

Testimony of

Sara M. Taylor

July 11, 2007

Opening Statement of Sara M. Taylor Before the Senate Judiciary Committee July 11, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Senator Specter, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Sara Taylor. Until seven weeks ago, I served as a Deputy Assistant to the President and the Director of the Office of Political Affairs at the White House. Over the last eight years I've worked in different capacities for President Bush. I know the President to be a good and decent man. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to serve him, and I admire his unflinching devotion always to do what he believes is right for our country. The professional opportunities President Bush gave me have and will continue to have a profound impact on my life. I am grateful for the confidence he has shown in me.

I am here today to testify, pursuant to subpoena, before this Committee as a willing and cooperative private citizen. I must recognize, however, that the areas you would like to question me about today arise out of my service to the President in the White House. I have received a letter from the Counsel to the President informing me that the President has directed me not to testify "concerning White House consideration, deliberations, or communications, whether internal or external, relating to the possible dismissal or appointment of United States Attorneys, including consideration of possible responses to congressional and media inquiries on the United States Attorneys matters." I have attached a copy of Mr. Fielding's letter to me to this statement, as well as the letter that my counsel wrote to the Chairman and Ranking Member of this Committee and to the Counsel to the President on July 7, 2007. The President has made the determination that the disclosure of this information would interfere with the operation of the executive branch. I intend to follow the President's instruction. I do not have the ability independently to assess or question the President's determination.

The current dispute between the Executive and Congressional branches of our government is much bigger than me or my testimony here today. In light of the President's direction, I will answer faithfully those questions that are appropriate for a private citizen to answer while also doing my best to respect the President's directive that his Staff's communications be privileged. To the extent that I am not able to answer questions because of the President's directions, I commit to abide by a judicial determination that may flow from a subpoena enforcement action against the White House. While I may be unable to answer certain questions today, I will answer those questions if the courts rule that this Committee's need for the information outweighs the President's assertion of executive privilege.

I look forward to answering those questions not covered by the President's assertion of executive privilege. I understand that during this hearing we may not agree on whether answers to particular questions fall within the prohibitions of Mr. Fielding's letter. This may be frustrating to both you and to me. I would ask the committee not to infer that an invocation of Mr. Fielding's letter signals knowledge on my part. Within the constraints of Mr. Fielding's letter, I will do my best to respond to your questions.

Thank you for your understanding.