

alike, sent a public letter praising Judge Garland. The list of people who signed this letter includes prominent Republicans and Democrats: Ken Starr, Drew Days, Walter Dellinger, Ted Olson, and Paul Clement. We know the Solicitor General serves as the Federal Government's chief advocate before the U.S. Supreme Court. They know the Supreme Court as well as anyone, and they know a good judge when they see one. Here is what they said about Judge Garland:

As a group, we have argued hundreds of cases before the United States Supreme Court and the Federal Courts of Appeals. Each of us has served as the United States Government's top representative before the Supreme Court. And while we have served in different administrations, we are unified in our belief that Judge Garland is superbly qualified to serve on the Supreme Court if he were confirmed. We are confident that Judge Garland would bring his brilliance, work ethic, and broad experience to the cases that come before him.

That is very high praise, isn't it? Clearly, President Obama selected a nominee highly regarded by advocates who know the Supreme Court better than most. Yet my Republican colleagues will not even give this superbly qualified nominee the dignity of a public hearing. They would rather keep a Supreme Court seat vacant for more than a year and allow the Court to deadlock for a year with 4-to-4 votes on key cases and wait in hopes they can roll the dice with President Donald Trump and his Supreme Court nominee. It is hard to fathom how this strategy is respectful of the constitution or in the best interest of our Nation.

Not only are Senate Republicans failing to do their job in considering Judge Garland's nomination, they are obstructing 20 other well-qualified judicial nominees who are currently pending on the Senate floor.

The Senate Republicans, as I have said, have held votes on only 17 judicial nominees this Congress. That is the lowest total in decades, far fewer than the 68 judges the Democratic-controlled Senate confirmed in the last 2 years of George W. Bush's administration. Republicans are apparently content to leave vacancies on courts across the United States and even on the Supreme Court of the United States. Is that why they were elected, to leave vacancies on these courts? They cannot hide from the fact that there is a need in this country for competent jurists to guide us in these Federal courts.

I hope a few more of my Republican colleagues will come to their senses. Rather than saving judicial seats for Donald Trump to fill, they should do their job and give President Obama's well-qualified nominees a hearing and a vote, and they should start with Merrick Garland.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter from these Solicitors General.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MAY 5, 2016.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. HARRY REID,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. CHUCK GRASSLEY,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S.
Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, MINORITY LEADER REID, CHAIRMAN GRASSLEY, AND RANKING MEMBER LEAHY: Each of us headed the Office of the Solicitor General. Our service took place under both Republican and Democratic Presidents. We write collectively in support of Judge Merrick Garland's qualifications to serve as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. We believe that Judge Garland has demonstrated the temperament, intellect, and experience to serve in this capacity.

Merrick Garland has a history of excellence in the Law. He served in high ranking Justice Department posts, as a partner at a major law firm, an Assistant United States Attorney, a law clerk on the United States Supreme Court, a law clerk on the Second Circuit for the legendary Judge Henry Friendly, and, of course, for nearly the last two decades, as a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. He presently serves as the Chief Judge of that Circuit, where he is known for his collegiality and is widely respected by his colleagues and litigants who have come before him.

As a group, we have argued hundreds of cases before the United States Supreme Court and the federal Courts of Appeals. Each of us has served as the United States Government's top representative before the Supreme Court. And while we have served in different Administrations, we are unified in our belief that Judge Garland is superbly qualified to serve on the Supreme Court if he were confirmed.

We are confident that Judge Garland would bring his brilliance, work ethic, and broad experience to the cases that come before him. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal K. Katyal (Acting Solicitor General, 2010-2011), Gregory G. Garre (Solicitor General, 2008-2009), Paul D. Clement (Solicitor General, 2005-2008), Theodore B. Olson (Solicitor General, 2001-2004), Barbara D. Underwood (Acting Solicitor General, 2001), Seth P. Waxman (Solicitor General, 1997-2001), Walter E. Dellinger III (Acting Solicitor General, 1996-1997), Drew S. Days III (Solicitor General, 1993-1996), Kenneth W. Starr (Solicitor General, 1989-1993).

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO VIETNAM VETERANS

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I would like to say welcome home and thank you to our Vietnam veterans, our true American heroes, as our community honors their courage and allegiance today in Moncks Corner, SC. Their celebration, which took place on May 6, 2016, is one small way we can take the time to show gratitude and appreciation for the men and women who fought for our Nation.

With one brother in the military and one recently retired after 30 years, I know firsthand the sacrifices our veterans and their families have made in order to protect and serve our amazing country.

We should celebrate these heroes every day. It is our responsibility to say thank you in tangible ways, such as this party. The Vietnam war era was one of the most challenging in our Nation's history, and it is truly my honor to recognize the service of our brave veterans who sacrificed for our freedom. Their dedication will never be forgotten.

You all put your lives on the line for our country, and because of people like you, I am proud to be an American. Thank you for your service. You deserve praise, recognition, and respect. God Bless America.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION CONCERT CHOIR

• Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the University of Mount Union Concert Choir as it continues its spring tour, which began Sunday, May 8, at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC.

Mount Union's concert choir prides itself as one of the oldest collegiate choirs in the United States and has been part of the school's history since 1896. Arts at the collegiate level can enrich the student experience, giving music students and nonmusic students the opportunity to practice their vocal or instrumental skills and share their talents with both the campus and the local community. The group, comprised of individuals from almost every academic department, is a testament to the school's strong liberal arts mission.

The group is led by Dr. Grant Cook III, the director of choral activities and an associate professor of music at Mount Union, an accomplished musician and conductor. His commitment