

Evangelicals From a Broad Cross-Section of America Weigh In on Judge Gorsuch

Immediately following President Donald Trump's announcement that he had nominated 10th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Neil Gorsuch to succeed the late Associate Justice Antonin Scalia on the U.S. Supreme Court, a number of evangelical leaders weighed in on the nomination.

Although Gorsuch has not yet heard a case relating to abortion, his positions in other cases, as well as his statement that human life is invaluable in a book he wrote about euthanasia and assisted suicide, lead many to believe he will be a pro-life champion on the high court. The response has been overwhelmingly supportive of the nomination.

Here are some of the reactions from evangelical leaders:

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins – I was pleased to witness President Trump follow through on his promise and select a nominee from the list he presented during the campaign. The president has been very clear on the type of justices that he would appoint: textualists who will not issue rulings based on the shadows of the Constitution.

In the third presidential debate, Donald Trump drove home his point about the type of Supreme Court nominees that he would select. I believe that moment in the debate helped sealed the deal with millions of social conservative voters. In fact, exit polling found that 21 percent of voters pointed to the Supreme Court as the 'most important factor driving their vote' and Trump won that group by 16 points.

Judge Gorsuch's record over the last 14 years, especially on religious liberty, gives Americans every reason to believe he

will make a fine Supreme Court justice. His reputation as a judge with integrity and dedication to the Constitution should be an encouragement to all Americans.

We are committed to working with President Trump and senators to help move the grassroots to gain the confirmation of Judge Gorsuch. This will be a battle but I am confident the president will get his nominee confirmed.

Dr. James Dobson – I am greatly encouraged by the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the United States Supreme Court. I thank God that if confirmed, this administration will have delivered on one of its most critical campaign promises—to appoint a judge in the mold of the late Justice Antonin Scalia who will uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States and the original intent of its framers.

If confirmed to the Supreme Court, I want to also urge Judge Gorsuch to be unwavering in his commitment to the sanctity of human life and to defend the religious freedoms of America and her citizens. Today's decision seems squarely in this spirit, and I commend President Donald J. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence for it.

National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference President Rev. Samuel Rodriguez – As our nation's political divide has seemed more like a chasm in recent weeks, I urge our politicians on both sides of the aisle to give an honest confirmation hearing to President Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court, Judge Neil Gorsuch. It has long been the case that presidents are given deferential treatment when it comes to their nominees for Cabinet positions and for the Supreme Court. The recent trend of blocking such nominees by both Republicans and Democrats must stop. Their political games are not in the best interest of the security and prosperity of the United States.

I pray for our political leaders that they would have wisdom

and political courage to act fairly and to do right by the American people. I pray also for Judge Gorsuch, that, should he ultimately be confirmed, he would be a blessing to this country, upholding the Constitution of the United States with virtue and justice for all.

I commend President Donald J. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence for selecting a judge with such a commendable track record on issues important to the evangelical community.

Dr. Michael D. Evans – I was thrilled to hear that Judge Gorsuch has been nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court. He has already led an impressive career as a champion of the originalist interpretation of the Constitution. In an era of justices legislating from the bench and attempting to re-shape our basic laws and rights, I hope and pray that Judge Gorsuch will rule in a fashion that applies our Constitution and the Bill of Rights as our founders intended.

In the coming months, many pressing issues will be left in the hands of our country's Supreme Court justices, and this nomination gives me great peace of mind.

Southern Evangelical Seminary President Dr. Richard Land – Tonight, President Trump held true to his word and chose one of the foremost jurists in America to fill the seat left vacant by justice Antonin Scalia. Judge Gorsuch comes from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit and he is a proponent of originalism and textualism in interpreting the Constitution. Because of this, Judge Gorsuch will interpret the Constitution's meaning as stable from the time of enactment and would not be prone to considering the Constitution as a living document. In addition, he has shown that he primarily interprets the Constitution based on the original intent of our Founding Fathers and doesn't read in meaning that isn't there.

Judge Gorsuch is supremely qualified to serve on the U.S.

Supreme Court,” Land continued. “This is precisely the kind of Supreme Court nominee that President Trump promised to give America and is the main reason why millions of Americans voted for him last November. The American people are extremely frustrated that they have been losing the right to govern themselves to un-elected federal judges. Judge Gorsuch will help correct that.

On a lesser note, it is interesting that Judge Gorsuch continues the domination of the Supreme Court by Ivy Leaguers. All of the current justices have been educated in the Ivy League as has Judge Gorsuch. However, he does increase the diversity of the court in that he is an Episcopalian and, if confirmed, Judge Gorsuch will be the only Protestant on the court. It also encourages conservatives that he was one of the youngest nominees, at the age of 49. Judge Gorsuch should have many decades of service on the court.

Immediate Past President of the Southern Baptist Convention Dr. Ronnie Floyd – I want to congratulate Judge Neil Gorsuch on his nomination to the Supreme Court in the spirit of Justice Antonin Scalia. Serving in the highest court of the land is not only one of the highest honors in our country’s government but also one of its most important responsibilities. As such, my prayers are wholeheartedly for Judge Gorsuch. May he, if confirmed, lead a long and successful career as a Supreme Court justice, upholding our Constitution with firmness and righteousness.

