



Trump's high court list offers encouraging sign

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Because of Donald Trump's inconsistent stances on several major issues, it's believed a substantial number of conservative voters may sit this election out, viewing Trump as only marginally better than Hillary Clinton.

Trump's release of a list of potential nominees to replace recently deceased U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia may give those conservatives cause to reconsider.

The 11 potential U.S. Supreme Court candidates Trump provided last week included six federal appeals court judges appointed by former President George W. Bush and five state Supreme Court justices.

The response from serious conservatives was overwhelmingly positive.

Writing at National Review Online, John Yoo, a law professor at the University of California at Berkeley and a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, said, "Everyone on the list is an outstanding legal conservative. All are young, smart, and committed. They would excel in any comparison with anyone whom Hillary Clinton would appoint to the Supreme Court."

The headline on the blog of the libertarian Cato Institute declared it a "Terrific List of Fabulous Judges." Ilya Shapiro, senior fellow in constitutional studies at Cato and editor in chief of the Cato Supreme Court Review, declared that of Trump's list of potential nominees "those whose jurisprudence I know well are excellent and the others have sterling reputations. These are not squishes or lightweights."

The Wall Street Journal editorialized that Trump's list "includes some of the more solid constitutional originalists in the country ..." The Susan B. Anthony List, an anti-abortion group, said Trump's list was "exceptionally strong."

In a TV appearance, conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer said Trump's list could have a "dramatic effect."

"The one thing holding back people from resisting Trump — or at least the major thing — is the fear of what a Clinton presidency would do to the Supreme Court, and how it would change it for a generation," Krauthammer said. He called the list of potential nominees "quite sterling."

You can judge a man by his enemies as much as his friends. By that measure, Trump's list also succeeded.

The Clinton campaign released a letter criticizing the judges and used the word "terrifying" to describe the idea of some of those appointments. The abortion-rights group NARAL Pro-Choice America called the judges a "nightmare."

White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters, “I would be surprised if there are any Democrats who would describe any of those 11 individuals as a consensus nominee.”

Yet one of the judges on Trump's list, Bill Pryor, a Bush appointee who serves on the 11th Circuit, was also appointed by President Barack Obama to serve on the U.S. Sentencing Commission. That fact undermines the over-the-top attacks coming from the political left without undermining Pryor's standing with conservatives.

In short, Trump's list should have strong appeal to conservative voters concerned about the Supreme Court's potential impact on the nation, even if those voters are otherwise lukewarm to Trump.

Of course, the caveat is that Trump's position on any given issue always appears subject to change, so some question whether he ultimately would nominate one of these proposed candidates or someone of similar caliber.

Nonetheless, while there may be reason to question Trump's commitment to conservative stances on taxes, trade, social issues, private property and the minimum wage, his list of potential justices still gives serious conservatives one solid reason to support his candidacy.