the tax relief.

We also did two other things important: One, we mitigated the damage done by the marriage penalty. Our Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage. And thirdly, we put the death tax on the way to extinction. The death tax is bad for Indiana farmers. It's bad for Indiana ranchers. It's bad for Indiana small-business owners. It is plain—it's just plain a bad tax.

But here's the problem—here's the problem—because of the Senate rules, all the tax relief that we passed, which both Republicans and Democrats voted for, goes away after 10 years. Now, that's a hard one to explain at the coffee shop there in Crawford. *[Laughter]* How do you say, "On the one hand, you've got tax relief; but on the other hand, you don't"? The one hand giveth; the other hand taketh away. It sounds like Washington to me. *[Laughter]* But those are the Senate rules.

And so here's one way to make sure we continue to have jobs for people, so that people can plan, so that people have certainty when it comes to their businesses, so jobs will grow, is for Congress to make the tax relief permanent.

There are some who are beginning to make noises that they want to raise the taxes. They want to do away with the tax relief. For the sake of people who want to find work in America, for the sake of job creation, it is important for those voices in Congress to read the same textbook you and I have read, that tax relief is important for job creation.

I'll tell you what else is important for job creation, is to make sure that Congress does not overspend. The problem we have in Washington is, every program sounds like a beauty, sounds like a winner. Every program sounds good. Just the problem is, they all cost billions. What we need to do is set our priorities, the priorities on how to make America safer, stronger, and better and not overspend. It's essential that the United States Congress meet our priorities and hold the line on spending. And one

way they can better understand how to do that is understand whose money we're talking about. The money we spend in Washington is not the Government's money. The money we spend in Washington is your money, the people's money.

We need an energy bill in America. An energy bill will be good for job security. It will also be good for national security. We need an energy bill which will encourage conservation, that will help unleash the technology necessary for us to conserve more, the technologies and the research necessary for us to do a better job with renewable sources of energy. But at the same time, we've got to understand technology has changed, and we can explore for energy here at home in safer ways. For the sake of job security and for the sake of national security—and I say "national security" because we must do everything we can to become less dependent on foreign sources of crude oil. They've been talking about an energy plan for months, and with the short time left before the Congress goes home for the elections, and for the sake of American jobs, they've got to stop talking and get me an energy bill. For the sake of the country, what's best for the country, we need an energy policy.

And we need, by the way, a terrorism insurance policy, too. When the terrorists hit us, they affected the ability of people to be able to get insurance necessary to start construction projects. There are over \$10 billion of construction projects which have been delayed because we can't get terrorism insurance for developers. Congress ought to help. Congress ought to help not for the sake necessarily of the developers but the sake of the over 300,000 hardhats who will be able to find work. If you want to help economic growth, Congress, get me a terrorism insurance bill that is—that recognizes the importance of the hardhat, rewards the hardhats of America, and does not reward the plaintiffs attorneys in this country.

I've got—I'm optimistic about our future, because I'm optimistic about America. I know the resiliency of our country. I know the strengths of our country. And while some hurt now because of the economic slowdown, I'm optimistic about our future. I really am. I feel strong—I feel strongly that there are better days ahead for people who can't find work. The foundation is there, and we'll keep working—we'll keep working.

My biggest job, however, is to protect you, the American people. That's my biggest job now, is to secure the homeland, is to make sure that we're safe, is to make sure our American families are protected. That job still exists, and it's important today because there's still an enemy out there that hates us.

It is really important for all of us to communicate the right message to our children when we talk with these harsh words. But you need to tell your kids that these killers hate America because of what we love. And what we love is, we love freedom. We love the fact that freedom can worship an—the freedom to worship an almighty God the way we see fit. We love our freedoms. We hold them dear, and we're willing to defend them. We love freedom to speak. We love freedom to assemble. We love freedom of the press. We love those freedoms. And the other thing—one of the other things that distinguishes from our enemy is that we value the worth of each life. Everybody counts. Everybody matters. Each person has worth here in America.

