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## Reaction to Souter retiring, nominee selection

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The Associated Press= Some reaction to Supreme Court Justice David Souter's plans to retire and the upcoming selection of a nominee to the court:

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"He consistently defied labels and rejected absolutes, focusing instead on just one task: reaching a just result in the case that was before him. ... The process of selecting someone to replace Justice Souter is among my most serious responsibilities as president, so I will seek somebody with a sharp and independent mind and a record of excellence and integrity." â President Barack Obama.

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"(Obama) should not use this as an opportunity to impose his liberal legacy on America or give political payback to the far left of his party by nominating someone who makes judicial decisions through an ideological rather than legal lens. Republicans will reserve judgment until the president makes an appointment." â Michael Steele, chairman of the Republican National Committee.

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"I think that, given the proportion of women in our society, that one out of nine is underrepresented. ... The court could use some diversity along a number of lines."â Sen. Arlen Specter, D-Pa.

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"(Souter's) just sort of an utterly genuine person who doesn't take himself too seriously and never got seduced by the idea of holding onto power and exerting power."â Duke University law professor Stuart Benjamin, who clerked for Souter between 1995 and 1996.

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"He's talked to me about this. He expects to go on senior status at the First Circuit, but not to work very full-time, and he's looking forward to finally having a life and catching up." â Rev. John McCausland, an Episcopal minister and longtime friend of Souter.

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"Once there is a nominee, I will work to ensure that their record is thoroughly reviewed and that there is a full and fair debate." â Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

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"Obama's own record and rhetoric make clear that he will seek left-wing judicial activists who will indulge their passions, not justices who will make their rulings with dispassion." â Ed Whelan, president of the conservative Ethics and Public Policy

Center.

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"We're looking for President Obama to choose an eminently qualified candidate who is committed to the core constitutional values, who is committed to justice for all and not just a few." â Nan Aron, president of the liberal Alliance for Justice.

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"Given the number of highly qualified women â both on and off the bench â this appointment should be a woman. We have clearly moved past the days when one woman on the highest court in the land is sufficient." â Marcia Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center.

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"There are many exemplary Latino jurists and legal scholars who are exceptionally qualified to serve on the Supreme Court, and we urge the president to appoint one of them to replace Justice Souter." â National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials.

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"If Obama nominates someone in line with his campaign promises, senators who want to protect the Constitution will have no choice but to oppose his nominee."â Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch, a conservative watchdog group.

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"Without a doubt, opponents of women's freedom and privacy will use a vacancy on the court as an opportunity to further their attacks on nominees who have taken pro-choice positions. America's pro-choice majority will fight back." â Nancy Keenan, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America.

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"In terms of the nomination battle: Don't expect the wild Senate fisticuffs many observers are predicting quite yet. Obama will have other judicial picks to make. Look for him to play this first one relatively safe, and for Republicans to keep their powder dry for future nominations." â Ilya Shapiro, senior fellow in constitutional studies at the libertarian Cato Institute.

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