

Statement on the Inauguration of Giorgi Margvelashvili as President of the Republic of Georgia *November 16, 2013*

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the people of Georgia as they celebrate the Inauguration of a new President and mark the first time a Presidential transition has taken place as the result of a peaceful, democratic election. I extend my warm congratulations to President Giorgi Margvelashvili on his Inauguration day.

The path to this day was marked by the contributions of many distinguished political leaders over the past 20 years, including outgoing President Mikheil Saakashvili and Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili, who have both played a vital role in strengthening Georgia's democratic institutions, together with civil society and the people of Georgia. We appreciate what

these two leaders have accomplished during their respective tenures and look forward to working with their successors to continue the strong and deep bonds that the United States and Georgia have enjoyed for over 20 years.

Georgia is making significant progress in consolidating democratic institutions, including through its commitments under the Open Government Partnership and its promotion of women's participation in public life, and is moving forward on the path to fulfilling its Euro-Atlantic aspirations. As we mark this momentous political transition, I call on all of Georgia's political leaders to work together and continue to work with civil society to build on this achievement.

Statement on Senate Action To Block the Nominations of Patricia A. Millett, Cornelia T.L. "Nina" Pillard, and Robert L. Wilkins To Be Judges on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit *November 18, 2013*

I am deeply disappointed that Senate Republicans have once again refused to do their job and give well-qualified nominees to the Federal bench the yes-or-no votes they deserve. The DC Circuit, considered the Nation's second highest court, has three vacancies. These are judgeships created by Congress. Chief Justice John Roberts and the Judicial Conference of the United States believe that these vacancies should be filled, not removed. And my constitutional duty as President is to nominate highly qualified individuals to fill these vacancies.

Patricia Millett, Nina Pillard, and Judge Robert Wilkins have all received the highest possible rating from the nonpartisan American Bar Association. They have broad bipartisan

support, and no one has questioned their merit. Yet Senate Republicans have blocked all three from receiving a yes-or-no vote. This obstruction is completely unprecedented. Four of my predecessor's six nominees to the DC Circuit were confirmed. Four of my five nominees to this court have been obstructed.

When it comes to judicial nominations, I am fulfilling my constitutional responsibility, but Congress is not. Instead, Senate Republicans are standing in the way of a fully functioning judiciary that serves the American people.

The American people and our judicial system deserve better. A majority of the United States Senate supports these three extraordinary nominees, and it is time for simple yes-or-no votes without further obstruction or delay.