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The American dream. Throughout the decades, people have parted ways with family and friends to reach the shores of the United States with the hopes and aspirations of attaining better jobs, improved living conditions, a stronger future for their children and possibly, just possibly, a shot at that American dream.

It is an ideal unique to our country; a notion that if one works hard and gets an education that no goal is unreachable despite this person's race, gender, religion or creed. That regardless of the obstacles and circumstances that this person may endure, with strong perseverance, determination, ambition, a tremendous work ethic and focus, anything is attainable.

These American values are emphasized in schools every day and passed down from generation to generation. and today we see their implementation in reality yet again with President Obama's nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Judge Sotomayor's unique and compelling story began right in the South Bronx. Raised in the Bronxdale Public Housing Projects, this daughter of Puerto Rican heritage recalls dodging bullets and drug dealers as a child just vying to survive.

Losing her father at the tender age of nine, Judge Sotomayor's mother worked tirelessly – sometimes two jobs – to ensure that both her children received food, clothing, shelter, a proper education and a chance to alter their own lives. Graduating valedictorian of her class at Blessed Sacrament and at Cardinal Spellman High School in New York, Judge Sotomayor did just that – and then some.

After winning a scholarship to Princeton, Judge Sotomayor graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. She excelled on to Yale Law School where she served as editor of the Yale Law Journal and as managing editor of the Yale Studies in World Public Order.

The distinguished legal expert has served as a prosecutor, assistant District Attorney, corporate litigator and trial judge. She was appointed to the District Court for the Southern District of New York by then President George H.W. Bush, and later appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit by President Clinton in 1998.

And in addition to her judicial work, Judge Sotomayor is a Lecturer at Columbia University Law School, a former adjunct professor at NYU Law School and still managed to create community organizations such as the Development School for Youth Program which sponsors workshops for inner city youth.

Now on November 4, 2008 Americans voted in historic numbers for a new way forward. They cast their ballots for progress, to move beyond race and ethnicity, to eliminate partisan divide and to unite the nation as a whole. President Obama himself ran an unparalleled campaign that urged citizens to honor the principles of our country and to excel past racial biases and work together to form a more perfect union.

At this moment in our history, there is no one more qualified to assume the bench on the U.S. Supreme Court than Judge Sotomayor. Her opponents have already begun their attack

campaigns and spin wars, but they lack any basis or sound reasoning. Instead, they are using the age-old wedges of race and color to divide the country. I say we honor our basic ideals and judge this accomplished woman on her sheer merits.

Armed with more experience than anyone currently serving the Supreme Court, Judge Sotomayor's credentials speak openly for themselves. And her compelling life story speaks candidly to the uniqueness of our nation, to the American dream and to the idea that in this country one truly can aspire to anything. Lets put into practice what we voted for in November, and let's bring to fruition the ideals we teach our children every single day. Lets see Judge Sotomayor seated on the Supreme Court, not because she's a Latina, nor a female, but because she unequivocally has earned it.