

Statement of

# **The Honorable George V. Voinovich**

United States Senator  
Ohio  
June 4, 2004

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Before the Senate Judiciary Committee  
June 4, 2004  
Confirmation Hearing for Judge Michael H. Watson

Mr. Chairman, I take great pride in having the opportunity to introduce, along with my home-state colleague Senator DeWine, someone with whom I worked very closely for many years, Judge Michael H. Watson who has been nominated to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio.

Throughout the time I have known Judge Watson, he has proven himself to be nothing short of a highly effective practitioner of the law. When I was the Governor of Ohio, Michael served as my Chief Legal Counsel. In that capacity, he provided sound and practical direction on legislative, regulatory, clemency and ethical matters that concerned state government.

Michael has been a dedicated member of and servant to his community through serving on numerous committees and associations including being President of the Worthington, Ohio, Youth Boosters. He has also held positions serving in the Office of the prosecuting attorney, as a Bailiff/Law Clerk for the Court of Common Pleas, as an attorney working on insurance, workers' compensation, and criminal defense, Chief Legal Counsel for the Ohio Department of Commerce, and finally Deputy Chief Counsel for the Office of the Governor before becoming my Chief Legal Counsel.

In 1996, I appointed him to the Franklin County Common Pleas Court - the busiest trial court in the State of Ohio - and he has served the court with integrity and fairness. He later also served as one of the Court's Administrative Judges. Since last year, he has further served his country as an Appeals Court Judge for the 10th District. As a result of our strong working relationship, I have gained an immense amount of respect for him and he has reinforced my confidence in his abilities.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I believe that Judge Watson has extraordinary qualifications to serve as a judge for the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio and feel tremendously privileged to have this opportunity to express my strong recommendation for his approval. I am certain that he would prove to be a valuable asset and an excellent member of the District Court.

Thank you very much for your time and careful consideration of this fine jurist.