

**Senator Dick Durbin**  
**Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Written Questions for Christopher R. Wolfe**  
**Nominee to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Texas**  
**February 11, 2026**

1. Since 2018, you have served on the Tarrant County Juvenile Services Board, which oversees the county’s juvenile detention center and related services.

In 2024, you led the Board’s efforts to end a contract with Youth Advocate Programs, Inc., a juvenile services provider, because its website mentioned “diversity initiatives” and “systemic racism.” You claimed these phrases constituted “hot topics and controversy politically.”

The provider had been contracted by the County since 1992 to provide youthful offenders with anti-recidivism services.

Meanwhile, young people of color in Tarrant County are referred to the juvenile system and admitted to juvenile detention centers at much higher rates than White youth. The most recent statistics showed that White youth represented 12.9 percent, Hispanic youth represented 31.3 percent, and Black youth represented 55 percent of admissions to detention centers in 2024, while the most recent U.S. Census indicates that the population of Tarrant County is 69.4 percent White, 31 percent Hispanic, and 19.5 percent Black.

- a. **When you advocated for ending the provider’s contract, did you take into account the disproportionate detention of Black youth?**

Response: The Tarrant County Juvenile Board is comprised of all the district judges in Tarrant County and the County Judge. The Board is responsible for ensuring that (1) juvenile detention facilities are safe, well-staffed, compliant with local, state, and federal laws and regulations, (2) juveniles are cared for and treated fairly and respectfully, and (3) the detention facility and all juvenile services are fiscally prudent. In 2024, the Board voted not to automatically renew an annual contract with Youth Advocacy Program (YAP) and declined their request for a 25-percent increase in funding. The Board believed that YAP had become increasingly political and learned that they used 15 percent of county taxpayer funding for nationwide lobbying. The Board also believed there were less expensive service providers.

I don’t recall the specifics of YAP’s website, but it contained controversial cultural and political content beyond mentions of “diversity initiatives” and “systemic racism.” Such content was removed from YAP’s website days after an open-forum, Board meeting. The Board’s unwillingness to renew YAP’s contract and to deny their request for additional funds was not because of two phrases on a website. Since 2024, Tarrant County has been able to adequately care for juveniles while also saving taxpayers’ money. I do not believe services provided

to juveniles under the care of Tarrant County has declined since the expiration of YAP's contract.

**b. To what do you attribute the disproportionate detention of Black youth in Tarrant County?**

Response: Causation of why a class of individuals is detained more than another is complex and debated among experts and political leaders. My role as a district judge and Board member is to ensure that juveniles in the care of Tarrant County are treated fairly and respectfully regardless of race.

**c. Have you done anything to address this problem during your time on the Board?**

Response: I have fulfilled my role as a district judge, through Board oversight, that all juveniles in the care of Tarrant County are treated fairly and respectfully.

**2. During your 2024 judicial campaign, you stated that courts "should also provide alternative diversion/intervention programs," referring to the Felony Alcohol Intervention Program (FAIP) over which you preside as "life changing for many." In your Senate Judiciary Questionnaire, you described FAIP as a "four-year, intense supervision and treatment program for repeat DWI offenders."**

**a. If confirmed, how would you incorporate alternative diversion or intervention programs into your work as district judge?**

Response: I am unaware of alternative diversion or intervention programs available in the federal court system. If confirmed, I will make effort to discern what, if any, such programs are available and whether they would be helpful.

**b. Do you agree that these programs are useful tools in our justice system?**

Response: Programs such as FAIP can be useful tools in our justice system.

**3. Did President Trump lose the 2020 election?**

Response: President Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and served four years as President of the United States.

**4. Where were you on January 6, 2021?**

Response: Fort Worth, Texas.

**5. Do you denounce the January 6 insurrection?**

Response: The question touches on a matter of significant political debate. As a judicial

nominee, I believe it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on the events at the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

**6. Do you believe that January 6 rioters who were convicted of violent assaults on police officers should have been given full and unconditional pardons?**

Response: This question touches on a matter of significant political debate and controversy. As a judicial nominee, I believe it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on this issue.

**7. The Justice Department is currently defending the Trump Administration in a number of lawsuits challenging executive actions taken by the Administration. Federal judges—both Republican and Democratic appointees—have enjoined some of these actions, holding that they are illegal or unconstitutional. Alarming, President Trump, his allies, and even some nominees before the Senate Judiciary Committee have responded by questioning whether the executive branch must follow court orders.**

**a. What options do litigants—including the executive branch—have if they disagree with a court order?**

Response: Generally, litigants can seek appellate review if they disagree with a court's order.

**b. Do you believe a litigant can ever lawfully defy an order from a lower federal court? If yes, in what circumstances?**

Response: Litigants are expected to comply with all lawful court orders.

**c. Under the separation of powers, which branch of the federal government is responsible for determining whether a federal court order is lawful?**

Response: Generally, the judicial branch is responsible for determining whether a federal court order is lawful.

**8. District judges have occasionally issued non-party injunctions, which may include “nationwide injunctions” and “universal injunctions.”**

**a. Are non-party injunctions constitutional?**

Response: According to *Trump v. Casa, Inc.*, 606 U.S. 831, 841 (2025), district judges lack equitable authority to bind parties not properly before them.

**b. Are non-party injunctions a legitimate exercise of judicial power?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 8.a. above.

- c. Is it ever appropriate for a district judge to issue a non-party injunction? If so, under what circumstances is it appropriate?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 8.a. above.

- d. As a litigator, have you ever sought a non-party injunction as a form of relief? If so, please list each matter in which you have sought such relief.**

Response: No.

- 9. At any point during your selection process, did you have any discussions with anyone—including individuals at the White House, the Justice Department, or any outside groups—about loyalty to President Trump? If so, please provide details.**

Response: No.

- 10. Does the U.S. Constitution permit a president to serve three terms?**

Response: The 22nd Amendment states that presidents may serve up to two terms.

- 11. On May 26, 2025, in a Truth Social post, President Trump referred to some judges whose decisions he disagrees with, as “USA HATING JUDGES” and “MONSTERS”, who “...SUFFER FROM AN IDEOLOGY THAT IS SICK, AND VERY DANGEROUS FOR OUR COUNTRY...”<sup>1</sup>**

- a. Do you agree that these federal judges are “USA HATING” and “MONSTERS” who “...SUFFER FROM AN IDEOLOGY THAT IS SICK, AND VERY DANGEROUS FOR OUR COUNTRY...”?**

Response: As a judicial nominee, I do not believe it would be appropriate to comment or opine on statements from political figures on any subject of political controversy.

- b. Do you believe this rhetoric endangers the lives of judges and their families?**

Response: Please see my answer to Question 11.a. above.

- 12. In addition to the President’s own attacks on judges, his adviser Stephen Miller took to social media to call a federal trade court’s ruling against President Trump’s tariffs a**

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<sup>1</sup> Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TRUTH SOCIAL (May 26, 2025, 7:22 AM), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114573871728757682>.

“judicial coup”<sup>2</sup> and later reposted the images of the three judges who decided the case and wrote, “we are living under a judicial tyranny.”<sup>3</sup>

- a. Do you agree that these judges are engaged in a “judicial coup” and that “we are living under a judicial tyranny”?**

Response: Please see my answer to Question 11.a. above.

