

didn't elect Senators and say, you know what, this is only a three-quarters or a half a term; you get elected for the full term, and you're expected to do your job during that entire time.

So the American people have already had a say, but now what we need to do is make sure the American people will remind Senators that they have a job to do. Senators that are trying to obstruct the process need to be told that we expect the Supreme Court to be above partisan politics and that the Court should be operating at full capacity to help the American people.

So you've got somebody with unimpeachable credentials, somebody the Republicans have themselves acknowledged is qualified. I have made this nomination. The Court needs to have an additional justice in order to be able to weigh on some of the most important issues that affect everybody's lives: our voting rights; our freedom of speech; issues like immigration; issues like our environment, clean air and clean water; issues of workplace safety. And the notion that somehow we would suspend all that because it's an election year is not in the Constitution, and it's not been our tradition.

And by the way, I think everybody on this call recognizes the election season lasts longer and longer every time. So the election season started 6 months, 9 months, a year ago. Are they suggesting somehow that we should have suspended our work in December or in June of last year, when the Presidential candidates were already running around Iowa? I'm assuming that's not the argument they're making.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the United States-Kazakhstan Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters

March 17, 2016

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Kazakhstan on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Washington on February 20, 2015. I also transmit, for the information of the Sen-

ate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

And as Valerie already pointed out, it's not as if we haven't had Supreme Court nominees confirmed during election years before. The difference is, typically, it's been Republican Presidents making the nominations and Democratic Senates—or Democratic majorities in the Senate who have confirmed them. And what we're asking is simply that the Senate acts fairly in dealing with an outstanding individual who deserves to be on the Supreme Court.

Be fair. That's something we all learned in kindergarten, and it's something that the American people I think understand should apply when it comes to the highest court in the land and how we make sure that our democracy and our judicial system work.

So make yourselves heard. Let Senators know that this is something that you care deeply about. And it goes beyond just the typical partisan disagreements that we have; this has to do with the integrity of our system of government. And it's something that I care deeply about, and I'm going to make sure to fight for for the remainder of my term as President. And I hope that you're right there with me. Okay?

Thank you so much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:18 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett; and Supreme Court Associate Justices Sonia M. Sotomayor and Elena Kagan. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

ate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties negotiated by the United States to more effectively counter criminal activities. The Treaty should enhance our ability to investigate and prosecute a wide variety of crimes.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Under the Treaty, the Parties agree to assist each other by, among other things: producing evidence (such as testimony, documents, or items) obtained voluntarily or, where necessary, by compulsion; arranging for persons, including persons in custody, to travel to another country to provide evidence; serving documents; executing searches and seizures; locating and identifying persons or items; and freezing and forfeiting

assets or property that may be the proceeds or instrumentalities of crime.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
March 17, 2016.

The President's Weekly Address *March 19, 2016*

Hi, everybody. One of the most consequential responsibilities our Constitution grants a President is appointing a Supreme Court Justice. The men and women who sit on the Supreme Court safeguard our rights. They ensure that ours is a system of laws, not of men. And they're given the essential task of applying the principles written into our founding documents to the most challenging questions of today.

So this is a duty I take very seriously. It requires me to set aside short-term politics in order to maintain faith with our Founders. And on Wednesday, after weeks of consultations with Republicans, Democrats, and leaders across the country, I selected a nominee whose unmatched experience and integrity have earned him the respect and admiration of both parties: Chief Judge Merrick Garland.

Judge Garland grew up in my hometown of Chicago, with parents who taught him to work hard and deal fairly. As a young lawyer, he left a lucrative private firm to work for half as much in public service. Eventually, he oversaw the Federal response to the Oklahoma City bombing, working side by side with first responders, victims, and their families to bring justice for an unspeakable crime. And everywhere he went during that investigation, he carried with him in his briefcase the program from the memorial service with each of the victims' names inside.

For the last 19 years, Judge Garland has served on what's known as the second highest

court in the land—the DC Circuit Court—including the last 3 years as Chief Judge. On the bench, he's shown a dedication to protecting our basic rights; a conviction that powerful voices must not be allowed to drown out those of everyday Americans; an understanding that justice isn't simply abstract legal theory, it affects people's daily lives; and a spirit of decency, modesty, and evenhandedness in his work. Judge Garland is admired for his courtesy, his devotion to family, and his civic-mindedness. For the past 18 years, he's served as a tutor for young students at a local DC elementary school.

During my time as President, through three separate Supreme Court appointments, in conversations with Republicans and Democrats alike, one name came up more than any other: Merrick Garland.

I understand that we're in the middle of an especially noisy and volatile political season. But at a time when our politics are so polarized, when norms and customs of our political rhetoric seem to be corroding, this is precisely the time we should treat the appointment of a Supreme Court justice with the seriousness it deserves. Because our Supreme Court is supposed to be above politics, not an extension of politics. And it should stay that way.

So I ask Republicans in the Senate to give Judge Garland the respect he has earned. Give him a hearing. Give him an up-or-down vote. To deny it would be an abdication of the Senate's constitutional duty. It would indicate a