

Week Ending Friday, February 3, 2006

### **The President's Radio Address**

*January 28, 2006*

Good morning. The United States Senate is now considering my nomination of Judge Sam Alito to be an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court. As Americans saw in his confirmation hearings, Sam Alito is a man of great character and integrity. He has more prior judicial experience than any Supreme Court nominee in more than 70 years. He understands that the role of a judge is to strictly interpret the law, not to advance a personal or political agenda. And throughout his extraordinary career, Sam Alito has earned the tremendous respect of his colleagues and attorneys across the political spectrum.

This past Wednesday, I met with a distinguished group of 39 former law clerks to Judge Alito. During Judge Alito's 15 years on the bench, these fine men and women have worked side by side with him, providing legal research, discussing and debating pending cases, and seeing firsthand how he arrives at decisions. They are uniquely qualified to assess what kind of Supreme Court Justice Sam Alito would be, and they are united in their strong support of Judge Alito's nomination.

One of Judge Alito's former clerks, who describes herself as a left-leaning Democrat, says this about Sam Alito: "He's a man of great decency, integrity, and character. I believe very strongly he deserves to be confirmed as the Court's next Associate Justice." Another former clerk worked on Senator Kerry's Presidential campaign. She says this about Judge Alito: "His approach to judging is not about personal ideology or ambition but about hard work and devotion to law and justice." In fact, Judge Alito has the strong support of all 54 of his former clerks, regardless of their political beliefs. They know him well, and they know he'll make an outstanding Supreme Court Justice.

Judge Alito has also earned broad support from his fellow judges on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. Seven of them took the extraordinary step of testifying on his behalf before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Former Chief Judge Ed Becker, who sat with Judge Alito on more than 1,000 cases, said this about his colleague: "He's a real judge, deciding each case on the facts and the law, not on his personal views." Another colleague on the Third Circuit who was appointed by President Clinton said this about Judge Alito: "He is a fair-minded man, a modest man, a humble man, and he reveres the rule of law." This judge went on to say that, if confirmed, Judge Alito "will serve as a marvelous and distinguished Associate Justice."

Judge Alito received the American Bar Association's highest possible rating—a unanimous "well-qualified." The ABA based its rating on its assessment of Judge Alito's integrity, professional competence, and judicial temperament. In the past, leading Democratic Senators have called the ABA rating the gold standard for judicial nominees.

This past week, Judge Alito gained the endorsement of Pennsylvania's Democratic Governor, Ed Rendell. Governor Rendell said he was not pleased with the partisan way some of his fellow Democrats have handled Sam Alito's nomination. Democratic Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia announced he was voting for Judge Alito, and he said that many people in his State were calling the treatment of Judge Alito by some Democrats "an outrage and a disgrace." Another Democratic Senator expressed concern that the Senate confirmation process in recent years has become "overly politicized, to the detriment of the rule of law."

The Senate has a constitutional responsibility to hold an up-or-down vote on Judge Alito's nomination. Throughout its 216-year history, the Senate has held an up-or-down vote on every Supreme Court nominee with majority Senate support. Judge Alito has

demonstrated that he is eminently qualified to serve on our Nation's highest Court, and America is fortunate to have a man of his integrity and intellect willing to serve.

I'm grateful to Judge Alito, his wife, Martha, and the Alito children for their patience and dignity during the process. And I look forward to the Senate voting to confirm Judge Sam Alito as the 110th Justice of the Supreme Court.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on January 27 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 27 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Revising Budget Amendments for the Department of Veterans Affairs**

*January 28, 2006*

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

My Administration is committed to ensuring that our Nation's veterans continue to receive timely and high-quality health care.

On July 14, 2005, I submitted an FY 2006 budget amendment to the Congress of \$1.977 billion to cover increased costs in the Department of Veterans Affairs medical care system. I did not designate the funds as an emergency requirement when I submitted the FY 2006 budget amendment. While I believe this funding should be categorized as part of the VA's base budget, it is critical that this funding be made available to meet veterans' needs. As a result, to provide the needed funds to veterans in a timely manner and consistent with the 2006 Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, Public Law 109-114, I hereby revise that request to designate \$1.225 billion of the amount proposed in that amendment as an emergency requirement. I appreciate your cooperation in working with me to ensure the highest quality of care for our veterans.

Additional information on this action is set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director

of the Office of Management and Budget. The details of the FY 2006 amendment were included in the previous transmittal.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 30.

### **Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters**

*January 30, 2006*

**The President.** I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for being here. We just had a really good discussion about the year 2006. Tomorrow night I'm going to be speaking to the Congress, giving the country my State of the Union Address. I can't tell you how upbeat I am about our future, so long as we're willing to lead.

We talked about how to make sure that America continues to spread the peace and to protect ourselves. I heard from the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of State about very positive initiatives—not only in the Middle East but in the Far East as well. We talked about how to make sure this economy of ours stays the strongest economy in the world and that we recognize we can't just sit back and hope for the best, that we've got to lead. And so we had a good discussion about matters such as health care and energy and education, all of which I'll address tomorrow night.

I'm looking forward to speaking to the country. We've got a lot to be proud of. We've got a lot of work to do. One of the things I will do is call for Congress and the executive branch to have a good, honest dialog but to speak candidly with each other, but to do so in a way that brings credit to the process. And I'll do my best to elevate the tone here in Washington, DC, so we can work together to achieve big things for the American people.

I'll answer a couple of questions. Nedra Pickler [Associated Press].