- b. Do you believe this rhetoric endangers the lives of judges and their families?**

Response: Please see my answer to Question 11.a. above.

- c. Would you feel comfortable with any politician or their adviser sharing a picture of you on social media if you issue a decision they disagree with?**

Response: Please see my answer to Question 11.a. above.

- 13. When, if ever, may a lower court depart from Supreme Court precedent?**

Response: Lower courts are bound by Supreme Court precedent.

- 14. When, in your opinion, would it be appropriate for a circuit court to overturn its own precedent?**

Response: Circuit courts should follow established practices and precedents when determining whether it would be appropriate to overturn circuit court precedent.

- 15. When, in your opinion, would it be appropriate for the Supreme Court to overrule its own precedent?**

Response: In determining whether it is appropriate to overturn its own precedent, the Supreme Court has considered the following five factors: nature of the court’s error, quality of the reasoning, workability, effect on other areas of the law, and reliance interests. *See Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, 597 U.S. 215, 263-90 (2022).

- 16. Please answer yes or no as to whether the following cases were correctly decided by the Supreme Court:**

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Miller (@StephenM), X, (May 28, 2025, 7:48 PM), <https://x.com/StephenM/status/1927874604531409314>.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Miller (@StephenM), X, (May 29, 2025, 8:25 AM), <https://x.com/StephenM/status/1928065122657845516>.

**a. *Brown v. Board of Education***

Response: Yes. As a judicial nominee, it would be inappropriate to opine on the correctness of Supreme Court precedent with two exceptions: *Brown* and *Loving*. Both are landmark decisions and have been recognized by prior nominees as so deeply rooted that the correctness of their judgement is beyond question. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply all binding Supreme Court precedent, including the decisions listed in Questions 16.b-m. below.

**b. *Plyler v. Doe***

Response: *Plyer* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**c. *Loving v. Virginia***

Response: Please see my response to Question 16.a. above.

**d. *Griswold v. Connecticut***

Response: *Griswold* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**e. *Trump v. United States***

Response: *Trump v. United States* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**f. *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization***

Response: *Dobbs* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**g. *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen***

Response: *Bruen* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**h. *Obergefell v. Hodges***

Response: *Obergefell* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**i. *Bostock v. Clayton County***

Response: *Bostock* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would

faithfully apply it.

**j. *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado***

Response: *Masterpiece Cakeshop* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**k. *303 Creative LLC v. Elenis***

Response: *303 Creative* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**l. *United States v. Rahimi***

Response: *Rahimi* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**m. *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo***

Response: *Loper Bright* is binding Supreme Court precedent. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply it.

**17. With respect to constitutional interpretation, do you believe judges should rely on the “original meaning” of the Constitution?**

Response: The Supreme Court has interpreted constitutional provisions by their original public meaning. If confirmed, I would follow all binding Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent when interpreting constitutional provisions.

**18. How do you decide when the Constitution’s “original meaning” should be controlling?**

Response: If confirmed, I would be bound by all binding Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent regarding the meaning of the Constitution. In the rare circumstance when a district court is required to consider novel constitutional questions, Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent suggests that an original-public-meaning analysis would be appropriate.

**19. Does the “original meaning” of the Constitution support a constitutional right to same-sex marriage?**

Response: The Supreme Court held in *Obergefell* that the Constitution provides a constitutional right to same-sex marriage. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply that precedent.

**20. Does the “original meaning” of the Constitution support the constitutional right to marry persons of a different race?**

Response: Yes.

**21. What is your understanding of the Equal Protection and Due Process clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment?**

Response: Generally speaking, the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits governmental infringement of fundamental rights and discrimination based on quasi-suspect or suspect characteristics. The Supreme Court has interpreted the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to establish procedural rules and substantive rights.

**22. How do these clauses apply to individuals that the Framers of the amendment likely did not have in mind, such as women? Or LGBTQ+ individuals?**

Response: The Supreme Court has found that these clauses prohibit discrimination based on sex and sexual orientation. If confirmed, I would faithfully follow all binding Supreme Court precedent when interpreting constitutional provisions.

**23. Do you believe that judges should be “originalist” and adhere to the original public meaning of constitutional provisions when applying those provisions today?**

Response: Please see my responses to Questions 17 and 18 above.

**24. If so, do you believe that courts should adhere to the original public meaning of the Foreign Emoluments Clause when interpreting and applying the Clause today?**

Response: Please see my responses to Questions 17 and 18 above.

**25. Under the U.S. Constitution, who is entitled to First Amendment protections?**

Response: The Supreme Court has held that the First Amendment protects individuals, corporations, and speech. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply binding Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent involving the First Amendment.

**26. How would you determine whether a law that regulates speech is “content-based” or “content-neutral”? What are some of the key questions that would inform your analysis?**

Response: The Supreme Court has held that “[c]ontent-based laws—those that target speech based on its communicative content—are presumptively unconstitutional and may be justified only if the government proves that they are narrowly tailored to serve compelling state interests.” *Reed v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona*, 576 U.S. 155, 163. A law is content neutral if it can be “justified without reference to the content of the regulated

speech.” *Id.* at 167. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply all binding Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent on this issue.

**27. What is the standard for determining whether a statement is protected speech under the true threats doctrine?**

Response: The Supreme Court has held that the First Amendment does not protect true threats, “serious expressions conveying that a speaker means to commit an act of unlawful violence,” *Counterman v. Colorado*, 600 U.S. 66, 74 (2023), under a recklessness standard. *Id.* at 79-82.

**28. Is every individual within the United States entitled to due process?**

Response: The Supreme Court has stated that “the Due Process Clause applies to all ‘persons’ within the United States, including aliens, whether their presence here is lawful, unlawful, temporary, or permanent.” *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 693 (2001).

**29. Can U.S. citizens be transported to other countries for the purpose of being detained, incarcerated, or otherwise penalized?**

Response: As a judicial nominee, it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on this issue because it is a subject of political controversy and debate, and is also being actively litigated. If confirmed, I would follow all binding Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court holdings.

**30. The Fourteenth Amendment states: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”**

**a. Is every person born in the United States a citizen under the Fourteenth Amendment?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 29 above.

**b. Is the citizenship or immigration status of the parents of an individual born in the United States relevant for determining whether the individual is a citizen under the Fourteenth Amendment?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 29 above.

**31. Do you believe that demographic and professional diversity on the federal bench is important? Please explain your views.**

Response: No one should be excluded from the federal bench because of their race, ethnicity, sex, religion, or any other protected characteristic. Attorneys with different backgrounds can provide valuable perspectives.

32. The bipartisan *First Step Act of 2018*, which was signed into law by President Trump, is one of the most important pieces of criminal justice legislation to be enacted during my time in Congress. At its core, the Act was based on a few key, evidence-based principles. First, incarcerated people can and should have meaningful access to rehabilitative programming and support in order to reduce recidivism and help our communities prosper. Second, overincarceration through the use of draconian mandatory minimum sentences does not serve the purposes of sentencing and ultimately causes greater, unnecessary harm to our communities. With these rehabilitative principles in mind, one thing Congress sought to achieve through this Act was giving greater discretion to judges—both before and after sentencing—to ensure that the criminal justice system effectively and efficiently fosters public safety for the benefit of all Americans.

a. **How do you view the role of federal judges in implementing the *First Step Act*?**

Response: District judges are obligated to faithfully apply the First Step Act, and follow all precedents interpreting it from circuit courts and the Supreme Court.

b. **Will you commit to fully and fairly considering the individualized circumstances of each defendant who comes before you when imposing sentences to ensure that they are properly tailored to promote the goals of sentencing and avoid terms of imprisonment in excess of what is necessary?**

Response: Yes.

