

GOP Supreme Court Candidate Makes Shocking Statement

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, a moderate Republican, had been closely linked to the current vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court.

The former federal judge who first took office as the Silver State's chief executive in 2011, was seen as pro-Second Amendment, but much softer on social issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage. Republicans and Democrats alike expressed concern over his potential nomination.

Sandoval put that to rest Thursday afternoon with a brief statement:

"Earlier today, I notified the White House that I do not wish to be considered at this time for possible nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States," he said. "The notion of being considered for a seat on the highest court in the land is beyond humbling and I am incredibly grateful to have been mentioned."

The White House simply said the governor was free to make his own career choices in response to media inquiries about the statement. President Obama is scheduled to meet with Senate leadership and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee to discuss a possible nomination next Tuesday.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) have repeatedly said there won't be any hearings on a replacement for the late Associate Justice Antonin Scalia until after the next president is sworn in on Jan. 20, 2017.