

Testimony of
The Honorable Orrin Hatch

July 22, 2003

Statement of Chairman Orrin G. Hatch

Before the Committee on the Judiciary

Hearing on the Nominations of:

Steven M. Colloton to be United States Circuit Judge
for the Eighth Circuit;

P. Kevin Castel to be United States District Judge
for the Southern District of New York;

Sandra J. Feuerstein to be United States District Judge
for the Eastern District of New York;

Richard J. Holwell to be United States District Judge
for the Southern District of New York;

H. Brent McKnight to be United States District Judge
for the Western District of North Carolina;

R. David Proctor to be United States District Judge
for the Northern District of Alabama; and

Stephen C. Robinson to be United States District Judge
for the Southern District of New York

Today the Committee is considering seven outstanding nominees for the federal bench, and I am pleased to have all of them before the Committee this morning. I look forward to hearing from each of them.

Before we hear from our panel of distinguished Senators who have appeared today on behalf of these nominees, I would like to share a few words of introduction.

Our first nominee today is Steven Colloton, who has been nominated to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. He has excellent academic and professional qualifications for the federal bench. A graduate of Yale Law School, Mr. Colloton clerked for D.C. Circuit Judge Laurence H. Silberman and for Supreme Court Justice William H. Rehnquist. Mr. Colloton worked as an attorney with the Office of Legal Counsel at the Department of Justice for a year and then, eager to return to his Midwestern roots, accepted a position as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Northern District of Iowa. After devoting eight years to fighting crime as a federal prosecutor, Mr. Colloton entered the private sector, where he concentrated his practice in civil litigation. In 2001, he returned to the public sector as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Iowa. He will be an excellent federal judge.

Our group of district court nominees is equally impressive. Four of them hail from the great state of New York. Kevin Castel is one of our three nominees for the Southern District of New York. He is a highly regarded litigator who has focused much of his professional career on complex commercial litigation. A graduate of St. John's University School of Law, he has served as the Chair of the Commercial and Federal Litigation Section for the New York State Bar Association. We look forward to hearing from him.

Another Southern District nominee, Richard Holwell, has 30 years of experience as a practicing litigation attorney. He currently acts as the executive partner in charge of his firm's global litigation practice. He has extensive experience in both civil and criminal investigations conducted by the Department of Justice, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and other federal agencies.

Our final Southern District nominee, Stephen Robinson, brings a balance of civil and criminal litigation experience to the bench. In addition to experience in the private sector, Mr. Robinson worked as a line prosecutor for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York before taking the helm as the United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut. Since 2002, he has worked as President and CEO of Empower New Haven, Inc., a nonprofit corporation.

Our other New York nominee, Judge Sandra Feuerstein, has been nominated for the Eastern District of New York. She has sixteen years of experience as a judge, having served on three

different courts in the New York state judicial system. She has been named Judge of the Year twice since 1992. Judge Feuerstein is a noted humanitarian and will make an outstanding addition to the Eastern District bench.

In addition to our slate of New York nominees, we will consider two additional nominations for seats on the federal district courts. Judge Brent McKnight, who has been nominated for the Western District of North Carolina, spent six years litigating felony offenses as an Assistant District Attorney for the State of North Carolina. In 1989, he became a district judge for the North Carolina 26th Judicial District. Four years into his term, he received a 97% approval rating from attorneys polled by Court Watch of North Carolina. In 1993, he made the transition from state to federal court when he was appointed a federal magistrate judge for the Western District of North Carolina.

David Proctor, nominated to the Northern District of Alabama, has practiced law in the Birmingham area for more than 15 years, most recently at the firm Lehr, Middlebrooks, Price & Proctor, where he has been an effective litigator in labor, employment and civil rights law. His extensive legal experience will serve him well as on the federal bench.

I am pleased to welcome our nominees to the Committee today, and I commend the President on selecting them for the very important positions that they will assume upon confirmation.

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