33. The Federalist Society seeks to “reorder[] priorities within the legal system to place a premium on individual liberty, traditional values, and the rule of law.”

a. **In your Questionnaire, you state that you are currently or were previously a member of the Federalist Society. What is your understanding of “traditional values”?**

Response: I am not familiar with that statement or its context, and am unsure of its meaning.

b. **President Trump wrote on Truth Social that the Federalist Society gave him “bad advice” on “numerous Judicial Nominations.” He also wrote that Leonard Leo is a “sleazebag” who “probably hates America.” If you are not familiar with this post, please refer to it in the footnote.<sup>4</sup>**

i. **Do you agree with President Trump that the Federalist Society provided President Trump with bad advice during his first term? Why or why not?**

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<sup>4</sup> Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TRUTH SOCIAL (May 29, 2025, 8:10 PM), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114593880455063168>.

Response: I believe it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on public statements from political figures, especially regarding matters involving political controversy or debate.

- ii. Do you agree with President Trump that Leo is a sleazebag who probably hates America? Why or why not?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 33.b.i. above.

- iii. If you are confirmed, do you plan to remain affiliated with the Federalist Society?**

Response: Yes.

- c. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with the Federalist Society, including Leonard Leo or Steven G. Calabresi? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response. I do not know either Leonard Leo or Steven Calabresi. However, I have several friends and acquaintances associated with the Federalist Society in Texas. I have spoken to a few of those individuals generally about my application and the selection process. They have been encouraging and congratulated me upon my nomination.

- d. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to the Federalist Society, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- e. Have you ever been paid honoraria by the Federalist Society? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

- 34. The Teneo Network states that its purpose is to “Recruit, Connect, and Deploy talented conservatives who lead opinion and shape the industries that shape society.”**

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with the Teneo Network, including Leonard Leo? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to the Teneo Network, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by the Teneo Network? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

**35.** The Heritage Foundation states that its mission is to “formulate and promote public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense.” Heritage Action, which is affiliated with the Heritage Foundation, seeks to “fight for conservative policies in Washington, D.C. and in state capitals across the country.”

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with the Heritage Foundation or Heritage Action, including Kevin D. Roberts? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to the Heritage Foundation or Heritage Action, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Were you ever involved in or asked to contribute to Project 2025 in any way?**

Response: No.

- d. Have you ever been paid honoraria by the Heritage Foundation or Heritage Action? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

**36.** The America First Policy Institute (AFPI) states that its “guiding principles are liberty, free enterprise, national greatness, American military superiority, foreign-policy engagement in the American interest, and the primacy of American workers, families, and communities in all we do.”

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with AFPI? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to AFPI, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by AFPI? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

**37.** The America First Legal Institute (AFLI) states that it seeks to “oppose the radical left’s anti-jobs, anti-freedom, anti-faith, anti-borders, anti-police, and anti-American crusade.”

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with AFLI, including Stephen Miller, Gene Hamilton, or Daniel Epstein? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to AFLI, including but not limited to research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by AFLI? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

**38.** The Article III Project is an organization which claims that, “The left is weaponizing the power of the judiciary against ordinary citizens.”

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with the Article III Project, including Mike Davis, Will Chamberlain, or Josh Hammer? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to the Article III Project, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by the Article III Project? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

**39.** The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) states that it is “the world’s largest legal organization committed to protecting religious freedom, free speech, the sanctity of life, marriage and family, and parental rights.”

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with ADF? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: I have friends and acquaintances associated with ADF. I have spoken to a few of those individuals generally about my application and the selection process. They have been encouraging and congratulated me upon my nomination.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to ADF, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by ADF? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

**40.** The Concord Fund, also known as the Judicial Crisis Network, states that it is committed “to the Constitution and the Founders’ vision of a nation of limited government; dedicated to the rule of law; with a fair and impartial judiciary.” It is affiliated with the 85 Fund, also known as the Honest Elections Project and the Judicial Education Project.

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with these organizations, including Leonard Leo or Carrie Severino? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to these organizations, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by these organizations? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

- d. Do you have any concerns about outside groups or special interests making undisclosed donations to front organizations like the Concord Fund or 85 Fund in support of your nomination? Note that I am not asking whether you have solicited any such donations, I am asking whether you would find such donations to be problematic.**

Response: I am not familiar with either of these organizations and don't fully understand the issue. To the extent this question is asking about a political dispute, I believe it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on this issue.

- e. If you learn of any such donations, will you commit to call for the undisclosed donors to make their donations public so that if you are confirmed you can have this information when you make decisions about recusal in cases that these donors may have an interest in?**

Response: Impartiality and the appearance of impartiality are important in maintaining the public's confidence in the judicial system. If confirmed, I will consult the relevant canons and rules in determining whether a conflict of interest exists. To the extent this question is asking for an opinion on political policy, I believe it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on this issue.

- f. Will you condemn any attempt to make undisclosed donations to the Concord Fund or 85 Fund on behalf of your nomination?**

Response: Please see my responses to Questions 40.d-e. above.

Senate Judiciary Committee  
Hearing on  
Nominations  
February 4, 2026  
Questions for the Record  
Senator Amy Klobuchar

For Christopher Wolfe, to be U.S. District Court Judge for the Western District of Texas  
Since the start of this administration, President Trump has frozen billions in federal funding that Congress appropriated.

- What provision of the Constitution empowers the President to withhold funds appropriated by Congress?

Response: Whether a President can impound funds is a topic of public debate and controversy. Proponents of a President’s power to impound funds generally argue that the Vesting Clause, Commander-in-Chief Clause, the President’s foreign affair powers, and the duty to “Take Care” in Article II authorize the President to manage, control, or delay expenditures. Some argue that while Congress has the “power of the purse,” appropriated funds set a ceiling on spending, not mandate that every dollar be spent. By contrast, opponents of impoundment cite the Impoundment Act and cases like *Train v. City of New York*, 420 U.S. 35 (1975) as authority for the argument that the President lacks authority to impound funds appropriated by Congress. As a judicial nominee, it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on this issue because it is currently being debated and litigated.

- What is your understanding of the Appropriations Clause?

Response: The Appropriations Clause in Article I establishes Congress’s “power of the purse,” generally restricting the expenditure of federal funds without legislative approval.

**Nomination of Christopher Wolfe to the  
United States District Court for the Western District of Texas  
Questions for the Record  
Submitted February 11, 2026**

**QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR COONS**

1. Do you believe that the Senate Judiciary Committee has a responsibility to evaluate judicial nominees to the best of its ability, including by asking questions on the record to make each nominee's unique background and viewpoint clear to the American people?

Response: Yes.

