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Letter to the Editor

Reality Check on Judicial Nominations

Robert D. Novak needs to take a basic civics course or abandon his willful intellectual dishonesty in the debate over judicial nominations [op-ed, Oct. 27]. Mr. Novak condemns an "unprecedented filibuster campaign to prevent a sitting president from selecting his own judiciary." But the judiciary does not belong to the president; it is designed to be an independent third branch of government, with its members selected by both the president and Congress.

Federal judges serve for their lifetime, not merely for the term of the president, and they make decisions that affect every area of Americans' daily lives.

This is why the Constitution requires that judges be appointed "by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate," a crucial check-and-balance that has preserved our impartial judiciary for more than 200 years. This also is why Earthjustice and other groups are fighting hard to ensure careful Senate scrutiny of judicial nominations.

Our senators have a constitutional duty to confirm qualified, impartial judges and to reject extremist, right-wing ideologues who could sit on our courts for decades. The Senate has confirmed more than 160 of President Bush's nominees and so far has blocked only three. That is hardly a Democratic triumph.

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