

**The President's Supreme Court Nomination  
of  
Chief Judge Merrick Garland  
U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit  
Statement of Support  
13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater  
May 18, 2016**

Members of the Senate, ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to speak to you today on behalf of the nomination by President Barack Obama of Chief Judge Merrick Garland of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit to the United States Supreme Court. I have known Chief Judge Garland as a friend, a fierce and exacting prosecutor in the U.S. Department of Justice and as an honorable, impartial and fair adjudicator, and leading member of what many consider to be the second highest court in the United States.

I speak today not for any partisan purpose, but instead as an ardent believer in the rule of law under our Constitution. When I had the sacred experience of being nominated and confirmed by the United States Senate as the 13th Secretary of Transportation, I took an oath to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States.” My allegiance to that cause did not waver when I left office. Indeed, my devotion to our Constitution is precisely what leads me today to urge the United States Senate to give its advice and consent in favor of Chief Judge Garland’s service as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Judge Garland shares with me a deep respect for our Constitution. Our devotion to our Constitutional system was guided by a man that we both view as an example of our system of government at its best—the Honorable William T. Coleman. With the advice and consent of the Senate, Mr. Coleman served with distinction in the Cabinet of President

Gerald Ford as the first African American U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

Many years later, I had the privilege of holding that same office in the Cabinet of President William J. Clinton, and of benefitting from the wisdom and counsel of Secretary Coleman.

Judge Garland also had the privilege of Secretary Coleman's good counsel and inspiration. And, like Secretary Coleman, Judge Garland was an honored graduate of the Harvard Law School and a law clerk to a Justice of our Supreme Court. All three of us—Secretary Coleman, Judge Garland and I—recognized how privileged we were to be nominated by the President and confirmed by the United States Senate. And all three of us committed ourselves to justifying the faith placed in us, and the responsibility given to us, by our Executive and by the Senate.

But that sacred shared privilege is just one of many other personal and professional connections with Judge Garland that convince me he will serve with distinction on our Supreme Court.

Our personal connections begin, as they do for most of us, with family. My wife, Cassandra, our daughter, Bridgette, and I first became acquainted with Merrick and his lovely wife, Lynn, as the concerned and loving parents of two daughters of their own, Rebecca and Jessica. This was in 1997. Our daughters were beginning elementary school at Sidwell Friends School in Bethesda, MD. This relationship continues to today, as we have enjoyed together parent teacher conferences, recitals, parents' nights, graduations and a plethora of college experiences together over the years. During these encounters, I have found Merrick to be a loving husband, doting father and engaged school parent.

Professionally, I witnessed his legal acumen, commitment to justice, supple mind and steeled resolve during his efforts to ensure the conviction of Timothy McVeigh and the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, during a stressful time in our nation. I was especially mindful of and interested in his work to bring the Oklahoma City terrorists to justice, as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration in the U.S. Department of Transportation, because 11 of the 168 people killed in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building were dedicated and devoted members of my staff. I remember well the fateful day, April 19, 1995 when a domestic terrorist attack, the likes America had never witnessed, shook the confidence of our nation. I was travelling in South Carolina on one of my FHWA Road Tours, much like my first, the year before, when I traveled from Buffalo, NY to Laredo, TX meeting with and hearing from local and state business, and community leaders about their transportation needs and challenges.

Merrick Garland stepped into the breach of the rubble of a hollowed out federal building, shattered lives, and potentially debilitating circumstances. As a result of his deliberate and painstaking preparation, astute legal prosecution, and unflinching commitment to the pursuit of justice, our nation was able to experience some measure of closure and to witness one of the finest examples of public service on display.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., once said “...as life is action and passion, it is required of a man that he should share the passion and action of his time at peril of being judged not to have lived.” Merrick Garland has been and is engaged in the action and passion of our times. In addition to his devotion as a husband, father, son, brother and friend, distinguished jurist, dedicated employer of law clerks — past and present — who respect and adore him, he has found time to regularly and passionately mentor inner city youth in the schools of our nation’s capital.

I am honored to lift the name of one whom I admire immensely, an exemplar of the Bench and Bar, and a person engaged in the “action and passion of our time,” Chief Judge Merrick Garland as the President’s nominee to the United States Supreme Court. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.