And that's not the way the enemy thinks. See, they've hijacked a great religion, and they don't care about life. They've got their desires, their dark, dark ambitions. And if people get in the way from them, that's just too bad, as far as they're concerned. But the problem—what they've got is, they've got a mighty nation that stands between them and their ambitions. We know they're out there. We know they're out there, and therefore, we're doing every-

thing we can to protect you. We're chasing down every lead, every hint. There's a lot of really good, hardworking people who are working overtime, working long hours to protect the homeland.

One of the reasons I've asked—or the reason I asked for us to create a new Department of Homeland Security is because I want to have all the tools at our disposal necessary to protect you—not just me but future Presidents. And notice I say “future Presidents,” because I believe this struggle is going to be going on for quite awhile, because we're not quitting freedom and they're probably not going to quit hating for a while.

I've asked the Congress to join me in creating this Homeland Department because I want the over 100 agencies involved with your protection to be under one agency. In other words, in order to affect the culture of an agency, in order to set the right priorities, they ought to be under one umbrella. They ought to be working toward the same goal. That doesn't mean they can't do other things, but the number one priority, the most important job that these agencies have, is to protect America.

And we're making some progress. I appreciate the way the House voted the bill, but we've got a little problem in the Senate. And here's the problem. I need flexibility in order to make decisions necessary to protect you. I'll give you an example. One of the ways—one of the most important things to secure our homeland is to do a better job on our borders. See, we need to know who is coming in the country. We need to know what they're bringing into the country. We need to know what they're bringing in, and we need to know if they're leaving when they say they're going to leave. That's what we need to know. And yet when you go down to the border, when you look at our border, there's Customs and there's INS and there's Border Patrol, three different uniforms, three different cultures, three different attitudes perhaps.

In order to better secure America, the administration, the executive branch of Government needs the capacity to move people to the right place at the right time. The enemy moves quickly; we should be able to move quickly. Yet the bill coming out of the Senate micromanages the process. Listen, there are Senators up there who are more concerned about special interests in Washington and not enough concerned about the security of the American people. And I'm not going to accept a lousy bill. I'm not going to accept a lousy plan. I insist, for the sake of our security, that the United States Senate get it right.

The best way to secure our homeland and the best way to make sure that our children can grow up in a free world is to hunt these killers down, one person at a time, and bring them to justice, which is exactly what we're going to do.

It's a different kind of war than we're used to. In the old days, they could count tanks and figure out how strong the enemy was, or you could look at airplanes and formations and flotillas. This is a war where we're fighting tough people, smart killers, who hide in dark caves or who kind of slither into shadowy recesses in large cities and parts of the world and then send youngsters to their suicidal death. See, it's a different kind of war, which means we've got to think differently. We've got to be better at intelligence. We've got to uphold that doctrine that says, either you're with us, or you're with the terrorists.

We will be steady. We will be patient. Sometimes you'll see the action in this war, and sometimes you won't see the action in this war. Sometimes you'll know whether we bring one of them to justice; sometimes you won't know whether we bring one of them to justice. [*Laughter*] But you've got to know that we're after justice, that we're steadily, slowly but surely, we are slowly but surely doing everything we can to protect the homeland, slowly but surely finding these people.

Sometimes they think they can outwit us, but they can't outwit a powerful nation that's just on the hunt. Once we get them on the run, we're going to make sure that there's no place for them to light, make sure that other countries understand the consequences of accepting these Al Qaida killers and other terrorists who hate America.

I also laid out another doctrine—and by the way, I think it's very important that when the United States speak, we do what we say, for our credibility and for the sake of peace. I told the world loud and clear, if you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the killers who came to America.

And one group of folks found out what we meant, the Taliban. I want you to tell your children this, as well, that this great Nation went into Afghanistan—in upholding that doctrine—we went into that country not to conquer anybody but to liberate people. See, every life matters to us. Every life matters. You need to tell your young ones when they think about America and our values, that because of this country and our friends, many young girls went to school for the first time. We freed people from the clutches of a barbaric regime.

I submitted the biggest increase in defense spending since Ronald Reagan was the President to Congress recently. I did it for two reasons. It's important for you to know why. First, anytime we put our troops into harm's way, our soldiers deserve the best possible pay, the best training, and the best equipment. We owe it to our troops. We owe it to those who are sacrificing for our country, and we owe it to their loved ones. By the way, if you happen to have a son or a daughter or a nephew or niece or a mom or a dad in the military, you tell them, thanks, on behalf of a grateful nation.

