

United States Senate

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May 21, 2019

Ms. Joy Beasley, Acting Associate Director
Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 3318
Washington D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

I write to support the nomination of the Sandra Day O'Connor House in Tempe, Arizona for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. While Justice Sandra Day O'Connor is an esteemed Arizonan, Justice O'Connor holds a special place in American history as the first woman on the Supreme Court of the United States. The home in which she lived for much of her life as an Arizona political leader and policy maker deserves to be included in the National Register because of her association with the home and also because of the role it served in bringing Justice O'Connor to the position to become President Reagan's nominee to the Court.

The adobe brick home Justice O'Connor and her husband, John helped to construct became a centerpiece in Justice O'Connor's career in Arizona. Simply, Justice O'Connor used her home as the venue to bring other political leaders together to create solutions that solved Arizona's policy challenges. It was Justice O'Connor's success in creating a cooperative environment for policy-making that enabled her to rise to become the Majority Leader in the State Senate, the first woman to do so in Arizona and the nation. Justice O'Connor's groundbreaking successes were, as she credits, due in part because of the home where "civil talk leads to civic action." Its history and role in elevating Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court made the O'Connor House "the" site most associated with Justice O'Connor and her historic career path.

Accordingly, when the O'Connor House was at risk of demolition, Arizonans of all stripes worked to preserve it, in one of the largest Arizona historic preservation efforts in recent years. Justice O'Connor herself was involved in this preservation effort. Fittingly, the O'Connor House now serves to support the work of the O'Connor Institute, which means that the home is once again a place where Arizonans come together to find common solutions to the problems of our time. Although preservation of this historic property required its relocation, the association of this building with Justice O'Connor's contribution to civic education, engagement and discourse is durable, and so National Register designation would provide recognition of what Justice O'Connor considers her life's work – work, now carried on in the very same space by an organization dedicated to her legacy.

In recognition of the significant association between Justice O'Connor, one of the most important American women of the 20th Century, and the home that was so critical to her path past gender discrimination to the Supreme Court, I emphatically support the Sandra Day O'Connor House for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Please feel free to contact my office if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha McSally". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martha McSally
United States Senator