

THE Skanner

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Opinion

EDITORIAL: Let the Republicans Pay the Price, or We Will

President Donald Trump has nominated Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, hoping to cement the court's extreme right-wing bias for a generation to come.

For almost a year Republicans refused to consider President Obama's nominee, well-respected mainstream Judge Merrick Garland. Now Republicans are in a rush to confirm Gorsuch, one of the youngest nominees to the court at age 49.

Supreme Court Justices are appointed for life, so confirming Gorsuch would have a long-term effect on our country. (By the way, we don't be-

“What they did to Judge Garland was unacceptable and must have consequences

lieve anyone in government should have a job for life — even Supreme Court Justices — because when you're too comfortable you tend to lose touch with reality.)

Democrats must oppose this

Bernie Foster

Publisher
The Skanner News

nomination. If they don't what will be next? Republicans may never permit a future Democratic president to appoint a Supreme Court Justice. What they did to Judge Garland was unacceptable and must have consequences.

Neil Gorsuch is a judge who has supported efforts to defund Planned Parenthood and took the side of an employer who wanted to exclude

contraception coverage from its healthcare plan; a man who hated his liberal high school so much he started a club called Fascism Forever. If Gorsuch is confirmed we can



Supreme Court Justice nominee Neil Gorsuch meets with Senate Judiciary Committee member Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2017, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

expect a right-wing extremist court for years to come.

Hats off to Sen. Jeff Merkley who has already promised to filibuster this nomination. Sen. Merkley says he will not vote for any nominee who is not Judge Merrick Garland. We hope every Democrat will join Sen. Merkley to insist that the Republicans find 60 votes for Judge Gorsuch — if they can.

The President has encour-

aged Sen. Mitch McConnell to use the 'so-called' nuclear option and change Senate rules in order to push through this appointment. That's a bad precedent, but if Sen. McConnell wants to take that low road, then let him. Democrats may not be able to block this nomination for good, but they should not make it easy.

Let the Republicans pay the price for the last eight years of obstruction.

Lawmakers, Lobbyists Attack Consumer Protection Agency

As a new Congress and White House begin their respective governmental roles, a still-growing cadre of supporters and opponents are focusing on the future of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).

Ironically, Capitol Hill's ongoing regulatory tug-of-war is really not a partisan issue for much of the nation. Early consumer polls documented that the strongest supporters for financial regulation were consumers of color. Considering that Black and Latino consumers are often targeted for financial abuse, strong support is understandable.

Even a December 2016 online poll conducted by Glover Park Group/Morning Consult revealed strong support for CFPB among Trump voters as well:

- By a margin of 55 to 28 percent, Trump voters oppose efforts to weaken or eliminate the CFPB;
- 47 percent say the Dodd Frank financial reforms should be kept or expanded, as against 27 percent who want to see that law scaled back or repealed; and
- 41 percent want the bureau to be left alone, and 14 percent say its power should be increased.

So why are some Capitol Hill lawmakers and lobbyists still determined to attack the CFPB and Richard Cordray, it's the director of the agency? A number of recent actions appear out of sync with even



Charlene Crowell
NNPA Columnist

President Trump's base.

As early as January 11, a bill was filed to change CFPB's governance from a single director to a five-member commission. Nearly six years ago,

“A growing number of lawmakers, state officials and consumer advocates are raising their respective voices to alert consumers

CFPB opponents tried unsuccessfully to create a less efficient commission rather than an accountable, single director structure. Sponsored by Nebraska's Senator Deb Fischer, the measure was assigned to the Senate's Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs and awaits further consideration.

On January 20, Reince Priebus announced to federal agency heads and executive departments that a regulatory freeze would take effect at noon that same day. As an independent law enforcement agency, many consumer advocates would argue that CFPB should be exempted from executive actions.

Even though the Priebus memo made no specific men-

tion of CFPB, the specter of its still pending regulation hangs in the balance. After public hearings and comments, many consumer advocates anxiously await rules that would govern small dollar loans such as payday and car-title, and others affecting debt collection and auto finance.

In the meantime, a growing number of lawmakers, state officials and consumer advocates are raising their respec-

tive voices to alert consumers of all at stake and their commitment to financial fairness.

A total of 16 state attorneys general agree. On January 23, Connecticut AG George Jepsen and his colleagues filed a motion to intervene in a federal appeals case, defending the constitutionality of the CFPB.

Writing for the group, AG Jepsen said, "The CFPB is the cop on the beat, protecting Main Street from Wall Street misconduct. It was structured by Congress to be a powerful and independent agency that would protect consumers from the abuses of Wall Street, banks, and other large financial institutions.... That mission is still critical to consumers today."

The following day, January 24, a letter to President Trump from 38 members of the Congressional Black Caucus called for Director Cordray to remain in his position through his confirmed 2018 term. According to the CBC members, with Director Cordray's leadership nearly \$30 million in civil monetary penalties and over \$400 million in restitution went to 1.4 million minority consumers.

"Communities of color and, indeed, all consumers in America will benefit from having Director Cordray remain in his position and continue to independently implement the mandates imposed upon him by Congress as the Director of the CFPB", wrote the CBC.

The letter to President Trump also followed a January 18 guest column jointly authored by California Congresswoman Maxine Waters and Congressman Cedric Richmond of Louisiana, the newly-elected chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. Their column declared that CFPB Director Richard Cordray had their "unyielding support" and added that the Bureau is "America's most important consumer protection agency."

"In 2007, the American economy was shaken to its core. Trillions of dollars in wealth disappeared," wrote Waters and Richmond.

Read the rest of this commentary at
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