

make America more competitive and our middle class more secure, or more of the same.

I know this Nation has been through an incredibly difficult time. Not all the steps we took to dig us out of this recession have been popular. The pundits in Washington—I have befuddled them over the last 20 months. They keep on saying: “Well, why is he doing that? That doesn’t poll well.” And I keep on explaining to them, I have my own pollsters. I know how it polls. I know these things—some things we did were not popular, but they were right. I wasn’t elected just to do what was popular. I was elected to do what was right.

My job is not to focus on the next election; it’s to focus on the next generation. That’s why I ran for office. That’s what I try to do every day. That’s why Alexi is running for the United

States Senate. That’s what he will do every day when he’s in the United States Senate. We need your help. And if you’re willing to invest in our future, we are going to keep on moving forward for years and decades to come.

Thank you, Chicago. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:51 p.m. at Palmer House Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of State Jesse White, State Comptroller Daniel W. Hynes, State Senate President John J. Cullerton, and State House of Representatives Speaker Michael J. Madigan of Illinois; House Republican Leader John A. Boehner; Sen. Mark S. Kirk; and Rep. Joseph L. Barton.

Remarks on Senate Confirmation of Elena Kagan as a Supreme Court Associate Justice in Chicago

August 5, 2010

Good afternoon. I am very pleased that the Senate has just voted to confirm Elena Kagan as our Nation’s 112th Supreme Court Justice. And I want to thank the Senate Judiciary Committee, particularly its chairman, Senator Leahy, for giving her a full, fair, and timely hearing.

Over the past 2 months, the committee has scrutinized Elena’s record as a scholar, as a law school dean, as a Presidential adviser, and as Solicitor General. And after 17 hours of testimony, during which she answered more than 540 questions, I’d say they got a pretty good look at Elena Kagan. They’ve gotten a sense of her formidable intelligence, her rich understanding of our Constitution, her commitment to the rule of law, and her excellent—and occasionally irreverent—sense of humor. And they have come to understand why, throughout her career, she has earned the respect and admiration of folks from across the political spectrum, an achievement reflected in today’s bipartisan vote.

But today’s vote wasn’t just an affirmation of Elena’s intellect and accomplishments. It was also an affirmation of her character and her temperament, her openmindedness and even-

handedness, her determination to hear all sides of every story and consider all possible arguments. Because Elena understands that the law isn’t just an abstraction or an intellectual exercise. She knows that the Supreme Court’s decisions shape not just the character of our democracy, but the circumstances of our daily lives—or as she once put it, that “behind the law there are stories—stories of people’s lives as shaped by the law, stories of people’s lives as might be changed by law.”

So I am confident that Elena Kagan will make an outstanding Supreme Court Justice. And I’m proud also of the history we’re making with her appointment. For nearly two centuries, there wasn’t a single woman on our Nation’s highest court. When Elena takes her seat on that bench, for the first time in our history, there will be three women.

It is, as Ruth Bader Ginsburg recently stated, “one of the most exhilarating developments,” a sign of progress that I relish not just as a father who wants limitless possibilities for my two daughters, but as an American proud that our Supreme Court will be more inclusive, more

representative, and more reflective of us as a people than ever before.

Thanks very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:56 p.m. in the Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Chicago August 5, 2010

The President. Hello, hello, hello! Thank you. Thank you so much, everybody. Hello, hello! It is good to be back in Chicago. Somebody has got the “Obama 44” license plate.

Audience member. Happy birthday!

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you so much. What a wonderful birthday gift, to be back home with so many good friends.

There are a number of people I just want to make mention of. You probably have already heard from them, but I want you to know how much I appreciate what they are doing each and every day—outstanding leadership, leadership that’s going to move this country forward. First of all, our wonderful Governor and the next Lieutenant Governor of Illinois, Pat Quinn and Sheila Simon. Give them both big rounds of applause.

Dear friend who fights each and every day on behalf of working families across her district, this State, and the country, Jan Schakowsky is in the house. Senate President John Cullerton is here, one of the smartest guys in the State legislature and one of the funniest as well—[laughter]—and did great work with me when I was in the State senate.

We’ve got the next Congressman from Illinois’s 10th Congressional District, Dan Seals in the house. There’s Dan. I want to thank the preprogram speakers, Sheena Patton from Organizing for America and Morgan McClelland, who is a first-time voter. I like that.

And I’ve got a few things to say about Alexi. [Laughter] Before I do that, though, one other person who actually wasn’t on my sheet, but I see her right in front, so I have to say something—this was—this is, I guess, my—still my State representative almost—I’m right at the border—but also was a great friend for a very long time and is a wonderful leader in the

house of representatives, Barbara Flynn Currie. So I just wanted to acknowledge Barbara.

Now, I see so many good friends who’ve been with me since I was skinnier—[laughter]—less gray—[laughter]—and when nobody could pronounce my name. [Laughter] And I know that if it weren’t for you, I might not be standing here tonight as President.

I am reminded of the story Abraham Lincoln told about a guy who comes to the White House, insists on seeing the President. He says, “I worked tirelessly on the President’s behalf,” and he was seeking a patronage job, and he insisted on an audience. And finally, Lincoln says, “Okay.” The guy comes in, he says, “I am responsible—if it weren’t for me, you would not be President.” And Lincoln says, “I forgive you.” [Laughter] It’s a true story.

It is an extraordinary honor and privilege to be able to serve. And I’m able to serve because of you. I’m also proud to be here tonight with the next Senator from the State of Illinois, and that’s Alexi Giannoulias.

Now, I want to say to everybody here, Alexi is my friend. I know his character. I know how much he loves this country. I know how committed he is to public service. I know he is in this race for the right reasons. I know he has been a great advocate on behalf of the people of Illinois.

He’s not in this to help lobbyists or special interests. He’s not one of those politicians who’s going to put out his finger to the wind to see which way it’s blowing. He is somebody who is committed to you. You can trust him. He is going to be an outstanding Senator, and I need you to fight for him so he can fight for you in Washington, because we’ve got a lot of work to do.

Now, look, the last few years have been incredibly challenging. Over almost 20 months