2. Do you believe that you, as a judicial nominee, have a responsibility to the American people to give full and complete answers to the Committee's questions to the best of your ability and in good faith?

Response: Yes.

3. Do you believe you fulfilled this responsibility with the answers you have provided to my questions for the record?

Response: Yes.

- a. Did you receive assistance from staff in the White House, the Department of Justice, or any other organization in writing your responses to these questions? If so, from whom did you receive assistance and what was the nature of the assistance you received?

Response: I drafted responses to these questions while reviewing case law, statutes, the Constitution, and prior judicial nominees' responses to similar questions. I received feedback from DOJ officials, finalized my answers, and authorized them to be submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

- b. Do you believe it is appropriate for a nominee to answer my questions for the record with the verbatim answers of previous nominees who answered the same questions?

Response: Yes, if the response fairly and accurately reflects a nominee's views in response to a particular question.

- c. Did you review the answers to my questions for the record submitted by previous judicial nominees before answering these questions?

Response: Yes.

- d. To your knowledge, are any of your answers to these questions for the record exact duplicates of answers provided by previous nominees?

Response: Yes.

4. At any point during the process that led to your nomination, did you make any representations or commitments to anyone—including but not limited to individuals at the White House, at the Justice Department, or at outside groups—as to how you would handle a particular case or matter if confirmed? If so, explain fully.

Response: No.

- a. At any point during the process that led to your nomination, were you asked about your opinion on any cases that involve President Trump or the Trump administration?

Response: No.

5. When it comes to conducting yourself ethically, who in the legal profession do you see as a role model?

Response: My mentor and role model is the Honorable Terry R. Means of the Northern District of Texas (Fort Worth Division). Judge Means embodies what I believe a judge should be: humble, hardworking, impartial, respectful of litigants and parties before him, knowledgeable of the law, and courageous. Judge Means has a high view of the law and is a dedicated public servant. If confirmed, I will try to follow Judge Means's example.

6. How would you describe your judicial philosophy?

Response: I believe judges should apply the law as written.

7. With respect to substantive due process, what factors do you look to when a case requires you to determine whether a right is fundamental and protected under the Fourteenth Amendment?

Response: The Supreme Court has found that the Fourteenth Amendment contains certain fundamental, substantive due process rights. If confirmed, I will faithfully follow all binding Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent regarding substantive due process rights.

- a. Would you consider whether the right is expressly enumerated in the Constitution?

Response: Yes.

- b. Would you consider whether the right is deeply rooted in this nation's history and tradition? If so, what types of sources would you consult to determine whether a right is deeply rooted in this nation's history and tradition?

Response: Yes. I would consider whether a right is deeply rooted in this nation's history and tradition by looking to the types of sources relied on in cases like *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org.*, 597 U.S. 215 (2022), *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. 702 (1997), and *United States v. Rahimi*, 602 U.S. 680 (2024). If confirmed, I would faithfully apply all binding Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent.

- c. Would you consider whether the right has previously been recognized by Supreme Court or circuit precedent? What about the precedent of another court of appeals?

Response: Yes. I would faithfully follow all binding Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent regarding whether a right has been previously recognized. In the absence of controlling precedent, I would also consider precedent of another court of appeals as persuasive.

- d. Would you consider whether a *similar* right has previously been recognized by Supreme Court or circuit precedent?

Response: Yes.

- e. What other factors would you consider?

Response: I would consider any other relevant factors relied upon by the Fifth Circuit, Supreme Court, or other circuit courts.

8. If you concluded that the President had violated his constitutional duty to faithfully execute the laws and then had to determine the remedy, what process would you use to perform that analysis? I assume you would faithfully follow binding precedent, but what specific precedents and/or other sources of law would you look to?

Response: Under such circumstances, I would look for binding precedent and consider the briefing of the parties regarding available remedies.

9. Is President Trump eligible to be elected President for a third term in 2028? Assume that I know what the text of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment says. I am interested in your application of that text to whether or not President Trump can be elected President in 2028.

Response: The 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment states that presidents may serve up to two terms.

10. If Congress certifies a candidate as being the winner of a presidential election, does that mean that the candidate won the election? If not, what does it mean?

Response: It appears this question calls for a comment or opinion on a topic of significant political controversy and debate. I believe it would be inappropriate to comment beyond what I and other judicial nominees have stated in response to similar questions on this topic.

11. At your Senate Judiciary Committee nomination hearing, Senator Blumenthal asked you who won the popular vote and the electoral college in the 2020 election. You echoed your fellow nominees' responses that President Biden was certified the winner and served four years.

- a. In advance of the hearing, did you prepare a potential answer or set of answers to question(s) you might receive related to who won the 2020 election? If so, what information or sources did you use to develop your answer(s)?

Response: I reviewed videos of Senate Judiciary Committee hearings and responses to questions for the record where previous judicial nominees replied to 2020-election questions similarly, and concluded that their answers were accurate and avoided potential violations of judicial canons. I also received guidance from White House and DOJ officials on how previous judicial nominees have responded to these types of questions.

- b. Prior to the hearing, did anyone instruct, suggest, imply, or otherwise represent that you should avoid directly answering questions about who won the 2020 election? If so, please explain. If not, please explain how you, without any outside input, made the decision to reply with who was *certified* the winner when asked about who *won* the 2020 election.

Response: No. Please also see my response to Question 11.a. above.

- c. Do you believe that you would face any adverse professional consequences if you directly stated, during your hearing or otherwise on the record, that President Trump lost the 2020 election, or that President Biden won the 2020 election? Please explain.

Response: Answering 2020-election questions differently than I and other judicial nominees have responded may have been perceived as an opinion on a topic of public debate and controversy. Therefore, I believed it was appropriate to respond as I did at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing.

12. Under 28 U.S.C. § 455, “[a]ny justice, judge, or magistrate judge of the United States shall disqualify [themselves] in any proceeding in which [their] impartiality might reasonably be questioned.” As a general matter, what criteria would you use when deciding whether to recuse yourself from a case?

Response: The Supreme Court has stated that what matters under 28 U.S.C. § 455(a) “is

not the reality of bias or prejudice but its appearance.” *Microsoft v. United States*, 530 U.S. 1301, 1302 (2000) (quoting *Liteky v. United States*, 510 U.S. 540, 548 (1994). “This inquiry is an objective one, made from the perspective of a reasonable observer who is informed of all the surrounding facts and circumstances.” *Id.* If confirmed, I will follow § 455, the Code of Conduct for United States Judges, Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent, and all other relevant rules, practices, ethical requirements, and guidance from colleagues when considering whether actual or potential conflicts of interests exists.

13. I have been proud to co-lead the bipartisan *Safer Supervision Act*, a bill to reform our federal supervised release system that has received substantial conservative and law enforcement support. The premise of the bill is that our federal supervision system has strayed far from how Congress designed it, as courts impose it mechanically in essentially every case, which means that probation officers do not have time to properly supervise those who most need it. The bill reinforces courts’ existing obligations under 18 U.S.C. §§ 3553 and 3583 to impose supervision as warranted by the individual facts of the case and encourages more robust use of early termination when warranted to provide positive incentives encouraging rehabilitation. At the encouragement of a bipartisan group of members of Congress, the U.S. Sentencing Commission adopted an amendment to supervision guidelines implementing certain parts of the bill; this amendment went into effect on November 1.

a. As a sentencing judge, would you endeavor to impose supervision thoughtfully and on the basis of the individual facts of the case consistent with 18 U.S.C. § 3553 and 18 U.S.C. § 3583?

