

economy. Before that she was a prosecutor in the Manhattan DA's office, serving under the legendary Robert Morgenthau, an early mentor of Sonia's who still sings her praises today. There Sonia learned what crime can do to a family and a community and what it takes to fight it. It's a career that has given her not only a sweeping overview of the American judicial system, but a practical understanding of how the law works in the everyday lives of the American people.

But as impressive and meaningful as Judge Sotomayor's sterling credentials in the law is her own extraordinary journey. Born in the South Bronx, she was raised in a housing project not far from Yankee Stadium, making her a lifelong Yankee's fan. I hope this will not disqualify her—[laughter]—in the eyes of the New Englanders in the Senate. [Laughter]

Sonia's parents came to New York from Puerto Rico during Second World War, her mother as part of the Women's Army Corps. And, in fact, her mother is here today, and I'd like us all to acknowledge Sonia's mom. Sonia's mom has been a little choked up. [Laughter] But she, Sonia's mother, began a family tradition of giving back to this country. Sonia's father was a factory worker with a third grade education who didn't speak English. But like Sonia's mother, he had a willingness to work hard, a strong sense of family, and a belief in the American Dream.

When Sonia was 9, her father passed away, and her mother worked 6 days a week as a nurse to provide for Sonia and her brother, who is also here today, is a doctor and a terrific success in his own right. But Sonia's mom bought the only set of encyclopedias in the neighborhood, sent her children to a Catholic school called Cardinal Spellman, out of a belief that with a good education here in America all things are possible.

With the support of family, friends, and teachers, Sonia earned scholarships to Princeton, where she graduated at the top of her class, and Yale Law School, where she was an editor of the Yale Law Journal, stepping onto the path that led her here today.

Along the way she's faced down barriers, overcome the odds, lived out the American

Dream that brought her parents here so long ago. And even as she has accomplished so much in her life, she has never forgotten where she began, never lost touch with the community that supported her. What Sonia will bring to the Court, then, is not only the knowledge and experience acquired over a course of a brilliant legal career, but the wisdom accumulated from an inspiring life's journey.

It's my understanding that Judge Sotomayor's interest in the law was sparked as a young girl by reading the Nancy Drew series—[laughter]—and that when she was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 8, she was informed that people with diabetes can't grow up to be police officers or private investigators like Nancy Drew. And that's when she was told she'd have to scale back her dreams.

Well, Sonia, what you've shown in your life is that it doesn't matter where you come from, what you look like, or what challenges life throws your way, no dream is beyond reach in the United States of America.

And when Sonia Sotomayor ascends those marble steps to assume her seat on the highest court in the land, America will have taken another important step towards realizing the ideal that is etched above its entrance: Equal justice under the law.

I hope the Senate acts in a bipartisan fashion, as it has in confirming Judge Sotomayor twice before, and as swiftly as possible, so that she can take her seat on the Court in September and participate in deliberations as the Court chooses which cases it will hear this coming year.

And with that, I'd like all of you to give a warm greeting as I invite Judge Sotomayor to say a few words.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Celina Sotomayor, mother, and Juan Sotomayor, brother, of Supreme Court Associate Justice-designate Sotomayor. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Supreme Court Associate Justice-designate Sotomayor.

Statement on the Detention of Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma *May 26, 2009*

I call on the Burmese Government to release National League for Democracy secretary general and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi from detention immediately and unconditionally. I strongly condemn her house arrest and detention, which have also been condemned around the world. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has issued opinions affirming that the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi dating back to 2003 is arbitrary, unjustified, and in contravention of Burma's own law, and the United Nations Security Council reaffirmed on May 22 their concern about the situation and called for the release of all political prisoners.

Aung San Suu Kyi's continued detention, isolation, and show trial based on spurious charges cast serious doubt on the Burmese regime's willingness to be a responsible member of the

international community. This is an important opportunity for the Government in Burma to demonstrate that it respects its own laws and its own people, is ready to work with the National League for Democracy and other ethnic and opposition groups, and is prepared to move toward reconciliation.

By her actions, Aung San Suu Kyi has represented profound patriotism, sacrifice, and the vision of a democratic and prosperous Burma. It is time for the Burmese Government to drop all charges against Aung San Suu Kyi and unconditionally release her and her fellow political prisoners. Such an action would be an affirmative and significant step on Burma's part to begin to restore its standing in the eyes of the United States and the world community and to move toward a better future for its people.

Statement on the White House Organization for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism *May 26, 2009*

As President, my highest priority is the safety and security of the American people. That is why, in February, I issued a Presidential Study Directive to look at how the White House should be organized to deal with the critical issues of homeland security and counterterrorism. I have carefully reviewed the findings and recommendations of that study, and am announcing a new approach which will strengthen our security and the safety of our citizens. These decisions reflect the fundamental truth that the challenges of the 21st Century are increasingly unconventional and transnational, and therefore demand a response that effectively integrates all aspects of American power.

Key decisions that I have made include:

- The full integration of White House staff supporting national security and homeland security. The new "National Security Staff" will support all White House policy-making activities related to international, transnational, and homeland security mat-

ters. The establishment of the new National Security Staff, under the direction of the National Security Advisor, will end the artificial divide between White House staff who have been dealing with national security and homeland security issues.

- Maintaining the Homeland Security Council as the principle venue for inter-agency deliberations on issues that affect the security of the homeland such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, natural disasters, and pandemic influenza. The Homeland Security Council, like its National Security Council counterpart, will be supported by the National Security Staff.
- The establishment of new directorates and positions within the National Security Staff to deal with new and emerging 21st Century challenges associated with cybersecurity, WMD terrorism,