

Mitch McConnell: Republicans Remain Resolute

Monday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) was a guest on the *Hugh Hewitt Show* and was asked about Republican resolve against confirming President Obama's Supreme Court nominee, Judge Merrick Garland.

"There are breathless reports nearly every day of cracks in the wall against the Supreme Court nomination of Merrick Garland," the host said. "Do you see any cracks in that wall?"

McConnell said he didn't see any "cracks," but did note a couple Republicans "from Blue states" had a different view on how to approach the president's nominee. He said 52 Republicans remain committed and comfortable with "no hearings, no votes."

"You'd have to go back 80 years to find the last time a vacancy on the Supreme Court occurred in the middle of a presidential year and was confirmed by the Senate. You'd have to go all the way back to 1888 with Grover Cleveland, a Democrat in the White House, to find the last time a Senate of the opposite party confirmed a nominee to a vacancy on the Supreme Court occurring in a presidential year.

"If that were not enough, Hugh, as I'm sure you've talked on your show repeatedly, Joe Biden when he was chairman of the Judiciary Committee in 1992, a presidential election year, said if a vacancy occurred, they wouldn't fill it. Harry Reid said 10 years ago that the Constitution didn't require the Senate to even have a vote. And Chuck Schumer, the next Democrat leader, apparently, helpfully said in terms of this particular issue, 18 months before the end of [George W. Bush]'s second term that had a vacancy occurred, they wouldn't fill it.

“So look, we know if the shoe was on the other foot, this was a Republican president nominating someone to the Supreme Court for a vacancy occurring in a presidential year, a Democratic Senate wouldn’t act on it. And we’re not going to, either.”

Hewitt asked McConnell how certain he was that there would be no hearings and no votes on Garland’s nomination. The majority leader said he was absolutely certain. He then heaped praise on Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), who he said has been “the Rock of Gibraltar” on the issue.

“You know, they’re out there running ads and have paid people to show up at Chairman Grassley’s town hall meetings to try to harass him,” he said. “I think the American people understand that they ought to weigh in. We’re right in the middle of a presidential election. And we ought to hear from them as to who they want the next president to be before we fill this vacancy, not Barack Obama on the way out the door, the lamest of lame ducks, basically tipping the balance on the Supreme Court to the left for who knows how long, maybe the next quarter of a century.”

Grassley also made headlines Tuesday morning, acknowledging he had a telephone conversation Monday night with Garland. The senator’s spokeswoman issued a brief statement that said Grassley had invited the judge to breakfast “where they could discuss the nomination and why the Senate will not consider a nominee until the next President takes office.”

The date and time of that breakfast has yet to be determined.