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Interest groups take sides on nomination

The day after President Bush announced his nomination of John G. Roberts Jr. for the Supreme Court, groups from both ends of the political spectrum cranked into high gear. Here's where some of them came down on the choice:

THUMBS UP

Concerned Women for America, a conservative Christian advocacy organization, plans to send an e-mail alert that encourages support for Bush's nominee.

Family Research Council, a Christian organization promoting the traditional family unit and Judeo-Christian values, will have a gathering called "Justice Sunday" in Tennessee in August to denounce the Supreme Court as hostile to religion and families and to show support for Roberts' confirmation.

Focus on the Family, a conservative group, is pleased. "We believe Judge Roberts will interpret the Constitution and not try to legislate from the bench, which has been the pattern in recent years," said chairman James Dobson.

The Southern Baptist Convention will encourage the 16.3 million Southern Baptists to contact their senators and let them know they support Roberts' confirmation.

American Center for Law and Justice, a religious liberty advocacy group, sent 900,000 e-mails immediately after Bush announced Roberts as his choice, urging ACLJ supporters to sign a petition in support of the judge.

Progress For America, a conservative organization with ties to the Bush administration, unveiled a pro-Roberts ad stressing his resume of academic and professional accomplishments and public service — first in his class at Harvard

law school, confirmed by the Senate to his current position, lawyer in two administrations.

American Center for Law and Justice, a conservative Christian legal advocacy group founded by television evangelist Pat Robertson, proclaimed its support. "Judge Roberts is an exceptional choice who will bring sound legal reasoning to the Supreme Court," said Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the group.

THUMBS DOWN

The National Organization for Women sees Roberts as a threat to abortion rights and is raising awareness via e-mail alerts. "There is no question in our minds that John Roberts would immediately vote the opposite direction than Sandra Day O'Connor," said Kim Gandy, NOW president.

MoveOn.org, a liberal political action organization, is raising money and awareness of Roberts' "hard right philosophy." The group is holding rapid-response events at shopping malls and schools to protest the nomination.

People For The American Way, a group allied with the Democrats, plans to create ads to counter the nomination, said President Ralph Neas. The organization "will have the money to be in radio and TV and in print. It's all a question of strategic timing."

NARAL-Pro Choice America. The abortion rights group, staged a demonstration against Roberts' nomination outside a Senate office building Wednesday. The group also posted a form on its Web site that allows visitors to directly e-mail senators to voice their opposition.

Rainbow PUSH Coalition. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, president of the group, said

confirmation of Roberts would set “the court back half a century. ... He will roll back workers’ rights, women’s rights and civil rights.”

Alliance for Justice, one of the three major organizations orchestrating the response of numerous groups on the left, issued a lengthy paper that raised questions about some of Roberts’ rulings from the bench. It said he had “participated in efforts to weaken voting rights, equal education rights, reproductive rights, environmental protections and proscriptions on state-sponsored religion.”

WAIT-AND-SEE

Earthjustice, a nonprofit public interest law firm aimed at protecting the environment, issued a statement noting its concern that Roberts might not uphold “key environmental safeguards” and urging senators to take their time in reviewing his qualifications.