

the hearings even started. We have heard people try to attach a lot of labels to Judge Sotomayor over the past few weeks, but it has become clearer and clearer as we look hard at Judge Sotomayor's record and vast experience that attacking this nominee is like throwing rocks at a library. It is uncalled for and it doesn't accomplish anything. Her opponents are grasping at straws, because it turns out we have before us one of the most qualified, exceptional nominees to come before this Senate in recent history.

Let there be no doubt: Sonia Sotomayor's nomination to be a Justice to the Supreme Court is a proud moment for America. It is proof that the American dream is in reach for everyone willing to work hard, play by the rules, and give back to their communities, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background. It is further proof of the deep roots the Hispanic community has in this country.

But let's be clear: We get to be proud of this nominee because she is exceptionally qualified. We get to be proud because of her vast knowledge of the law, her practical experience fighting crime, and her proven record of dedication to equal justice under the law. Those are the reasons we are proud. Those are the reasons she should be confirmed without delay.

We should not be hearing any suggestions that we need infinitely more time to discuss this nomination. It should move as promptly as the nomination of John Roberts, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

A little while ago at a press conference, we heard from prominent legal and law enforcement organizations that explained how the people who have actually seen her work know her best: as an exemplary, fair, and highly qualified judge. They came from across our country, from Florida to Texas, Nebraska, and my home State of New Jersey. They shed light on how important her work has been in the fight against crime, how her work as a prosecutor put the "Tarzan murderer" behind bars, how as a judge she upheld the convictions of drug dealers, sexual predators, and other violent criminals. And they made it clear how much they admire her strong respect for the liberties and protections granted by our Constitution, including the first amendment rights of people she strongly disagreed with.

Judge Sotomayor's credentials are undeniable. After graduating at the top of her class at Princeton, she became an editor of the law journal at Yale Law School, which many consider to be the Nation's best. She went to work in the Manhattan district attorney's office, prosecuting crimes from murder to child abuse to fraud, winning convictions all along the way.

A Republican President, George H.W. Bush, appointed her to the U.S. District Court in New York, and a Democrat, Bill Clinton, appointed her to the

U.S. Court of Appeals. She was confirmed by a Democratic majority Senate and then a Republican majority Senate. Her record as a judge is as clear and publicly accessible as any recent nominee and clearly shows modesty and restraint on the bench.

She would bring more judicial experience to the Supreme Court than any Justice in 70 years, and more Federal judicial experience than anyone in the past century. Her record and her adherence to precedent leave no doubt whatsoever that she respects the Constitution and the rule of law.

Judge Sotomayor's record has made it clear that she believes what determines a case is not her personal preferences but the law. Her hundreds of decisions prove very conclusively that she looks at what the law says, she looks at what Congress has said, and she looks above all at what precedent says. She is meticulous about looking at the facts and then decides the outcome in accordance with the Constitution.

On top of that, Judge Sotomayor's personal background is rich with the joys and hardships that millions of American families share. Her record is proof that someone can be both an impartial arbiter of the law and still recognize how her decisions will affect people's everyday lives.

I think it says something that the worst her ideological opponents can accuse her of is being able to understand the perspective of a wide range of people whose cases will come before her.

Judge Sotomayor deserves nothing less than a prompt hearing and a prompt confirmation. As the process moves forward, I plan to come back to the floor as often as is necessary to rebut any baseless attacks leveled at this judge.

It fills me with pride to have the opportunity to support President Obama's groundbreaking nominee, someone who is clearly the right person for a seat on the highest Court of the land.

It is an enormous joy to be reminded once again that in the United States of America, if you work hard, play by the rules, and give back to your community, anything is possible.

Madam President, with that, I yield the floor.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m. recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Acting President pro tempore.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, what is the status of the Senate at the present time?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business.

#### FOOD SAFETY RAPID RESPONSE ACT OF 2009

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to talk for a few minutes about the Food Safety Rapid Response Act of 2009. I do this in conjunction with my colleague from the State of Minnesota, Senator KLOBUCHAR. I recognize her first for her strong leadership on this legislation. She and I both are a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. On that committee, she has been extremely active, and on this particular issue we have had the opportunity to dialog on any number of occasions. Thanks to her cooperation and her leadership, we have developed and are cosponsoring the Food Safety Rapid Response Act of 2009, which is designed to improve foodborne illness surveillance systems on the Federal, State, and local level, as well as improve communication and coordination among public health and food regulatory agencies.

In the wake of the recent salmonella outbreak at the Peanut Corporation of America in my home State of Georgia, the Senate Agriculture Committee held a hearing to review the response from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration. The mother of a victim of the outbreak testified at the hearing and shared her personal story and frustrations in dealing with numerous Federal bureaucracies over this issue.

This hearing brought to light a clear need to develop a more effective national response to outbreaks of foodborne illness, especially in the area of coordination among public health and food regulatory agencies, to share findings and develop a centralized database. The Food Safety Rapid Response Act of 2009 will expedite much needed improvements to identify and respond to foodborne illnesses throughout the country.

Key components of this legislation include the following: First, directing the CDC to enhance the Nation's foodborne disease surveillance system by improving the collection, analysis, reporting, and usefulness of data among local, State, and Federal agencies, as well as the food industry; second, directing the CDC to provide support and expertise to State health agencies and laboratories for their investigations of foodborne disease. This includes promoting best practices for food safety investigations. And, third, establishing regional food safety centers of excellence at select public health departments and higher education institutions around the country to provide increased resources, training, and coordination among State and local personnel.

Both Senator KLOBUCHAR and I are very proud of the excellent work done at universities in our respective home States in the area of food safety and epidemiology.

The University of Georgia is home to the world-class Center for Food Safety