



AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION OF  
UNIVERSITY  
WOMEN

## U.S. SUPREME COURT NOMINATIONS

The role of the U.S. Supreme Court in preserving individual rights and effecting social change has been recognized for more than 30 years. As the 20th Century draws to a close, it is clear that Supreme Court decisions will focus increasingly on issues of personal freedom. Because Supreme Court Justices deal with the most critical issues facing the nation and have lifetime tenure on the Court, a nominee's views must be carefully scrutinized before confirmation. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) believes that the President must nominate and the Senate must confirm as Supreme Court Justices individuals who understand and support the Court's role in protecting individual liberties.

The President and the Senate share the responsibility of making appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court. The importance of the Senate confirmation process cannot be overstated. The Senate's exercise of its "advice and consent" role in considering a President's Supreme Court nominee ensures that the judicial philosophy of a potential Justice is thoroughly examined. A nominee's judicial record and testimony at the confirmation hearings should demonstrate a clear and unwavering dedication to individual liberties for all Americans.

During Supreme Court confirmation hearings, AAUW urges Senators to thoroughly investigate the nominee's interpretation of the fundamental constitutional issues that will be before the Court in the next decade. Those issues include:

- Preserving the separation of church and state.
- Ensuring equal opportunity for all Americans, regardless of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.
- Protecting the right to privacy, including the right to reproductive choice.
- Defending the First Amendment guarantees of free speech and a free press.

American citizens have long regarded the Supreme Court as the institution that reflects and shapes our progress as a nation, by articulating with finality our ideals of fairness, equality, and humaneness. Senators should vote to confirm only Supreme Court nominees who demonstrate a commitment to those ideals and understanding of the Court's role in protecting the rights of the individual.

Because of the Senate's responsibility for Supreme Court appointments, voters should ask both incumbent Senators and Senate candidates to describe their vision of the Supreme Court and their view of the Senate's role in the appointment process. A Senator or Senate candidate should assure voters that she or he will vote to confirm only those nominees who provide evidence of the judicial philosophy and ability appropriate to a U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

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