

One Wisconsin Now: Going nuclear to confirm right wing Supreme Court nominee destructive to Senate, courts and rights of all Americans

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Senate Republicans Poised to Change Longstanding Rules of U.S. Senate to Place Trump Nominated Judge in Stolen U.S. Supreme Court Seat

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin attorneys and activists today spoke out in opposition to right wing judge Neil Gorsuch and the U.S. Senate Republicans' scheme to impose a "nuclear option" rule change to lower the vote threshold and force through confirmation of Donald Trump's nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Astar Herndon, Executive Director of 9to5 Wisconsin, Attorney Tamara Packard of the law firm Pines Bach, AFT Local 212 President Michael Rosen and One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross called for the rejection of Gorsuch's extreme views and for a new nominee, instead of imposing a "nuclear option" Senate rule change to lower the vote threshold for Gorsuch's confirmation.

"Judge Gorsuch had the opportunity during his confirmation hearing before the U.S. Senate to acknowledge the existing Supreme Court precedent that recognizes gays and lesbians as a discrete class," commented Attorney Tamara Packard. "But he declined to do so, instead saying that he sees LGBT people as 'individuals,' thus setting the stage for undermining hard won equal rights which, at their foundation, began with recognizing that gays and lesbians have a shared history of oppression based on sexual orientation."

Throughout committee hearings held to vet Gorsuch, the nominee has refused to answer substantive questions. But a review of his record reveals the right wing Gorsuch is far out of the mainstream on nearly every issue. As a judge, he repeatedly sided with insurance companies that wanted to deny disability benefits and employers who wanted to cut pension benefits to employees. His ideological extremism also led to his joining a decision granting corporations a right to religious beliefs, and to put those rights before an employee's right to make personal health care decisions.

The nomination of Gorsuch by Trump was made possible by the unprecedented partisan political power play of U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson and his Washington D.C. Republican colleagues. They refused to do their jobs and give a hearing or a vote to President Barack Obama's nominee to fill a vacancy on the United States Supreme Court, made with nearly a full year remaining in the President's term.

Astar Herndon of 9to5 Wisconsin commented, "We see efforts every day in Wisconsin and in Washington D.C. to undermine the rights of women and workers. It's very concerning that Neil Gorsuch's interpretation of the law and the constitution would expose women to discrimination in the workplace and in their access to comprehensive health care for themselves."

In addition, the Gorsuch nomination has been made under an a cloud of uncertainty, with ongoing probes of Russian efforts to influence the November 2016 election and inquiries being made by the F.B.I. and legislative committees into the conduct of Donald Trump's campaign and his close associates.

"Neil Gorsuch is an extremist on many issues, especially those related to workers. He has consistently sided against the laws and the agencies that protect whistleblowers, workers' safety and workers' wages," said Michael Rosen, president of AFT Local 212. "His appointment would mark a sad day for working men and women in Wisconsin and across the country,"

Ross noted that the Senate Republicans "going nuclear" and changing the the rules because they could not win any other way would undermine the ability of the Senate and the courts to be an independent check on the power of the executive. And, most importantly, the American people would lose because a judge who can't be trusted to be independent and protect the constitutional rights and freedoms of all Americans would be handed a lifetime appointment through a tainted process by a tainted president whose campaign and administration are under investigation by

the FBI.

He concluded, “Wisconsin’s U.S. Senators are a vivid demonstration of what’s at stake here. While Ron Johnson puts partisanship before patriotism in kowtowing to Donald Trump and his political leaders, Tammy Baldwin is standing strong for our rights and our nation’s constitution.”

One Wisconsin Now is a statewide communications network specializing in effective earned media and online organizing to advance progressive leadership and values.