

## **Senate Republicans Refuse to Do Their Job, Consider Supreme Court Nominee Judge Garland**

*Last week, President Obama nominated Judge Merrick Garland to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court. Despite being well-qualified and highly regarded within the legal community, Senate Republicans have refused to hold a confirmation hearing or an up-or-down vote on Judge Garland. In fact, they won't even meet with him. President Obama has a constitutional duty to nominate a Supreme Court justice, but rather than do their job, Senate Republicans are playing partisan games.*

*Republican leaders in both the House and Senate have made clear that their obstruction is all about politics:*

“[Senate Majority Leader Mitch] McConnell said Wednesday that the **‘the decision the Senate made weeks ago remains about a principle, not a person.’**” [NPR, [3/16/16](#)]

“**‘It isn’t about the person, it’s about the process, it’s about the principle,’** [Sen. Chuck] Grassley told reporters after the Garland nomination.” [Washington Post, [3/16/16](#)]

“Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) stood by McConnell's decision. **‘This has never been about who the nominee is. It is about a basic principle.’**” [The Hill, [3/16/16](#)]

*Judge Garland is an accomplished prosecutor and judge, and received a strong bipartisan vote of 76-23 when he was confirmed to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. Seven current Republican Senators voted to confirm him, including Senator Orrin Hatch.*

“Merrick B. Garland is highly qualified to sit on the D.C. circuit... His intelligence and his scholarship cannot be questioned... His legal experience is equally impressive... Accordingly, I believe Mr. Garland is a fine nominee. I know him personally, I know of his integrity, I know of his legal ability, I know of his honesty, I know of his acumen, and he belongs on the court... I fully support his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to strongly consider voting in favor of confirmation.” [Sen. Orrin Hatch, [3/19/97](#)]

*Even Senators who opposed his nomination on the grounds that they thought it unnecessary to fill another seat on the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals thought highly of Judge Garland and his ability to fulfill the duties required of him.*

“**I have nothing against the nominee.** Mr. Garland seems to be well qualified and would probably make a good judge—in some other court.” [Sen. Chuck Grassley, [3/19/97](#)]

“There will be a number of judgeship vacancies in the D.C. trial judges. He has been a trial lawyer. He would be a good person to fill one of those. **I would feel comfortable supporting him for another judgeship.**” [Sen. Jeff Sessions, [3/19/97](#)]

*But while Senator McConnell refuses to consider Judge Garland, not all of his Republican colleagues are on board. Some Senate Republicans have publically said that hearings should be held on Judge Garland's confirmation, regardless of how they feel about him as a nominee.*

**“I believe that we should follow the regular order in considering this nominee. The Constitution's very clear that the president has every right to make this nomination, and then the Senate can either consent or withhold its consent.”** [Sen. Susan Collins, [3/16/16](#)]

*And more than 55 newspaper editorial boards across the nation have called on the Senate to at least consider Judge Garland.*

**“Judge Merrick Garland deserves, as any reasonable nominee deserves, a full hearing and a vote. For the Republicans who control the Senate to do less is to shame themselves and the institution they represent.** It is to neglect their duty, insult their president, and weaken this democracy's faith in justice. **It would ultimately weaken the very rule of law.”** [Dallas Morning News Editorial, [3/16/16](#)]

**“President Barack Obama has acted in the spirit of compromise with his choice of Merrick B. Garland for the U.S. Supreme Court.** Senate Republicans will expose themselves as naked obstructionists if they refuse to follow suit and hold hearings.” [Kansas City Star Editorial, [3/16/16](#)]

**“President Obama appears to have made a wise choice in nominating Merrick Garland, a respected judge and former prosecutor,** to the U.S. Supreme Court. **Showing far less wisdom are Republican Senate leaders refusing to consider his nomination.”** [Seattle Times Editorial, [3/16/16](#)]

**“In short, [Judge Merrick has] had an extraordinarily distinguished legal career, tailor-made for a seat on the nation's highest judicial tribunal.** Unfortunately, a great record and all the qualifications in the world are no match for partisan politics amid the volcanic election cycle of 2016.” [Miami Herald Editorial, [3/16/16](#)]

**“The stubborn refusal of Senate Republicans to consider any Supreme Court nominee offered by President Obama would be outrageous, regardless of whom the president selected to succeed Justice Antonin Scalia. But Obama's announcement Wednesday that he will nominate Merrick Garland, a moderate federal appeals court judge who has won bipartisan praise during a long and distinguished legal career, puts the Republicans' irresponsibility and cheap partisanship in even starker relief.”** [Los Angeles Times Editorial, [3/16/16](#)]

*Congressional Democrats will continue to urge Senate Republicans to do their job and give Judge Garland fair consideration.*