

# Roberts is new center of Supreme Court

## Farther right than outgoing Kennedy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Chief Justice John Roberts is the Supreme Court's new man in the middle. It's just that the middle may have moved well to the right.

The retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy means Roberts probably will be the conservative justice closest to the court's four liberals, allowing him to control how it rules in some of its most contentious cases.

Roberts will be the justice who determines "how far they go and how fast they go," said Washington lawyer John Elwood.

Kennedy played a similar role for many years — his votes on gay rights, abortion, the death penalty, the environment, voting rights and affirmative action basically determined the outcome of cases on which the court was divided between liberals and conservatives.

Roberts has typically been to Kennedy's right. He did not endorse a constitutional right to marry for same-sex couples. He dissented when the court struck down Texas abortion clinic restrictions in 2016. The chief justice also was in dissent from the court's first major climate change decision in 2007, when it held that the Environmental Protection Agency could regulate emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as air pollutants.

New cases on any of those issues could be before the court soon and,



Win McNamee/Pool via AP

U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts

even if Roberts is not prepared to overrule major Supreme Court precedents, he could be in position to cut back on environmental protections as well as gay rights and abortion rights.

Smaller steps might be in keeping with Roberts' preference for avoiding major divides where possible, and attracting votes from both conservatives and liberals. The 63-year-old chief justice may be in no hurry to move quickly, as he could be on the bench another 15 to 20 years.

"Chief Justice Roberts, more than any other justice on the court, believes in narrow rulings that attract broad majorities, answering no more than necessary to resolve a given case," Jonathan Adler, a professor at the Case Western Reserve University School of Law,

wrote on the Volokh Conspiracy legal blog.

In one sense, the Supreme Court's immediate future could look a lot like the term that just ended. Roberts seemed firmly in control of a court that overwhelmingly went conservative in divided cases, including upholding President Donald Trump's travel ban, striking a blow at public-sector labor unions, limiting workers' rights to band together to complain about pay and affirming Ohio's aggressive efforts to purge its voting rolls.

Only on one occasion did Roberts join with the liberal justices in a 5-4 decision, a ruling that said police generally must have warrants to get telecommunications companies' records showing where people have used their cellphones.

## Trump's hot streak: Court rulings, vacancy

WASHINGTON — A Supreme Court vacancy just fell in his lap, offering a chance to shape the court for decades. The current court handed him two favorable rulings in a single week. And there's a Russia summit on the horizon, promising headlines for a week or more. President Donald Trump is enjoying quite a hot streak.

Some of the good news is not of his making. Still, a series of welcome events has given the president a reprieve from images of migrant children being separated from their families at the border, as well as negative headlines about administrative chaos implementing his hard-line immigration policies.

Trump sought to keep the good vibes going Friday with an event marking the six-month anniversary of his tax cuts.

"We are bringing back our beautiful American dreams," Trump declared, as he used a celebratory East Room event with top aides and business owners to showcase the \$1.5 trillion tax package passed last December.

He called recent growth an "economic miracle," though there's credit to be shared: Lower unemployment, fewer claims for jobless benefits and many other positive economic indicators reflect the slow and steady nine-year recovery that began under President Barack Obama.

Trump's tax cuts will add a hefty dose of debt-financed stimulus to the economy. Government agencies and outside analysts estimate the tax cuts will temporarily boost growth in 2018 and 2019, then fade as the national debt mounts.

Twice, though, Roberts was among a larger grouping of justices in cases that skirted the big issue at stake, but that could return to the court. In one case, the justices rejected a lower-court ruling that set limits on redistricting for partisan gain, but without deciding whether limits ever could be imposed. In another, the court ruled in favor of a baker who would not create a wedding cake for a same-sex couple, yet left on the table the question of whether

religious objections could be used to avoid complying with anti-discrimination laws that protect LGBT people.

For all his votes on the conservative side of issues, Roberts has had his critics on the right. They include Trump, who once labeled Roberts "an absolute disaster" for the chief justice's critical vote to uphold the Affordable Care Act in 2012. Trump has not publicly criticized Roberts since he's been president.

# SHERIFF: Humphreys family has been in Wheeler County for five generations

Continued from 1A

Matt English, Hood River County Sheriff and president of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association, said law enforcement in much of rural Oregon, and Wheeler County in particular, is stretched very thin.

"I went out and spent some time there," he said. "Resource-wise, they don't have anything. They can't pay well, the living conditions are not great. They don't have funding. ... It's one of the struggles they are having in rural counties across the state."

There are also more demands on their time, and a steadily decreasing base of volunteers for fire, paramedic and police positions. As more people are recreating in Oregon's rural places, calls for emergency response to far-flung locales and dispatches for search and rescue are increasing exponentially. Just last month, Humphreys' entire staff, as well as a slim volunteer crew, was out all night searching for a local woman who had a medical emergency while walking.

They found her — a "needle in a haystack" according to Humphreys — and saved her life. But the whole crew then had to do their administrative duties, and overtime costs are not in the budget.

"It's just impossible, and exhausting," said Humphreys.

"I empathize with him how difficult it is," said English.

He said in Hood River County his office must respond to emergencies in nearby Hood and Columbia rivers, to Mt. Hood and the national forest.

"It's the impact of tourism on rural counties," said English. "We are to breaking points. There is so much impact on our resources, and Wheeler County is the same ... our deputies are getting pulled out of neighborhoods for recreational events ... and local taxpayers don't like that."

He said the sheriff's association is considering legislation for the 2019 session that could add taxes on the hospitality industry to help fund public safety. The exact look of that legislation has

not yet been decided.

Whatever it is, it didn't come soon enough to provide financial stability and quality of life to the Wheeler County Sheriff's Office, though Humphreys notes there were plenty of issues that led to this point. Humphreys says someone else could have handled the political issues better than he did and another sheriff could have made a more impactful plea for additional funding.

Wheeler County Judge Lynn Morley did not return a call by press time about the issue. Wheeler County Commissioner Rob Ordway said that he has "always supported law enforcement and public safety," but said he had no plan to replace Humphreys, nor did he know how the sheriff's office would be able to provide law enforcement with the loss of the three deputies. There are no other municipal police departments in the county. An Oregon State Police officer based in Condon can respond to emergencies, but cannot commit to working full-time in just one rural county.

For Humphreys, part of the reason he is leaving has nothing to do with funding or politics. He said he plans to remain in Wheeler County, where his family has lived for five generations, and said he will be happy to give up a career in law enforcement.

"Believe me when I say I am not worried about not being a cop," he said.

Humphreys said it has

been a devastating year for the agency. He has a hard time shaking the 2017 Memorial Day weekend fatal crash that killed two Gypsy Joker motorcyclists and injured many others, which he described as the most "horrific" and "brutal" of his career. He was driving just behind the convoy when it happened.

"It was tough and there was some people that saved

some lives that night," he said, though noting it was one of the scenes that you hope to never have to experience. And the long, stressful, dangerous court process that emanated from it was additionally taxing, he said.

He is worn out and leaving the profession, and he said it is unclear how law enforcement and public safety will operate in Wheeler County in the future.

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