

POLITICO

Sotomayor starts taking hits from right

By: [Alexander Burns](#)
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President Barack Obama's first Supreme Court nominee, Second District Appeals Court Judge Sonia Sotomayor, began taking hits from the right as her nomination was announced Tuesday morning, with top conservatives describing her as a hardline liberal who would impose her personal agenda on the Court.

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee called Sotomayor's appointment "the clearest indication yet that President Obama's campaign promises to be a centrist and think in a bipartisan way were mere rhetoric."

"Sotomayor comes from the far left," Huckabee said in a statement. "The notion that appellate court decisions are to be interpreted by the 'feelings' of the judge is a direct affront of the basic premise of our judicial system that is supposed to apply the law without personal emotion. If she is confirmed, then we need to take the blindfold off Lady Justice.

Charmaine Yoest, the president of Americans United for Life, blasted Sotomayor as "a radical pick that divides America."

"She believes the role of the Court is to set policy, which is exactly the philosophy that led to the Supreme Court turning into the National Abortion Control Board," Yoest said. "This appointment would provide a pedestal for an avowed judicial activist to impose her personal policy and beliefs onto others from the bench at a time when the Courts are at a crossroads."

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The Judicial Confirmation Network circulated a memo from its counsel, Wendy Long, calling Sotomayor a "favorite of far-left special interest groups" who will "indulge ... left-wing policy preferences instead of neutrally applying the law."

"Sotomayor readily admits that she applies her feelings and personal politics when deciding cases," Long charged, citing as evidence Sotomayor's ruling in *Ricci v. DeStefano*, a Connecticut-based case about racial preferences, and a 2002 speech the judge delivered at Berkeley.

Writing in POLITICO's Arena, Roger Pilon, the vice president for legal affairs at the Cato Institute, echoed Long's assessment and pointed to the same case – *Ricci* – as an example of judicial activism.

"President Obama chose the most radical of all the frequently mentioned candidates before him," Pilon said. "Given the way she recently all but dismissed the *Ricci* case ... and the expectation, based on oral argument, that the Supreme Court will reverse the Second Circuit decision, there will likely be an extremely contentious confirmation battle ahead."

Some Republican officeholders were more tentative in their reactions, vowing to apply rigorous scrutiny to Sotomayor's record.

"Senate Republicans will treat Judge Sotomayor fairly," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said in a statement. "But we will thoroughly examine her record to ensure she understands that the role of a jurist in our democracy is to apply the law even-handedly, despite their own feelings or personal or political preferences."

Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele released a restrained statement, declaring: "Republicans will reserve judgment on Sonia Sotomayor until there has been a thorough and thoughtful examination of her legal views."

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