

Vice President Pence Discusses Supreme Court Nomination at Federalist Society

Vice President Mike Pence appeared over the weekend at an event hosted by The Federalist Society, and took the occasion to discuss President Donald Trump's nomination of 10th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Neil Gorsuch to succeed the late Associate Justice Antonin Scalia on the U.S. Supreme Court.

During the speech, held in Congress Hall in Philadelphia, the vice president thanked the Federalist Society members for their support during last year's presidential campaign. He also conveyed the president's support for the organization's work before moving on to discuss the Gorsuch appointment.

Here is the portion of Pence's speech related to the Supreme Court nominee:

My friends, I can say with the utmost confidence: Judge Gorsuch is a worthy successor to Justice Antonin Scalia.

By the grace of God, and with what I know will be the tireless efforts of everyone in this room, I believe Neil Gorsuch soon take his seat as an associate justice on the Supreme Court of the United States.

When you get right down to it, Judge Gorsuch plain and simple is one of the most mainstream, respected and exceptionally qualified Supreme Court nominees in American history.

But don't take my word for it. That actually was the conclusion of the American Bar Association in 2006. After

President George W. Bush nominated him to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, the ABA gave him a unanimous rating of “well-qualified”—which is the highest possible recommendation.

And the United States Senate agreed. Only two months after Neil Gorsuch’s nomination to the court of appeals, the Senate confirmed him by a unanimous voice vote, and nearly a third of those senators, on both sides of the aisle, are still serving in the Senate today. A unanimous vote. As President Trump asked on Tuesday, “can you believe that?”

Oh, yes, you can, when you look at Judge Gorsuch’s record ever since. In his decade on the 10th Circuit, he has established himself as a fair and impartial judge who has been faithful to the Constitution. He is well-known by his peers as a keen legal thinker and, just as important, a clear legal writer. It’s evident to all that he’s a man also of high character and courage—indispensable qualities for a jurist.

Over the past few days it’s been amazing to see the outpouring of support from those who know Judge Gorsuch and his work. Ed Whelan from the Ethics and Public Policy Center and a former clerk to Justice Scalia declared him a “dedicated originalist and textualist” who “writes with clarity, force and verve.”

The Wall Street Journal praised him as a “distinguished choice who will adhere to the original meaning of the Constitution.”

And Leonard Leo, who of course is here, called him an “exceptional jurist.”

By the way, Leonard, let me say again how much I and the President appreciate your tireless work on behalf of our country and the Constitution. We are grateful for all you have done.

Now, I should also note that Judge Gorsuch is so well-liked that even those who disagree with him sing his praises.

Norm Eisen, President Obama's former ethics czar, simply said Judge Gorsuch is "a great guy."

And Neal Katyal, the acting solicitor general under President Obama, endorsed Judge Gorsuch in the strongest possible terms. He called him "an extraordinary judge" who will "help restore confidence in the rule of law."

That's what this is really all about, isn't it? Our constitutional order requires the rule of law, without exception. We are, after all, a nation of laws.

Judge Gorsuch firmly understands this. He has said on many occasions that judges must apply the law as written, without regard to their own politics or personal feelings.

He put it well on Tuesday and movingly, saying "in our legal order it's for Congress and not the courts to write new laws." He added, "It is the role of judges to apply, not alter, the work of the people's representatives." And my favorite line sitting as I was on the front row was this one—he said: "A judge who likes every outcome he reaches is very likely a bad judge, stretching for results he prefers rather than those the law demands."

I don't know about you, but that's my kind of Supreme Court justice.

But it's not just his words. Judge Gorsuch's record on the bench clearly demonstrates his fidelity to the wisdom of the Founders rather than the whims of our own day and age.

He has written more than 200 published opinions in his decade on the 10th Circuit. And if you read them all, and some have, which the President's team I promise you did, an unmistakable picture emerges: He is an originalist and a

textualist who will pick up right where Justice Scalia left off.

Judge Gorsuch has such a long history of upholding the separation of powers and the checks and balances between the three branches. He also defends the Constitution's unique system of federalism, and he restricts the national government to the specific and enumerated powers enshrined in the Constitution, while leaving to the states much more sizeable control over their lives and destinies.

These carefully calibrated mechanisms, so wisely designed by our Founding Fathers, are a strong foundation for the protection of the American people's fundamental liberties. By defending them, Judge Gorsuch has shown himself to be a true friend of our freedoms.

It should be abundantly clear that Judge Neil Gorsuch is indeed a worthy successor to Justice Antonin Scalia. He is cut from the same cloth. Our Constitution and our country will be stronger with him on the Supreme Court.

But we're not there yet, which is why I'm here. First, of course, we must abide by the Constitution and secure the "advice and consent of the Senate."

The morning after his nomination, I had the privilege of escorting Judge Gorsuch to Capitol Hill for the first time. I'm pleased to report in just a few short days he has already met with 12 senators in both political parties. And he making himself available to meet with all 100 members of the Senate—if they're willing to meet with him.

Of course, several announced their opposition within minutes of his nomination. And now they're even threatening to filibuster procedure in the Senate to stop him. Make no mistake about it, this would be an unwise and an unprecedented act.

Never before in the history of our country has an associate justice nominee to the Supreme Court faced a successful filibuster, and Judge Neil M. Gorsuch should not be the first.

Now let me tell you, President Trump and I have full confidence that Judge Gorsuch will be confirmed. But rest assured, we will work with the Senate leadership to ensure that Judge Gorsuch gets an up or down vote on the Senate floor—one way or the other.

This seat does not belong to any party, or any ideology, or any interest group. This seat on the Supreme Court belongs to the American people, and the American people deserve a vote on the floor of the United States Senate.

My friends, this is a historic time for our country. We are on the verge literally of reaffirming the supremacy of the Constitution on our nation's Supreme Court. We are giving a new voice to the age-old vision of our Founding Fathers. We are rededicating ourselves and our country to the timeless principles that they proclaimed only a few steps away from right where we're standing today.