I pray that these next years will turn out to be America’s best. But this will only happen if we stay true to who we are. May our next Supreme Court justice honor our Constitution as it was originally intended.

Turning Point Founder Dr. David Jeremiah – For many evangelicals, Trump’s campaign promise to appoint a Supreme Court Justice in the mold of Antonin Scalia— an originalist who would uphold the Constitution – was the single most

important issue facing the American people this past election. I am greatly encouraged by the nomination of Judge Gorsuch as he represents a clear and definitive fulfillment of President Trump's promise.

Judge Gorsuch has proven himself to be a reliable conservative who Americans can trust to uphold the Constitution of the United States without legislating from the bench.

The Supreme Court represents the bedrock of our republic, and it has safeguarded the American people from executive overreach, by both presidents on the left and the right, for hundreds of years. I pray for our leaders that they would have the wisdom and the political courage to swiftly confirm Judge Gorsuch to the highest court in the land. I thank God that President Trump and Vice President Pence have selected a judge who will carry on the legacy of the late Justice Antonin Scalia.

Operation Rescue President Troy Newman – We want to express our thanks to President Trump for nominating a man of such stellar quality as Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. One of the reasons I endorsed Trump for president was because of the strong promises he made to pro-life leaders. Now, after less than two weeks in office, he is keeping those promises, and we are very encouraged. He has proved himself to be a man of his word.

We look forward to speedy hearings on Judge Gorsuch's nomination, and urge the Senate to expedite his confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Harvest Christian Fellowship (Calif.) Senior Pastor Greg Laurie – Last week, I stood in support of the thousands upon thousands of people meeting and standing for life in Washington as I wrote these words on Facebook alongside a picture of myself and my mom:

Life begins at conception, and every unborn baby has a right

to live. I myself was conceived out of wedlock, so this is personal for me. I am thankful that my mom carried me to term and that I was allowed to live. If you are a woman who is pregnant, and you do not want to raise a child, have the baby and put it up for adoption. God has a plan for each life. Scripture says, 'We are fearfully and wonderfully made' (Ps. 139:14).

This week, I commend our president for nominating a judge to the Supreme Court who appears to be someone who will protect the right to life.

Judge Gorsuch will have big shoes to fill in replacing the late and revered Justice Antonin Scalia. As Jefferson so eloquently reminded us, the God who gave us life gave us liberty, so I pray Judge Gorsuch never forgets to value each and every American as our maker does.

To that end, should he be confirmed, I would urge Judge Gorsuch to speak up for the rights of all those who are oppressed and marginalized, including the lives of the unborn. May he and his colleagues also be faithful voices for the fundamental right to the free exercise of religion, as we have seen such privileges become threatened by judicial overreach. With the immense power bestowed upon the Supreme Court, may our judges ensure that America will remain a beacon of hope in a world where so many are robbed of the freedom and dignity they deserve.

First Liberty Institute President and CEO Kelly Shackelford

– As a candidate, President Trump promised to appoint pro-religious freedom judges to the Supreme Court. Today, he took a positive step toward achieving that goal.

As a religious freedom law firm, we have one criterion for evaluating judicial candidates. We ask, "Does this candidate have a proven record of upholding the Constitution, especially as it relates to religious freedom?" I am pleased to say that

Judge Gorsuch has just such a record, authoring or joining multiple landmark opinions upholding religious freedom.

America needs Supreme Court justices who will uphold the Constitution and defend the religious liberty of every American. I am hopeful that Judge Gorsuch will live up to President Trump's and the American people's expectations and strongly protect our constitutional freedoms.

American Center for Law and Justice Chief Counsel Jay Sekulow

– We're very encouraged by President Trump's nominee to fill the late Justice Antonin Scalia's seat on the Supreme Court. Judge Gorsuch is a remarkably qualified nominee with a conservative judicial philosophy and a commitment to uphold the rule of law and the Constitution. He is decidedly pro-life and understands what it means to protect the constitutional freedoms afforded to all Americans. The obstructionists who oppose every move by President Trump will likely challenge this nomination from the outset. That is unfortunate. The American people have spoken in this election. It's time to move forward and proceed without delay and confirm this nominee.

It is imperative that this nomination move forward without delay. President Trump campaigned on nominating a well-qualified, conservative jurist to replace the late Justice Scalia. He has fulfilled that promise. The Senate must do whatever is necessary—including a rules change if necessary—to permit action on this nominee. A filibuster is not acceptable.

Evangelicals in the political realm also weighed in:

U.S. Rep. Doug Collins (R-Ga.) – Judge Neil Gorsuch interprets the law with a thoughtful humility that our country needs now more than ever. I could not be more pleased to see a Supreme Court nominee who values life and who labors to uphold—rather than revise—the Constitution. Judge Gorsuch's protection of religious freedom and expression has been steadfast, and I

look forward to his confirmation as a Justice of the Supreme Court.