I submitted that bill that size because I wanted to send a message to friend and foe alike that we're in this deal for the

long haul, that there's not a calendar on my desk that says, by such-and-such a date we've got to quit. See, we love freedom. And it doesn't matter how long it takes to defend freedom. We will defend freedom in America. That's what we're made out of. That's the fiber of our country.

That's important for people to understand. If there is a threat to America, we will deal with it in a deliberative, smart way. If we face a threat, we must confront that threat if we want our children—see, there's a new—it's a new attitude around the world. We've got to understand that. The battlefield is now here in America. It used to be the oceans would protect us. But September the 11th taught us a new lesson, and it's a lesson that must—that we must take seriously. We must understand the possibilities of what can happen in the new war of the 21st century.

And that's why I started a dialog yesterday on another threat to America, a dialog about Saddam Hussein. I want to assure you that I want the American people to fully understand all the consequences. That's why we're going to have a debate here nationally. That's why there's going to be a lot of discussion. That's why I've asked the Congress to be a part of the deliberations. That's why there will be open hearings. That's why members of—appropriate members of my administration will testify. That's why we'll share information as much as we possibly can with the American people, not only with the American people but with our friends and allies around the world.

I'll be meeting with Prime Minister Blair on Saturday, Prime Minister Chretien on Monday. I'll be talking to President Putin and Premier Jiang and President Chirac tomorrow. I'll be beginning to talk about the need for freedom-loving countries to deal with threats today, before they become incredibly serious tomorrow. See, I believe we owe that to our children.

Some things are certain, however. This is a man who used poisons on his own

people. He's invaded two countries—two countries. He's a person who has ignored all admonitions by international organizations. There will be a good debate, but I firmly believe that the world cannot allow the world's worst leaders to hold America blackmail, to threaten America, to threaten our peace and threaten our friends and allies with the world's worst weapons.

I don't know what was going through the mind of the enemy when they hit us. They probably thought, you know, America is so self-absorbed and so materialistic, so shallow and so selfish that after September the 11th, oh, they might file a lawsuit or two, but that's all they would do. No, they don't understand our country, do they? They don't understand the fact that, when we need to be tough, we're plenty tough. And when we need to be compassionate, we've got a huge heart.

Out of the evil done to America is going to come some good. Out of the evil done to this country—see, the enemy never could predict that. Haters don't—can't see. They can't see beyond their selfishness. But I see something different, and I know many Americans do as well. I see peace. I believe that by being strong and forceful when we need to be strong and forceful, by speaking clearly about good and evil, by leading other peaceful and loving—freedom-loving people in a vast coalition, that we can achieve peace, that we can achieve peace not only for ourselves and for our children, but we can achieve peace in parts of the world where people have quit thinking about peace.

We have a chance. The enemy hit us. They awoke a mighty country that not only will defend ourselves but will lead toward a more peaceful tomorrow. I want you to tell your children that when they hear all the talk and all the speculation and all the thousands of hours of so-called experts babbling away about this, that, or the other, that the true policy of this Government is to achieve peace for generations to come.

And at home the enemy hit us, and they have awakened a new spirit in the country. I used to tell people, "If you want to join the war on terror, do some good. If you want to fight evil, love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. If you want to be a patriot, serve something greater than yourself."

Today we've got Ricardo Rios with us. He is a AmeriCorps member. Ricardo, give them a wave. I'll tell you about Ricardo. He's decided that he wants to serve something greater than self, so he became a teacher, a sixth grade teacher. He knows what I know—and I want you all to hear this loud and clear—one person can't do everything in society. I know that, but each of us can do something to help change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

See, that's the great hope here for this country. The enemy has awakened a new spirit of compassion in America. We've got to recognize that in this great country there are pockets of despair; there are pockets of hopelessness; there's addiction. There are people who wonder about the American Dream. And that can be changed. There can be light where there is darkness, particularly when our fellow Americans put their arm around people in need and say, "I love you. What can I do to help? How can I help make your life better?" If you want to join the war on terror, if you want to be a part of the change in America, love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

No, the enemy hit us, and as a result, there are more soldiers in the armies of compassion all across America. The enemy hit us, and as a result, people have taken a step back and have asked, "What's important in our lives?" We've taken an assessment of our worth, an assessment of our future. And as a result of what they have done, I think our culture is changing, a culture that used to say, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else for

your problem," to a new day in which each of us understand we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you're a mom or a dad—if you're lucky enough to be a mom or a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're fortunate enough to be a citizen of South Bend, Indiana, you're responsible for the quality of education. You're responsible for the public school system. You're responsible for making sure that your faith-based groups, if they're looking for help, are joined. You're responsible for helping feed the hungry. It's your responsibility, in order to be an American, to serve something greater than yourself in life.

