



## Obama pushes for Merrick Garland's nomination at University of Chicago

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President Obama is growing increasingly frustrated with Senate Republicans' refusal to hold a hearing for Merrick Garland, his pick for the Supreme Court following the sudden death of Justice Antonin Scalia.

President Barack Obama responded on Thursday to concerns that by selecting "a white guy" for the Supreme Court, he was renegeing on his promise to promote diversity with his judicial nominees.

"Senator Kirk Was The First Republican Senator To Meet With Judge Garland".

"If it becomes apparent somewhere down the line that the next president might be a Democrat, they may want to think about the kind of nominee that he or she might send to us, as compared to this nominee", Carper said. "In short, the justices themselves have gotten political", Grassley said, before referencing chief justice John Roberts - who cast the deciding vote in 2012 to uphold Obama's healthcare law - although not by name.

Leaders of the Republican-controlled Senate, including Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, have adamantly said the Senate will not hold any hearings or a confirmation vote on Garland's nomination.

Roger Pilon, vice president for legal affairs for the Cato Institute, a libertarian research group, said the fact that Obama's opposition did not come in an election year, like this one, makes the actions worse. Those same efforts are now being directed at Judge Garland, a highly regarded appellate jurist who has been praised by Republicans for his fair-minded approach and his commitment to the rule of law. "And the courts will be just an extension of our legislatures, and our elections, and our politics".

And that, Obama said, would destroy the independence and integrity of the judicial branch.

Senate Republicans said they will not budge from their position, with McConnell calling Obama's assertion the Constitution requires the Senate to consider any nominee a "politically convenient fairy tale".

Republicans have increasingly come to Grassley's defense as Democrats have tried to pressure him into caving and giving Garland a hearing. Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Sen.

Most Republican senators have backed McConnell's stance. Garland will meet with other Republicans next week, including Sens.

The White House wants to take the debate out of **Washington**. And South Carolina Sen. In Graham's instance, his office said Graham stands with the rest of the GOP in opposing a nomination process, but he still met with the nominee as a "courtesy". Kirk tweeted that he met with the judge "because my responsibility to the people of (hashtag)IL is more important than partisanship".

In the note to Kirk, Obama said: "Thank you for your fair and responsible treatment of Merrick Garland".

Obama defended the diversity of his federal appointments during a conversation in Chicago, Illinois, about nominating Garland.

"Well, he's from Skokie, (Illinois)", Obama joked.

Obama's warning upped the ante in a high-stakes battle for the future of the narrowly divided court, arguing that the current fight to replace conservative Justice Antonin Scalia could turn into gridlock that "would be a disaster for the courts". And the Supreme Court needs all of its justices - at the very least to avoid 4-4 ties in key decisions.

But Obama is hammering home the point that it's really the other way around.

President Barack Obama jokes with his daughter Malia Obama as they walk to board Air Force One from the Marine One helicopter Thursday, April 7, 2016, as they leave Chicago en route to Los Angeles.