

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 499

Acknowledging the lifetime of service of Sandra Day O'Connor to the United States as a successful Arizona State Senator, trailblazer, expert collaborator, educational advocate, and one of the great Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 13, 2023

Ms. SINEMA (for herself, Mr. KELLY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. FISCHER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. BUTLER, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. BRITT, Ms. SMITH, and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Acknowledging the lifetime of service of Sandra Day O'Connor to the United States as a successful Arizona State Senator, trailblazer, expert collaborator, educational advocate, and one of the great Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Whereas Sandra Day O'Connor was born in 1930 in El Paso, Texas, and spent her childhood on her family's isolated Arizona cattle ranch;

Whereas O'Connor lived with her grandmother in El Paso during the school year, away from her home and parents;

Whereas O'Connor matriculated to Stanford University at the age of 16 and combined her undergraduate and law school curricula, graduating with a bachelor's degree in economics and a law degree in just 6 years;

Whereas O'Connor graduated third in her law school class, behind William Rehnquist, her future colleague on the Supreme Court of the United States (referred to in this preamble as the "Supreme Court");

Whereas, despite her qualifications, O'Connor could not find work as an attorney because of bias against women in the law;

Whereas O'Connor ended up negotiating for an unpaid position in the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office at a shared desk, while her husband, John, finished at Stanford Law School 1 year later;

Whereas O'Connor traveled to Frankfurt, Germany, in 1954 with her husband John, who had joined the United States Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, and she was able to find work as a civilian attorney with the United States Army Quartermaster Corps;

Whereas, in 1957, O'Connor returned to Arizona and still could not find work with a traditional law firm due to her gender, so she "hung out a shingle" as a sole practitioner;

Whereas, in 1965, O'Connor was hired as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Arizona;

Whereas O'Connor was active in Republican Party politics and was well-received for her work at the Arizona Attorney General's Office, which resulted in her appointment to an Arizona State Senate seat in 1969 when the incum-

bent, also a woman, was appointed to a Federal position and vacated the office;

Whereas, in 1970, O'Connor was elected to the Arizona State Senate and served 2 consecutive terms;

Whereas, in 1972, O'Connor was selected as Majority Leader of the Arizona State Senate, the first time a woman held such a position in any State;

Whereas, in 1974, O'Connor was elected as a trial court judge and was later appointed to the Arizona Court of Appeals in 1979;

Whereas, on August 19, 1981, President Ronald Reagan nominated O'Connor to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court to fill the seat vacated by Associate Justice Potter Stewart;

Whereas, on September 21, 1981, the Senate confirmed O'Connor's nomination by a unanimous vote, making her the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court;

Whereas O'Connor established herself as a pragmatic, independent voice on the Supreme Court, casting decisive votes during a time when the Supreme Court was being asked to resolve politically charged issues;

Whereas O'Connor put a very public face on the role of the Supreme Court, domestically and around the world;

Whereas O'Connor became the Supreme Court's most prolific public speaker, traveling to all 50 States and to countless law schools, libraries, and public events to describe how the Supreme Court works and its role in our constitutional form of government;

Whereas O'Connor traveled worldwide as an ambassador for the rule of law and the independence of judiciaries everywhere;

Whereas, after 24 years on the Supreme Court, O'Connor announced her retirement to care for her beloved husband, who had Alzheimer's disease;

Whereas O'Connor began her retirement with 2 goals, which were to—

(1) convince more States to adopt merit selection of judges for filling vacancies in State courts; and

(2) educate the public on the importance of an independent judiciary;

Whereas O'Connor's judicial independence work led to her awareness of a national civics education deficit;

Whereas, in 2009, O'Connor created the free-to-use, ad-free platform iCivics.org to educate young citizens of the United States about civics and what it means to be a citizen;

Whereas iCivics.org grew to become the largest civics education platform in the United States, with over 7,000,000 students annually enrolling in the programs the platform offers;

Whereas the popularity of iCivics.org was due to its captivating online, interactive gaming approach;

Whereas iCivics.org played a crucial role in Educating for American Democracy, a Federally funded initiative to improve civics and history education, which released its reports in March 2021;

Whereas Sandra Day O'Connor was a beloved sister, wife, mother, and grandmother;

Whereas Sandra Day O'Connor was an icon, trailblazer, and dedicated public servant, who leaves behind a legacy that has inspired generations of women, including the 5 women justices who have followed in her footsteps on the Supreme Court; and

Whereas Sandra Day O'Connor will be remembered as a pioneer in the history of the United States and will always be revered as the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) extends heartfelt sympathies to the family
3 and friends of Sandra Day O'Connor;

4 (2) respectfully requests that the Secretary of
5 the Senate communicate this resolution to the House
6 of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy
7 thereof to the family of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; and
8 nor; and

9 (3) acknowledges the lifetime of service of San-
10 dra Day O'Connor, a successful Arizona State Sen-
11 ator, trailblazer, expert collaborator, educational ad-
12 vocate, and the first woman to serve on the Supreme
13 Court.

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