

Senate Judiciary Chair: Trump's Supreme Court List 'an Important Step'

As the pundits begin to weigh in on presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's "short list" of potential Supreme Court nominees, there's one senator's opinion many were waiting to hear.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) has been taking the brunt of the criticism leveled against Republicans who have so far successfully blocked President Obama's nominee to replace the late Associate Justice Antonin Scalia. And according to a statement released by his spokeswoman, Beth Levine, on Wednesday evening, he seems to think a potential President Trump nominee would be worth the wait.

"Mr. Trump has laid out an impressive list of highly qualified jurists ... who understand and respect the fundamental principle that the role of the courts is limited and subject to the Constitution and the rule of law," he said. "Understanding the types of judges a presidential nominee would select for the Supreme Court is an important step in this debate so the American people can have a voice in the direction of the Supreme Court for the next generation."

Although Trump would not be bound to the list, there would be considerable fallout politically if he backed away from it later. While their resumes are now being thoroughly scrutinized, other court observers have begun to weigh in, agreeing with Grassley.

"It is also heartening to see so many Midwesterners and state court judges on the list," Judicial Crisis Network Carrie Severino, a former clerk to Associate Justice Clarence Thomas,

said. "They would bring a valuable perspective to the bench, particularly since they have already served on a court of last resort in their own states."

Still others, while impressed with those on the list, still need to be convinced that Trump will actually follow through.

"It's a good list of some of the outstanding judges who give ample sign of being faithful to the Constitution," said Ed Whelan, a conservative legal commentator and former law clerk to Scalia. "Whether a President Trump could actually be counted on to pick folks like this is a different question."