

Full Strength: Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch Takes His Ceremonial Oath of Office in the Rose Garden

In a ceremony held Monday morning in the Rose Garden at the White House, Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch was sworn in as the 113th member of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Prior to the ceremony, at which the rest of the Supreme Court's members were assembled, President Donald Trump made the following statement:

Friends and distinguished guests, welcome to the White House. We are gathered here today for a truly momentous occasion in our democracy—the swearing-in of a United States Supreme Court justice. In particular, I'm greatly honored to welcome to these grounds every sitting justice of the United States Supreme Court. Welcome!

Mr. Chief Justice, and fellow justices, it's a privilege to have you here, to join in this historic moment on this very beautiful spring day in the Rose Garden. Spring is really the perfect backdrop for this joyful gathering of friends, because, together, we are in a process of reviewing and renewing, and also rebuilding, our country. A new optimism is sweeping across our land, and a new faith in America is filling our hearts and lifting our sights ...

We are here to celebrate history—the taking of the judicial oath by the newest member of the United States Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch. Justice Gorsuch, I just want to congratulate you and your entire family. It's something so special. In fact, I've always heard that the most important thing that a president of the United States does is appoint

people—hopefully great people like this appointment—to the United States Supreme Court. And I can say this is a great honor. And I got it done in the first 100 days—that’s even nice. You think that’s easy?

This ceremony has special meaning as Justice Gorsuch is filling the seat of one of the greatest Supreme Court judges in American history, and that’s Antonin Scalia, who is a terrific—was a terrific judge and a terrific person. Justice Scalia was a patriot who revered our Constitution. He was beloved by many, very many, who are here today, and he is deeply missed by all of us.

I want to at this time recognize his incredible wife, Maureen, who I got to know very well over the last short period of time. And, Maureen, please stand up. Thank you very much. Thank you and your family. Thank you. Thank you, Maureen.

Americans are blessed to have in Neil Gorsuch a man who will, likewise, be a devoted servant of the law. Over the past two months, the American people have gotten to know, respect and truly admire our newest member of the United States Supreme Court. In Justice Gorsuch, they see a man of great and unquestioned integrity. They see a man of unmatched qualifications. And most of all, and most importantly, they see a man who is deeply faithful to the Constitution of the United States. He will decide cases based not on his personal preferences, but based on a fair and objective reading of the law.

Today, we have all three branches of government represented at this event. It is a very special thing—and a very special happening. And it’s worth taking just a minute to remember what it all means.

In our founders’ incredible wisdom, they gave each branch of government a different role in our great republic. We have a

Congress to write the laws on behalf of the people. We have a president to enforce those laws and defend our nation. And we have a Supreme Court to apply and interpret the law, in a fair and impartial manner, when disagreements arise. The founders separated power because they knew it was the best way to protect our citizens and keep our Constitution secure.

Justice Gorsuch, you are now entrusted with the sacred duty of defending our Constitution. Our country is counting on you to be wise, impartial and fair—to serve under our laws, not over them and to safeguard the right of the people to govern their own affairs. I have no doubt you will rise to the occasion and that the decisions you will make will not only protect our Constitution today, but for many generations of Americans to come.

In just a moment, Justice Gorsuch will be sworn in by Justice Kennedy, a great man of outstanding accomplishment. Throughout his nearly 30 years on the Supreme Court, Justice Kennedy has been praised by all for his dedicated and dignified service. We owe him an enormous debt of gratitude, and I am honored that he is with us today.

This is a very, very special moment, because many years ago a young Neil Gorsuch started his legal career as a law clerk to Justice Kennedy. You remember that, right? It is a fitting testament to Justice Kennedy's impact that, upon giving the oath to Justice Gorsuch, he will become the first ever Supreme Court justice to serve with one of his former law clerks. It's sort of a big deal, isn't it? Sort of like that. That's sort of good. It has never happened before. That's pretty good. Also shows you have a lot of respect for this man. Very good.

We're thrilled to share this historic moment with Justice Kennedy, with all of you here today, and with all Americans watching us at home.

Justice Gorsuch, I again congratulate you and your entire family, and I wish God's blessings on your amazing journey ahead. I have no doubt you will go down as one of the truly great justices in the history of the United States Supreme Court.

Kennedy spoke briefly prior to administering the oath of office to his former law clerk about the two different oaths a justice must take. The first is the constitutional oath that is administered to officials of all three branches of government, while the second—the judicial oath—applies only to federal judges.

"Both of the oaths date from the founding of the republic; the judicial oath dates from 1789," he said. "And both of these oaths remind us that we as a people are bound together, we as a people find our self-definition, our respect, our heritage, and our destiny in the Constitution."

Gorsuch took the first oath earlier in the morning in the Supreme Court chamber. He immediately took the second upon the completion of Kennedy's comments, and afterward, he shared his own thoughts about the historic moment:

I see before me so many to whom I owe so much. I know I would not be here today without your friendship and support. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

I want to thank the president for nominating me and for the great confidence and trust he's reposed in me. I want to thank the vice president for his constant encouragement and friendship throughout this process.