Response: Yes.

b. Would you agree that the availability of early termination under 18 U.S.C. § 3583(e)(1) can provide individuals positive incentives to rehabilitate?

Response: Yes.

c. Will you commit if confirmed to reviewing the *Safer Supervision Act* and the recent Sentencing Commission amendment and considering them as you develop your approach to sentencing of supervised release?

Response: Yes.

14. If you had to determine whether it is appropriate for the President of the United States to punish a law firm for taking on a client that the President did not like, what process would you use to perform that analysis? I assume you would faithfully follow binding precedent, but what specific precedents and/or other sources of law would you look to?

Response: I believe it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on this issue because the question appears to touch on a matter of public controversy and debate, and that has

been or is currently being litigated.

15. Do you agree that the constitutional right to travel across state lines is fundamental and well established?

Response: The Supreme Court has stated that the “freedom to travel throughout the United States has long been recognized as a basic right under the Constitution.” *United States v. Guest*, 383 U.S. 745, 758 (1966).

- a. If you had to determine whether it is constitutional for a state to restrict the interstate travel of its citizens, what process would you use to perform that analysis? I assume you would faithfully follow binding precedent, but what specific precedents and/or other sources of law would you look to?

Response: I would look to binding precedent of both the Fifth Circuit and the Supreme Court, including *United States v. Guest*, 383 U.S. 745, 758 (1966) and *Saenz v. Roe*, 526 U.S. 489, 500 (1999). I would also look to authority from other circuits.

16. Do you believe that the Constitution protects a fundamental right to privacy?

Response: The Supreme Court has recognized a fundamental right to privacy in certain contexts. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply all binding Supreme Court precedent.

- a. Do you agree that that right protects a woman’s right to use contraceptives? If you do not agree, please explain whether this right is protected or not and which constitutional rights or provisions encompass it.

Response: The Supreme Court has recognized that the Constitution protects a woman’s right to use contraceptives. See *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965); *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, 405 U.S. 438 (1972). If confirmed, I would faithfully apply all binding precedent on this issue.

17. Does the public’s original understanding of the meaning of a constitutional provision constrain its application decades or centuries later?

Response: No. I understand originalism to mean that the Constitution and statutes should be interpreted by their original public meaning, that is, in accord with what would have been understood by the public at the time of ratification or enactment. But the application of that interpretive method does not have to be rigid or identical. For example, while discussing originalism in the context of interpreting the Second Amendment, the Supreme Court noted that “some courts have misunderstood the methodology of our recent Second Amendment cases. These precedents were not meant to suggest a law trapped in amber.” *United States v. Rahimi*, 602 U.S. 680, 691 (2024). “[T]he Second Amendment is not limited only to those arms that were in existence at the founding,” and it “permits more than just those regulations identical to ones that could be found in 1791.

Holding otherwise would be as mistaken as applying the protections of the right only to muskets and sabers.” *Id.* at 691-92. “A court must ascertain whether the new law is “relevantly similar” to laws that our tradition is understood to permit, “apply[ing] faithfully the balance struck by the founding generation to modern circumstances.” *Id.* at 692 (cleaned up). If confirmed, I will faithfully apply all binding precedent regarding the application of constitutional interpretation.

- b. What specific sources would you employ to discern the public’s original understanding of the meaning of a constitutional provision? Please provide three examples of sources you consider reliable in this regard.

Response: I would consult binding Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent, the text of the constitutional provision and its broader context, precedent from other courts of appeals, and historical sources (e.g., founding-era dictionaries, Federalist and anti-Federalist Papers, ratification debates).

18. Do you believe that immigrants, regardless of legal status, are entitled to due process and fair adjudication of their claims?

Response: Yes. The Supreme Court has stated that “the Due Process Clause applies to all ‘persons’ within the United States, including aliens, whether their presence here is lawful, unlawful, temporary, or permanent.” *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 693 (2001). There are precedents addressing what process is due under certain contexts. I would faithfully apply all binding precedent addressing due process claims.

19. Should you be confirmed, what would you do if a party refuses to comply with one of your orders?

Response: It would depend on the facts and circumstances. Generally, I would consider initiating contempt proceedings by providing notice, normally through a show-cause order, to the party and provide an opportunity to be heard on the matter through written response or by holding a hearing, or both. I would then seek to determine whether the party had knowledge of the order, willfully failed to comply, and whether the party had a valid defense.

20. What criteria would you use to determine whether a party was engaging in abusive litigation tactics, such as excessive discovery requests, repeatedly or frivolously filing motions, or other procedural delays?

Response: I would generally consider the arguments by the parties to the litigation and the specific circumstances in determining whether a party was acting in bad faith. I would faithfully follow binding precedent regarding whether a party had engaged in abusive litigation tactics.

- a. If you determined that a party was engaging in such tactics, how would you address it?

Response: If a court determines that a party has engaged in such practices, the court has broad authority to impose sanctions or other remedies – all designed to punish the misconduct, deter future violations, and compensate the opposing party for expenses incurred.

21. What role, if any, should the practical consequences of a particular ruling play in a judge's rendering of a decision?

Response: There are some instances where a court is required to consider the practical consequences of a particular ruling, such as whether to grant a stay or temporary injunction. In most instances, however, a court should rule according to the law without regard to the consequences.

22. What role, if any, should a judge's personal life experience play in his or her decision-making process?

Response: A judge should be able to set aside his or her personal life and make decisions on the facts and law in a dispassionate way without undue influence of improper factors. However, in my experience, a judge's personal life can affect the way he or she conducts court business. Hopefully, a judge's personal life is a source of sound judgment and respect for others. A judge's personal life also has the ability to either increase or decrease the reputation of the judiciary. If confirmed, I commit to conducting myself in an honorable way, knowing the potential effect on the judiciary.

23. What role, if any, should empathy play in a judge's decision-making process?

Response: A judge should be mindful that the decisions he or she makes has an impact on the lives of real people. However, a judge should rule according to the law, regardless of whether he or she empathizes with a litigant.

24. What case or legal matter are you most proud of having worked on during your career?

Response: I have prosecuted and presided over several significant cases during my career, but the Felony Alcohol Intervention Program (FAIP) is a source of pride. FAIP is an intense supervision and treatment program in Tarrant County, Texas, for individuals who have been convicted of Driving While Intoxicated three or more times. Instead of a lengthy prison sentence or 10-year term of probation, defendants agree to follow strict conditions of FAIP during a four-year term of probation. FAIP is difficult. Among other conditions, probationers are required to regularly attend Alcoholics Anonymous, submit to random urinalysis, be equipped with a Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitor ("SCRAM"), attend weekly meetings in my court, and maintain full-time employment. They are also not allowed to drive a vehicle for six months, and then only with an interlock device for the duration of the program. I did not create FAIP, but I oversee it. The program has been very successful. The recidivism rate is low, and individuals have experienced long-term sobriety for the first time in their lives. Not all complete the

program, but those that do tell us that FAIP changed their lives. I'm proud of the impact FAIP has made in the lives of many.