Perhaps the most vivid example of that came with Flight 93. I want you all to remember. For me, it's one of the most important moments of the change that is taking place in America, the most vivid and sad symbol of them all but, nevertheless, vivid and clear. People are flying across the country on an airplane; at least they thought they were. They learned the plane was going to be used as a weapon. They got on their telephones. They were told the true story. Many of them told their loved ones goodbye. They said they loved them. They said a prayer; a prayer was said. One guy said, "Let's roll." They took the plane into the ground.

It is that spirit, it is that willingness to serve something greater than yourself in life which is a part of this great country's soul and fabric. No, the enemy hit us. They didn't know who they were hitting. And out of the evil done to America is going to come some incredible good, because this is the greatest nation on the face of the Earth, full of the greatest people.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in the ATA Hangar at South Bend Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to John Barnes, vice chairman, U.S. Chamber of

Commerce; Mayor Stephen J. Luecke of South Bend; Mayor Robert C. Beutter of Mishawaka, IN; Mayor David Miller of Elkhart, IN; Richard “Digger” Phelps, former men’s basketball coach, and Tyrone Willingham, head football coach, University of Notre Dame; President Saddam Hussein

of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; President Jiang Zemin of China; and President Jacques Chirac of France.

Remarks at a Dinner for Congressional Candidate Chris Chocola in South Bend September 5, 2002

Thank you all very much for that warm welcome. And thank you for that kind introduction, “Congressman.” [*Laughter*] I’m proud to come back to my alma mater. Well, that is, my honorary alma mater. [*Laughter*] I’m proud to come back to support Chris Cacho—Chocola. [*Laughter*] He’s a fine man. You’re lucky he’s running for Congress. The people of this district need to send him to Washington, DC.

I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate your support of Chris. I want to thank those who organized this dinner. I thank John Hiler, who’s campaign chairman. I want to thank Father Scully, from one of the greatest universities in America, that is, Notre Dame. I appreciate Doc Bowen. I asked him if he wanted to be called Secretary or Governor. He said, “Governor.” I said, “I understand that.” [*Laughter*] Former Congressman Bud Hillis is here. A current Congressman, Steve Buyer, is here, and I appreciate Steve coming. He’s been a strong ally in the United States Congress. Brose McVey, who is running for Congress from the Indianapolis area, is with us today. And Brose, thank you for running for Congress, and sure hope you win. I appreciate Jim Kittle, who’s the chairman of the party.

But most of all, I appreciate all the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank you for supporting this good man. I want to thank you for what you have done, but

most importantly, I want to thank you for what you’re going to do, and that is turn out the vote. We need him in the United States Congress.

Chris Chocola is a man of faith and family. He’s got good, solid Indiana values. He married above himself—[*laughter*—and so did I. [*Laughter*] I love the story that’s told about Chris sitting there yelling at TV screen on Sunday morning. Sarah finally said, “If you get so agitated at screaming at the TV screen about all the opinions being made, why don’t you start talking to voters instead? Why don’t you go out and ask for the vote and serve your country?” And thankfully, he said yes. I appreciate a good wife who stands by her husband, who is willing to work to see the best interests of this district are represented in Washington, DC.

I also love the fact that they place high priority on their children. There’s nothing more important than having people in Washington, DC, who understand that their most important job is to be a good mom and a good dad. And you’ve got that in the Chocola family.

I had the honor of shaking some hands a little earlier. And more than one person, Chris, said they wished Laura were here. You drew the short straw. [*Laughter*] By the way, she’s doing great. When I married her, she was—we were both raised in Midland, Texas, for starters. And the truth of