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Statement Of NELA Executive Director Terry O'Neill

Terry O'Neill, Executive Director of the National Employment Lawyers Association, released the following statement in anticipation of Donald Trump's nomination to fill the vacancy on the United States Supreme Court.

The United States Supreme Court profoundly affects every important issue that touches the lives of working people: wages, protection from discrimination and harassment, access to the courts to seek redress for illegal treatment, voting rights, immigrant rights, and the list goes on. Working people across the U.S. deserve a fair-minded, independent nominee dedicated to upholding the rule of law and equal protection for all.

The politicization of the judicial nominations process at the hands of the Senate Majority Leadership must end. In 2016, Senate Judiciary Chair Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) prevented the Supreme Court nominee of our previous President from getting so much as a hearing, an unprecedented political maneuver. Since early 2017, the leadership has rammed through dozens of district and circuit court nominees at breakneck speed. In doing so they have prevented every Senator from conducting the thorough and deliberative evaluation essential for any lifetime appointment, diminishing the Senate's constitutional duty to advise and consent.

The result has been a series of Supreme Court decisions that promote the interests of powerful elites and well-funded ideologues against workers (in *Epic Systems Corp. v. Lewis*), public employee unions (in *Janus v. AFSCME*), travelers from predominantly Muslim countries (in *Trump v. Hawaii*), and women seeking accurate, unbiased information about their reproductive health care (in *NIFLA v. Becerra*). These cases, decided in this past term, represent a continuing and alarming trend of the courts no longer being a place where individuals are on equal footing with corporate or other powerful interests.

All U.S. Senators must demand the restoration of core democratic principles of fairness to the judicial nominations process. Any Supreme Court nominee must be thoroughly and rigorously evaluated, however long it takes. No nominee can be allowed to hide behind evasive responses and platitudes. Anyone seeking a lifetime appointment to the Court must affirmatively demonstrate, through a clear and strong record, commitment to

our country's most sacred values: that *no one* is above the law; that the rights of the vulnerable and marginalized are as worthy as those of the wealthy and powerful; and that every individual is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace and the community, to bodily integrity, and to the equal protection of the laws.

NELA will strongly oppose any nominee whose record does not measure up to these standards. For all workers in the U.S., the stakes could not be higher.

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The National Employment Lawyers Association advances employee rights and serves lawyers who advocate for equality and justice in the American workplace. NELA provides assistance and support to lawyers in protecting the rights of employees against the greater resources of their employers and the defense bar. It is the country's largest professional organization exclusively comprised of lawyers who represent individual employees in cases involving employment discrimination and other employment-related matters. NELA and its 69 circuit, state, and local affiliates have more than 4,000 members around the country.