U.S. Rep. Jody Hice (R-Ga.) – Without question, Justice Antonin Scalia was an incomparable and irreplaceable legal scholar who inspired millions, including myself, with his steadfast defense of the Constitution. He adhered to the precepts of our Founding Fathers, possessed strong conservative values and exhibited an intellect and thoughtful analysis that is rarely seen today. With the selection of Neil Gorsuch, I am confident that he will be a jurist in the mold of Justice Scalia, and I look forward to the Senate's speedy confirmation of such a worthy candidate.

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee gave his enthusiastic support for Gorsuch. HuckPAC, his political action committee, set up a website—to help get the judge's nomination confirmed in the senate.

As for the Senate, a number of leading figures in the confirmation process weighed in with their overwhelming support, as well:

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) – The president made an outstanding decision in his nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to be an associate justice of the Supreme Court. He has an impressive background and a long record of faithfully applying the law and the Constitution. Judge Gorsuch understands the invaluable contribution to the federal judiciary and our democratic government made by the justice he is succeeding. Like Justice Scalia, he understands the constitutional limits on the authority of a federal judge and that the duty of a judge is to apply the law even-handedly, without fear or favor, and not to rule based on one's empathy with a party in a case.

When the Senate previously confirmed him to the appellate court, the bipartisan support in the Senate was so

overwhelming, a roll call vote was not even required. I hope members of the Senate will again show him fair consideration and respect the result of the recent election with an up-or-down vote on his nomination, just like the Senate treated the four first-term nominees of Presidents Clinton and Obama.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) – Judge Gorsuch is universally respected across the ideological spectrum as a mainstream judge who applies the law without regard to person or his own preferences. By all accounts, he has a record of deciding cases based on the text of the Constitution and the law. That's important because in our system of government, Congress, not judges, makes the laws. I look forward to continuing to review his qualifications and to hearing from Judge Gorsuch himself about his approach to the law.

Following the death of Justice Scalia, as Americans were beginning to cast their votes for the next president, I said that we'd move forward with the next president's nomination to the Supreme Court, regardless of who won. The president has made his selection and that's what we'll do.

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) – Last year, after the unexpected passing of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, Senate Republicans drew a line in the sand on the behalf of the American people. Exercising our constitutional authority, we advised President Obama that we would not consent to a Supreme Court nominee until we, the people, in the presidential election, were able to choose between an originalist and a progressive vision of the Constitution.

In November, the people spoke, clearly. They elected President Donald Trump, who had repeatedly promised to nominate a justice firmly committed to the following the law and the original understanding of the Constitution. Today, with the nomination of the Honorable Neil Gorsuch from the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, President Trump has fulfilled that

promise, and the rule of law will be all the better for it.

Like the renowned justice he is set to replace, Judge Gorsuch is brilliant and immensely talented. He has impeccable qualifications, having clerked at the Supreme Court, excelled in private practice, served at the highest levels of the Justice Department and garnered a stellar reputation over the past decade as an appellate judge. More importantly, though, he also mirrors Justice Scalia in that he has a proven track record of honoring the Constitution, following the text of the law and refraining from imposing his policy preferences from the bench. As a result of his fidelity to law, he has proven to be a champion of federalism, the constitutional separation of powers, religious liberty and all of the fundamental liberties enshrined in our Bill of Rights. I couldn't be happier with his selection.

Indeed, I wholeheartedly applaud President Trump for nominating Judge Gorsuch. Our country desperately needs Supreme Court justices who revere the Constitution and are willing to elevate it over their own personal preferences, and Judge Gorsuch has demonstrated that faithfulness. Eleven years ago, the Senate was so confident in Judge Gorsuch's abilities that it confirmed him by voice vote. In the time since, he has shown himself worthy of that distinction, and I would hope that my Senate colleagues give him the respect he deserves this time around as well and support his confirmation.

U.S. Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) – Judge Gorsuch is a tremendous pick for the Supreme Court, and I look forward to doing everything I can to make sure he is confirmed by the Senate.

I've had the privilege of arguing before Judge Gorsuch, and he is extremely impressive. He is a prepared, thoughtful and careful jurist, who has demonstrated a strong commitment to textualism and originalism. His opinions are well-reasoned and brilliantly written, and he has enriched the Tenth Circuit's jurisprudence in a number of areas during his ten years on the

court. He is a judge's judge, who is well within the mainstream and always decides cases based on what the law says. He also always treats the parties appearing before him with dignity and respect.

Throughout 2016, I said the next President should pick the next Supreme Court justice. This vacancy was a central issue during the 2016 campaign, and the people have spoken by electing President Trump and returning a Republican Senate majority. I applaud the President for his excellent choice, and I look forward to enthusiastically working toward Judge Gorsuch's confirmation.

U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) – I congratulate President Trump for nominating a conservative jurist with outstanding credentials and experience to the Supreme Court. Judge Gorsuch is a worthy successor to Justice Scalia, a committed originalist and a strong defender of religious liberty and states' rights. I look forward to working with my colleagues for a speedy confirmation and to having another justice who will defend the constitution. {eo}