25. Some district court judges have issued standing orders indicating that the court will favor holding an oral argument when there is a representation that the argument would be handled by a junior lawyer. Such efforts are intended to provide more speaking opportunities in court for junior lawyers. Would you consider issuing a standing order that would encourage more junior lawyers to handle oral arguments? Why or why not?

Response: Yes. I think it's important that junior lawyers are provided opportunities to gain valuable experience. Those opportunities, of course, should be balanced with the need to avoid unwarranted costs to the parties.

- a. How else would you support the skills development of junior lawyers appearing before you?

Response: In addition to being open to the idea of a standing order like the one described above, if confirmed, I intend to participate in a local Inn of Court and other young lawyer mentoring programs.

26. Discuss your proposed hiring process for law clerks.

Response: If confirmed, I would seek the advice of my colleagues in the Northern and Western Districts of Texas as to the best procedures and timelines for clerk hiring.

- a. Do you think law clerks should be protected by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act?

Response: I have been a state district judge for almost eight years. I take seriously the responsibility to ensure that judicial staff are treated with the utmost dignity and respect. If confirmed, I would not tolerate misconduct, harassment, or any form of discrimination in the court or chambers. I believe it would be inappropriate to comment further because the question calls for an opinion on a political matter and one that could be the subject of future litigation.

27. Recently, multiple studies have revealed ongoing problems with workplace conduct policies and outcomes in the federal judiciary. In a national climate survey, hundreds of judiciary employees reported that they experienced sexual harassment, discrimination, or other forms of misconduct on the job. A study by the Federal Judicial Center and the National Academy of Public Administration found the branch has failed to set up trusted reporting systems for employees who experience misconduct or ensure those handling complaints are adequately trained.

- a. If confirmed, what proactive steps would you take to ensure that the clerks and judicial assistants who work in your chambers are treated with respect and are not subject to misconduct?

Response: Please see my response to Question 26.a. above. Additionally, if confirmed, I would consult with colleagues in the Northern and Western Districts of Texas for advice on preferred policies and available programs and trainings.

- b. What proactive steps would you take to ensure that any workplace-related concerns that your clerks and judicial assistants may have are fully addressed?

Response: Please see my responses to Questions 26.a. and 27.a. above. I would also welcome input from current and former clerks and judicial staff.

- c. If you are confirmed and you later hear from a colleague or your chambers staff that another judge is acting inappropriately, what steps would you take to help ensure the problem is addressed?

Response: I would consider all options under the circumstances, including reporting the allegations to the appropriate authorities.

28. Do you agree with me that the attack at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, was an insurrection? Why or why not?

Response: I believe it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on this issue because it is a topic of significant political debate and controversy.

- a. If you think this question would require you to express an opinion on “political” matters, as some judicial nominees have responded when asked this question, please explain why labeling the events of January 6, 2021, as either “an insurrection” or “not an insurrection” requires you to opine on a “political” matter.

Response: Please see my response to Question 28 above.

29. As you know, the President has the power under the Constitution to grant executive clemency relief. Even so, in your opinion, do you think the individuals convicted of assaulting law enforcement officers at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, deserved to be pardoned? I am asking for your opinion about whether the pardons were prudent, not whether the President has the authority to issue them.

Response: Please see my response to Question 28 above.

30. If you were the President on January 20, 2025, would you have pardoned the individuals convicted of assaulting law enforcement officers at the Capitol on January 6, 2021? Again, I know that the President has the power under the Constitution to grant executive clemency relief. I want to know whether you—if serving as President on January 20, 2025—would have chosen to issue pardons to those convicted of assaulting law enforcement officers at the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Response: Please see my answer to Question 28 above.

31. In your Senate Judiciary Questionnaire, you note that just 1% of your practice has involved civil proceedings. You also note that 0% of the cases you have presided over as a judge were civil proceedings.

- a. Why do you think you are qualified to serve as a federal judge overseeing a substantial civil docket if you have so little experience with civil cases?

Response: I've been in the courtroom for over 25 years and have either tried or presided over 100 jury trials. I know how to apply law to facts, as a litigator and judge. I completed a civil litigation concentration at Baylor Law School, clerked at civil law firms during law school, and began my career in civil litigation. I managed a heavy caseload as a federal prosecutor, routinely wrote and responded to substantive motions, especially while prosecuting white-collar fraud, and became proficient with the Federal Rules of Evidence and Criminal Procedure. While civil and criminal cases are clearly different, they share basics: a claim, a process of discovery, rules of procedure, negotiations, pre-trial motions, and some form of disposition or settlement. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement, a trial is ordered. And my record demonstrates that I'm comfortable in the courtroom. I believe my 25 years of experience has adequately prepared me to preside over criminal and civil cases.

- b. If you are confirmed, what resources will you use to get up to speed on civil proceedings?

Response: I had the privilege of practicing before outstanding federal judges during my career as an Assistant United States Attorney, several of whom are still on the bench. I also have friendships with current district judges in the Northern and Western Districts of Texas. Several of those judges have kindly offered to help me get up to speed. If confirmed, I intend to take advantage of their years of experience.

**Questions for the Record for Judge Christopher Wolfe**  
**Submitted by Senator Richard Blumenthal**  
**February 11, 2026**

1. If confirmed, will you recuse yourself from any case where a reasonable person, knowing all the relevant facts, might question your impartiality, even if you personally believe you can be fair?

Response: 28 U.S.C. § 455(a) states that a judge “shall disqualify himself in any proceeding in which his impartiality might reasonably be questioned.” The Supreme Court has stated that “[t]his inquiry is an objective one, made from the perspective of a reasonable observer who is informed of all the surrounding facts and circumstances.” *Microsoft v. United States*, 530 U.S. 1301, 1302 (2000). The import of § 455(a) “is not the reality of bias or prejudice but its appearance.” *Id.* (quoting *Liteky v. United States*, 510 U.S. 540, 548 (1994)). If confirmed, I will follow § 455, the Code of Conduct for United States Judges, Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent, and all other ethical rules and obligations regarding judicial conduct when considering whether actual or potential conflicts of interest exists.

- a. If confirmed, will you recuse yourself from cases involving individuals, organizations, or entities to which you or your family members have made political contributions or provided political support?

28 U.S.C. § 455(a) states that a judge “shall disqualify himself in any proceeding in which his impartiality might reasonably be questioned.” If confirmed, I will follow § 455, the Code of Conduct, Fifth Circuit and Supreme Court precedent, and all other ethical rules and obligations regarding judicial conduct when considering whether actual or potential conflicts of interest exists.

- b. If confirmed, will you recuse yourself from cases involving former clients, former law firms, or organizations with which you have had significant professional relationships?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.a. above.

- c. If confirmed, will you recuse yourself from cases involving personal friends, social acquaintances, or individuals with whom you have ongoing personal relationships?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.a. above.

2. If confirmed, will you commit to avoiding all *ex parte* communications about pending cases, including informal discussions at social events or professional gatherings?

Response: If confirmed, I will faithfully comply with all ethical rules and obligations regarding judicial conduct.

- d. If confirmed, will you avoid discussing pending cases or judicial business with elected officials, political appointees, or political operatives?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2 above.

