

# Vice president: 'There is no Biden rule'

But getting Senate vote on court nominee tricky in election year

Kathleen Hennessey  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vice President Joe Biden on Thursday tried to clear his name and tout his record on Supreme Court nominations, calling Republican branding of his past remarks on the subject “ridiculous” and casting himself as a longtime advocate of bipartisan compromise in filling seats on the high court.

In a speech at Georgetown Law School, Biden issued a broad warning

that Republicans’ election-year blockade of President Barack Obama’s nominee “can lead to a genuine Constitutional crisis” and he sought to distance himself from the strategy. He argued Republicans have distorted a 1992 speech in which he seemed to endorse the notion of blocking any Supreme Court nominee put forward in the throes of the election season.

Republicans have labeled their strategy the “Biden rule.”

Biden, a former Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, said his broader point in the lengthy Senate floor speech was to call for more consultation with the Senate in choosing a nominee, a practice he said would lead to nominees with less extreme views. Obama “followed the path of moderation” in picking Appeals Court



Biden

the Constitution’s clear rule of advice and consent.”

Biden’s defense focuses on a later section on the speech, in which he called on then-President George H.W. Bush and future presidents to work more closely with the Senate to name moderate nominees. Earlier in the speech, Biden warned that if Bush were to name a nominee immediately, weeks before the summer polit-

ical conventions, “the Senate Judiciary Committee should seriously consider not scheduling confirmation hearings on the nomination until after the political campaign season is over.”

The remarks have proven problematic for Biden, a veteran of decades of Supreme Court battles. After more than 15 years on the Judiciary Committee, eight as chairman, few in Washington can match Biden’s experience with judicial nominations. Facing perhaps the last big political fight of his career, the vice president has appeared eager to dive into a familiar debate that has recurred throughout his career.

Biden, who has acted as a stealthy liaison to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell in past negotia-

tions, has begun some of that work. He has reached out to some Republican senators. And he’s pressed the issue as he’s campaigned for Democrats in Seattle and Ohio. His role is likely to increase as the process moves forward.

Republicans won’t make it easy. Immediately after Biden’s remarks Thursday, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus issued a statement accusing Biden of hypocrisy.

“There is some division within the ranks on that front. This week, U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., said he thinks Garland should get a vote. Moran said he would likely vote against an Obama nominee. Republican U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois also has called for a Senate vote.

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Sykes, who has been critical of national radio hosts for giving soft interviews, pressed a little further.

“Don’t you wonder whether the kind of rhetoric we’re hearing from presidential candidates might be discouraging nonradicalized Muslims from being willing to come forward and drop a dime?” he asked.

“I have no ability to control the rhetoric used by Donald Trump,” Cruz said.

## Ted Cruz defends Muslim ‘patrols’

David Weigel  
The Washington Post

PEWAUKEE, Wis. — U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, kicked off the two-week Wisconsin primary campaign Wednesday with a surprisingly tough interview conducted by radio host and author Charlie Sykes. The host, a Cruz endorser, had sold out his annual ideas forum after announcing that the candidate would appear. When he got there, Sykes immediately asked Cruz to respond to President Obama’s criticism of his call for “patrols” of “Muslim neighborhoods” to root out radicalism.

“I’m so sorry to be dimming Barack Obama,” Cruz said, joking that he’d clearly done something right if he’d angered the president and the mayor of New York City. “What I called for yesterday (Tuesday), and what everybody was reacting to, was increased law enforcement, increased military effort and increased police presence. You know, if you look at Europe, one of the tragic



Cruz

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