



September 25, 2020

Dear Senator Romney,

The undersigned national faith-based organizations, representing a diversity of religious traditions, write this appeal to you as a person-of-conscience. In the current political situation, we are deeply alarmed by the intention of the Senate Majority and the President to push through a Supreme Court nominee by the end of October. We are a nation traumatized by deep divisions and economic pain; the unnecessary coronavirus death toll of 200,000-plus is one such example of these struggles. There is a real cost to the national perception of a Congress and a president focused on expediting a Supreme Court nominee while failing to attend to the protracted national suffering. Integrity is about how we represent ourselves, and we urge you as a person of integrity to oppose forcing this process in the midst of a contentious election.

Our nation is suffering greatly in the midst of a highly contagious global pandemic. With 4% of the world's population, we have experienced 20% of all COVID deaths. Our multi-faith community is working hard to provide some of the most vulnerable people in our nation with pastoral care, advocacy and direct services during extreme hardship. The Senate has failed to provide any meaningful COVID relief legislation since April 2020--nearly half-a-year has passed with unnecessary suffering and death. Any urgent actions that the Senate undertakes must focus on alleviating the suffering and economic distress of the people due to this crisis.

The faith community is woven into the fabric of civil society and we encourage our members and our networks to vote and engage in electing our leadership. A nation's well-being may rest on a single, pervasive cultural characteristic: the level of trust inherent in society. In October 2020 it feels like a tipping point--the fatigue and hardship of the people, the cynicism and division of the civic body, the disinformation inundating the public. Because one party has the constitutional right to seize power in a situation does not justify the damage it will do to our civic fabric. The rush to hold Supreme Court hearings at this time, before this particular election is unconscionable and unnecessary. There is no constitutional requirement for the timing of this process and we urge you to wait until after the election has been certified.

By forcing this nomination through, in this manner, your party is endangering what remains of our civic trust and putting our very democracy at risk. The head of the Mormon Women for Ethical Government, an advocacy group based in your state and rooted in your own faith tradition, [articulated that alarming risk](#) earlier this week.¹

Yesterday you conceded to a rushed nomination "...to follow the Constitution and precedent in considering the President's nominee". Procedurally, there is no precedence: every Supreme Court justice who was confirmed in an election year, going back almost 130 years, was confirmed more than 100 days--almost four months--before the election. More importantly, there is no precedent for the current circumstances. The national fragility within which this power play is taking place

¹ <https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2020/09/21/jennifer-walker-thomas/>

cannot be overstated. There is no precedent for allowing a president to have such extraordinary influence over the outcome of an election he is already threatening to contest. Our democratic institutions are maintained by norms as much as strict law and order. The one at risk of facing judgment ought not to choose the judges.

You distinguished yourself earlier this year by breaking with your party and citing conscience as the ultimate guide for your discernment. We urge you to consider the damage that a forced process during this election will have on the national psyche. As a community of faith, we yearn for healing, peace, and reconciliation in this nation--the plan to replace Justice Ginsburg in the middle of an election is anathema to these values. We ask you to reconsider, to consult your conscience, and to choose differently.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Disciples Center for Public Witness

Disciples Justice Action Network

Evangelical Anglican Church in America

Faith in Public Life

Faithful America

Franciscan Action Network

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Masjid Muhammad, The Nation's Mosque

Mormon Women for Ethical Government

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Council of churches

National Council of Jewish Women

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Poligon Education Fund

Reconstructing Judaism

Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

Chavurah B'Yachad (based in Utah)