- e. If confirmed, will you commit to declining meetings or communications with lobbyists, advocacy groups, or special interests seeking to influence your judicial decisions?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2 above.

- f. If confirmed, will you refrain from making public statements about legal or political issues that could reasonably be expected to come before your court?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2 above.

- 3. If confirmed, will you commit to filing complete and accurate financial disclosure reports that include all required information about your financial interests and activities?

Response: Yes.

- g. If confirmed, will you decline all gifts from parties who might appear before your court or who have interests that could be affected by your judicial decisions?

Response: If confirmed, I will faithfully comply with all ethical rules and obligations regarding judicial conduct, including any requirements related to potential conflicts of interest and gifts.

- h. If confirmed, will you decline privately funded travel, hospitality, or entertainment that could create an appearance of impropriety or special access?

Response: If confirmed, I will faithfully comply with all ethical rules and obligations regarding judicial conduct, including any rules and obligations related to privately funded travel, hospitality, or entertainment.

- i. If confirmed, will you ensure that any teaching, speaking, or writing activities comply with judicial ethics requirements and do not create conflicts with your judicial duties?

Response: If confirmed, I will faithfully comply with all ethical rules and obligations regarding judicial conduct, including any rules and obligations that impact teaching, speaking, or writing activities.

- 4. The House Republican-authored budget reconciliation bill for Fiscal Year 2026 had included a provision that would have limited federal judges' ability to hold government

officials in contempt. While the Senate Parliamentarian ruled that the provision violated the Byrd Rule, and it was, therefore, removed, it would have prohibited federal courts from issuing contempt penalties against officials who disobey preliminary injunctions or Temporary Restraining Orders if the party seeking the order did not provide financial security to cover potential future damages for wrongful enjoining.

The contempt power was first codified in law in the Judiciary Act of 1789. In 1873, the Supreme Court described it as “inherent in all courts” and “essential to the preservation of order in judicial proceedings and to the enforcement of the judgements, orders, and writs of the courts, and consequently to the due administration of justice.” Yet House Republicans are seeking to exempt government officials from this key tool for judicial enforcement.

- a. Do you believe the contempt power is “essential . . . to the due administration of justice[?]”

Response: The Supreme Court has stated that “the power to punish for contempts is inherent in all courts, has been many times decided and may be regarded as settled law. It is essential to the administration of justice.” *Michelson v. United States ex rel. Chicago, St. P., M., & O.R. Co.*, 266 U.S. 42, 65 (1924).

- b. Do you believe that federal judges should be limited in their ability to hold government officials who defy court orders in contempt?

Response: It appears that this question calls for an opinion on a topic of political controversy or debate. As a judicial nominee, I believe it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on this issue.

5. If confirmed, you, like all other members of the federal bench, would have the ability to issue orders. On February 9, 2025, Vice President Vance posted on X that “[j]udges aren’t allowed to control the executive’s legitimate power.” This raises an extremely concerning specter of Executive Branch defiance of court orders.

- a. If confirmed, would you have the ability to issue orders?

Response: Yes.

- i. Would you have the ability to enforce those orders?

Response: Yes. Generally speaking, district courts are able to enforce orders through status reports, show-cause orders, civil and criminal contempt procedures, and sanctions.

- ii. What powers would you have to enforce those orders?

Response: Please see my response to Question 5.a.i. above.

- b. Does there exist a legal basis for federal Executive Branch officials to defy federal court orders? If so, what basis and in which circumstances?

Response: With rare exception (e.g., lack of jurisdiction, impossibility), litigants, including executive branch officials, are expected to comply with all lawful court orders. If a litigant receives an adverse ruling, the general options are to request a stay and seek appellate review.

- c. Does there exist a legal basis for state officials to defy federal court orders? If so, what basis and in which circumstances?

Response: With rare exception (e.g., lack of jurisdiction, impossibility), litigants, including state officials, are expected to comply with all lawful court orders. If a litigant receives an adverse ruling, the general options are to request a stay and seek appellate review.

- d. What would make a court order unlawful?

Response: I have not studied this issue in depth, but a few examples of possible unlawful orders would be impossibility, lack of jurisdiction, and when a court exceeds its authority.

- i. What is the process a party should follow if it believes a court order to be unlawful?

Response: Generally, if a litigant believes a court's order is unlawful, the normal course is to seek appellate review.

- ii. Is it ever acceptable to not follow this process? When and why?

Response: I have not studied this issue in depth. I am unaware of when and how litigants can respond to adverse rulings by means other than what is noted in my response to Question 5.d.i. above.

6. Were you in Washington, D.C. on January 6, 2021?

Response: No. I was in Fort Worth, Texas, on January 6, 2021.

- a. Were you inside the U.S. Capitol or on the U.S. Capitol grounds on January 6, 2021?

Response: No.

**Senator Mazie K. Hirono**  
**Senate Judiciary Committee**

**Nomination Hearing**  
**Questions for the Record for Christopher R. Wolfe**

1. In 2022, you were criticized for releasing a repeat domestic violence offender on bond despite having had access to the defendant's records which showed he had a violent criminal history.
  - a. **Is it correct that this man, upon being released, went to his ex-girlfriend's house, impersonated a police officer to gain entry, strangled her until she was unconscious, and then fled the state?**

Response: In October 2021, a defendant was arrested for assaulting his ex-girlfriend. Texas law at that time mandated that a bond be set for the defendant. A county magistrate set the defendant's bond amount and added conditions of bond after an "individual magistration" that included a review of the defendant's criminal record, a probable cause affidavit, a risk assessment, and other available records. The state did not object to the bond amount or request additional conditions of bond. Almost four months later, the surety requested an arrest warrant because the defendant had moved out of state and failed to check in with the bondsman. I issued a warrant and the defendant was arrested. The defendant's attorney (deceased) appeared on behalf of his client and requested a bond. The defendant was legally entitled to a bond. I reset the bond amount originally set by the county magistrate. Upon making bond, the defendant drove to his ex-girlfriend's house, assaulted her, kidnapped their child, and fled. Upon being alerted of this, I immediately issued a warrant for the defendant's arrest. The defendant was arrested in New Mexico approximately 15 hours later. The child was unharmed. I then held the defendant without bond until trial. On the eve of trial, the defendant pleaded guilty to the offenses of burglary of a habitation and assault of a family member and was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment via plea agreement. In 2025, the Texas legislature enacted a bail reform package, generally providing judges with new tools to withhold bonds for violent offenders.