It's not possible to mention here everyone I should mention, but I'd be remiss if I didn't thank the president's counsel, Don McGahn, and Mark Paoletta, the Vice President's counsel, and every single person in the White House Counsel's Office for their tremendous and tireless support.

I want thank Kelly Ayotte and my day-to-day team for their humor, for their sage advice, for their faith, as we spent months and so many miles trooping together through the Senate complex. I want to thank every single person—and there are so many—in the White House and the Department of Justice who worked through so many late nights and long weeks on my behalf.

I want to thank, too, Senator McConnell and Senator Grassley and their excellent teams for their support and leadership. And I must thank my former law clerks and my dear friends who gave so much of themselves so selflessly through these last three months. You are dear to me. This is truly your doing, and this is your day.

I wish I could mention each of you by name, but you know who you are and you know your names are etched in my heart forever.

This process has reminded me just how outrageously blessed I am in my law clerks, and my family and my friends. And I hope that I may continue to rely on each of you as I face this new challenge.

To my former colleagues and the wonderful staff of the 10th Circuit, I thank you for your faithful service and your friendship over so many years. To my new, the very warm welcome. I look forward to many happy years together.

And I cannot tell you how honored I am to have here today my mentor, Justice Kennedy, administer the judicial oath, a beautiful oath, as he did for me 11 years ago when I became a circuit judge.

To the Scalia family, I won't ever forget that the seat I inherit today is that of a very, very great man. To my wife, Louise, and my daughters, Emma and Bindi, thank you for your perseverance and your patience, your courage and your love. I simply could not have attempted this without you.

And to the American people, I am humbled by the trust placed in me today. I will never forget that to whom much is given, much will be expected. And I promise you that I will do all my powers permit to be a faithful servant of the Constitution and laws of this great nation.

See the entire ceremony in the video above.

A number of conservative and Christian legal groups are celebrating Justice Gorsuch's arrival on the Supreme Court. Here is a summary of some of those reactions:

- **Heritage Foundation President Jim DeMint**—"Justice Gorsuch embodies what a good judge should be: He's impartial, applies the law fairly and is an ardent supporter of the written Constitution. This isn't just a monumental win for the conservative movement, this is a monumental win for the American people."
- **Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton**—"Justice Gorsuch's confirmation is a great victory for constitutional government. We expect that Justice Gorsuch will continue Justice Scalia's legacy and become a leading voice against politicized decision-making on the Supreme Court. It is shameful that the left blew up the confirmation process in the U.S. Senate in order to protect their efforts to legislate through the courts. The good news is that it may be easier to confirm Supreme Court justices who will apply the U.S. Constitution as written and intended by our Founding Fathers."
- **ACLJ Chief Counsel Jay Sekulow**—"Justice Gorsuch exemplifies everything a good judge should be, realizing it's his job not to be a legislator, but to take the cases and controversies as he finds them and apply the Constitution and the law to them. Today the Constitution won. The rule of law won. And the American people won. As we have numerous cases before the Supreme Court on issues of life and liberty, we look forward to appearing

before Justice Gorsuch.”

- **First Liberty Institute President and CEO Kelly Shackelford**—“President Trump promised to appoint pro-religious freedom judges to the Supreme Court, and today, he delivered. Our legal team analyzed many of Justice Gorsuch’s opinions and found him to be a champion of judicial independence, fairness and strong adherence to the rule of law. That is exactly the kind of justice we should all desire to have on our Supreme Court. America needs Supreme Court justices who will uphold the Constitution and defend our freedoms, especially religious freedom. Justice Gorsuch is just such a man. I congratulate him on his confirmation and look forward to seeing him continue to safeguard our freedoms for years to come.”

Hans A. von Spakovsky has written about the immediate impact Gorsuch’s arrival at the high court will usher in. Writing for FOX News and the Heritage Foundation, he stated, in part:

Once he is sworn in, Justice Gorsuch will arrive at the court just in time to hear the April 19 oral arguments in *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Pauley*. It is a case of stark, blatant religious discrimination by the government ...

Gorsuch may also make a difference in the court’s decisions about which of the pending petitions it will accept for appeal. Each term, the court accepts only a little over 70 of the roughly 7,000 petitions it receives. It will be helpful, therefore, to have another justice who understands the importance of constitutional issues and will vote to accept the most important cases for review ...

Justice Gorsuch may also make a difference on petitions to come—such as the emergency appeals of the numerous injunctions issued against President Donald Trump’s executive order temporarily suspending travel from terrorist safe-havens.

As five dissenting judges from the Ninth Circuit pointed out, those decisions confound Supreme Court precedent and the constitutional and federal statutory provisions that authorize the president's actions.

Neil Gorsuch should be the fifth vote needed to quash this judicial activism that interferes with the president's authority as commander-in-chief to protect the nation.

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