

Durbin meets with Supreme Court Judge Merrick Garland

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WASHINGTON — Assistant Senate Democratic Leader Dick Durbin (D-IL), a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, met today with Supreme Court Nominee Chief Judge Merrick Garland. “It’s great to have this son of Illinois come visit me today,” Durbin said before the meeting. Afterwards, Durbin held a media availability during which he discussed Judge Garland’s experience, qualifications, and Illinois connections.

“I’ve just met personally and directly with Merrick Garland, President Obama’s nominee for the vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court. I’ve read so much about him: his background, his life, and his professional career,” Durbin said. “He is clearly a person well-qualified to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. I think that’s one of the problems that the Republicans have. They just know that when sit down and get to know him, and understand his background, it’s virtually impossible to say that this man is not qualified to serve in that position.”

In March, President Obama nominated Judge Garland to the Supreme Court. Judge Garland was born in Chicago, Illinois and raised in the nearby suburb of Lincolnwood. Judge Garland attended Niles West High School in Skokie, Illinois, from which he graduated as valedictorian. He attended Harvard College and Harvard Law School before clerking on both the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and the Supreme Court. In 1995, Judge Garland was nominated to the D.C. Circuit seat vacated by his longtime mentor and fellow Chicagoan, Abner Mikva.

Before Judge Garland’s nomination was even announced, Senate Republicans announced that the Senate Judiciary Committee will not hold a hearing on a Supreme Court nominee, and that senior Republican Senators will decline to meet with that nominee, as is customary.

Since the Senate Judiciary Committee started holding hearings on Supreme Court nominees a century ago, no pending Supreme Court nominee has ever been denied a hearing. In fact, in the past three decades it has taken the Senate an average of about two months to consider Supreme Court nominees from nomination to confirmation.

Durbin has served on the Senate Judiciary Committee for 18 years, during which time he has considered the nominations of four current Supreme Court justices. He is also the Ranking Member of the Senate Subcommittee on the Constitution, formerly known as the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights. The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over all constitutional issues.