2. In 2024, as a member of the Tarrant County Juvenile Board, you cancelled a decades-old contract with the Youth Advocates Program due to its inclusion of "diversity initiatives" and "systemic racism" on the organization's website. You stated this language "reflects hot topics and controversy politically."
  - a. **Given your choice to end such an established productive relationship over your views on diversity, why should litigants and the public believe you would be impartial on cases concerning diversity initiatives?**

Response: The Tarrant County Juvenile Board is comprised of all district judges in Tarrant County and the County Judge. The Board is responsible for ensuring that (1) juvenile detention facilities are safe, well-staffed, compliant with local, state, and federal laws and regulations, (2) juveniles are cared for and treated

fairly and respectfully, and (3) the detention facility and all juvenile services are fiscally prudent. In 2024, the Board voted not to automatically renew an annual contract with Youth Advocacy Program (YAP) and declined their request for a 25-percent increase in funding. The Board believed that YAP had become increasingly political and learned that they used 15 percent of taxpayer funding for nationwide lobbying. The Board also believed there were less expensive service providers. I do not recall the specifics of YAP's website, but it contained controversial cultural and political content beyond mentions of "diversity initiatives" and "systemic racism." Such content was removed from YAP's website days after an open-forum, Board meeting. The Board's unwillingness to renew YAP's contract and to deny their request for additional funds was not because of two phrases on a website. Since 2024, Tarrant County has been able to adequately care for juveniles while also saving taxpayer money. I do not believe services provided to juveniles under the care of Tarrant County has declined since the expiration of YAP's contract.

**Nomination of Christopher R. Wolfe**  
**United States District Court for the Western District of Texas**  
**Questions for the Record**  
**Submitted February 11, 2026**

**QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BOOKER**

1. The American Bar Association (ABA) Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary has conducted extensive peer evaluations of the professional qualifications of a president's nominees to become federal judges for seven decades. This practice has endured through 18 presidential administrations, under Republican and Democratic presidents.

On May 29, 2025, Attorney General Pam Bondi ended this longstanding practice when she informed the ABA that, "[T]he Office of Legal Policy will no longer direct nominees to provide waivers allowing the ABA access to nonpublic information, including bar records. Nominees will also not respond to questionnaires prepared by the ABA and will not sit for interviews with the ABA."<sup>1</sup>

- a. Do you agree with AG Bondi that "the ABA no longer functions as a fair arbiter of nominees' qualifications and its ratings invariably and demonstrably favor nominees put forth by Democratic administrations"?

Response: As a judicial nominee, I believe it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on statements from political figures or on topics of political controversy.

2. If this Committee were to establish that a sitting federal judge knowingly provided false testimony to this Committee, what do you believe the appropriate process and consequences should be?

Response: I believe that a judicial nominee should provide truthful testimony to this Committee. I would defer to this committee as to the appropriate process or consequences if it were to be established that a federal judge knowingly provided false testimony.

3. If this Committee were to establish that a political appointee knowingly provided false testimony to this Committee, what do you believe the appropriate process and consequences should be?

Response: I believe that a political nominee should provide truthful testimony to this Committee. I would defer to this committee as to the appropriate process or consequences if it were to be established that a political appointee knowingly provided false testimony.

4. How would you characterize your judicial philosophy?

Response: I believe judges should apply the law as written.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Attorney General Pam Bondi to William R. Bay, President, American Bar Association (May 29, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1402156/dl?inline>.

5. What do you understand originalism to mean?

Response: I understand originalism to mean that positive law should be interpreted by their original public meaning, that is, in accord with what would have been understood by the public at the time of ratification or enactment. In other words, the meaning of the law remains fixed until properly ratified or amended.

6. Do you consider yourself an originalist?

Response: Generally, yes. If confirmed as a district judge, I will faithfully apply all binding precedent regarding what a law means or how it should be interpreted.

7. What do you understand textualism to mean?

Response: I understand textualism to mean a method of interpretation that focuses on the plain, ordinary meaning of a text, as opposed to subjective intent of its drafters, and that seeks to discern the law by its original public meaning.

8. Do you consider yourself a textualist?

Response: Generally, yes. If confirmed as a district judge, I will faithfully apply all binding precedent regarding what a law means or how it should be interpreted.

9. Legislative history refers to the record Congress produces during the process of passing a bill into law, such as detailed reports by congressional committees about a pending bill or statements by key congressional leaders while a law was being drafted. Some federal judges consider legislative history when analyzing the meaning of a statute.

a. If you are confirmed to serve on the federal bench, would you consult and cite legislative history to analyze or interpret a federal statute?

Response: I would consider legislative history if cited by litigants or if the statutory text is vague or ambiguous. However, legislative history is subordinate to the actual text of a statute. If confirmed as a district judge, I will faithfully apply all binding precedent regarding what a law means or how it should be interpreted.

b. Do you believe that congressional intent matters when interpreting a statute? Why or why not.

Response: Congressional intent could matter if it is clearly reflected in the text of a statute. However, any subjective intent would be subordinate to the actual text of a statute. If confirmed as a district judge, I will faithfully apply all binding precedent regarding what a law means or how it should be interpreted.

10. According to an academic study, Black men were 65 percent more likely than similarly-situated white men to be charged with federal offenses that carry harsh mandatory minimum sentences.<sup>2</sup>

a. What do you attribute this to?

Response: I am not familiar with this study. Causation of why a class of individuals is treated differently than another is complex and debated among experts and political leaders, as are the means to address this issue. Any discrimination based on race is a serious concern. As a state district judge, I have earned a reputation of treating individuals before me with dignity, respect, and fairness. If confirmed, I will continue that practice.

11. A recent report by the United States Sentencing Commission observed demographic differences in sentences imposed during the five-year period studied, with Black men receiving federal prison sentences that were 13.4 percent longer than white men.<sup>3</sup>

a. What do you attribute this to?

Response: Please see my response to Question 10 above.

12. What role do you think federal judges, who review difficult, complex criminal cases, can play in ensuring that a person's race did not factor into a prosecutor's decision or other instances where officials exercise discretion in our criminal justice system?

Response: If a federal judge concluded that a prosecutor committed an ethics violation by prosecuting an individual differently based on race, the court could report that finding to the relevant ethics bodies. The court could also be called upon to rule on a selective prosecution claim. Additionally, 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a)(6) mandates the court to "consider the need to avoid unwarranted sentence disparities among defendants with similar records who have been found guilty of similar conduct." If confirmed, I would faithfully apply all § 3553(a) factors.

13. Do you believe it is an important goal for there to be demographic diversity in the judicial branch? Why or why not.

Response: No one should be denied the opportunity to serve in the judicial branch based on race, sex, ethnicity, religion, or any other protected characteristic.

14. Please indicate whether you have ever published written material or made any public statements relating to the following topics. If so, provide a description of the written or

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<sup>2</sup> Sonja B. Starr & M. Marit Rehavi, *Racial Disparity in Federal Criminal Sentences*, 122 J. POL. ECON. 1320, 1323 (2014).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. SENTENCING COMM'N, DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN SENTENCING 2 (Nov. 2023), [https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2023/20231114\\_Demographic-Differences.pdf](https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2023/20231114_Demographic-Differences.pdf).

public statement, the date and place/publication where the statement was made or published, and a summary of its subject matter. Mere reference to the list of publications and statements provided in your Senate Judiciary Questionnaire is insufficient; provide specific responses.

If you have not disclosed a copy of the publication or a transcript of the statement to the Judiciary Committee, please attach a copy or link to the materials and please explain why you have not previously disclosed them.

- a. Abortion
- b. Affirmative action
- c. Contraceptives or birth control
- d. Gender-affirming care
- e. Firearms
- f. Immigration
- g. Same-sex marriage
- h. Miscegenation
- i. Participation of transgender people in sports
- j. Service of transgender people in the U.S. military
- k. Racial discrimination
- l. Sex discrimination
- m. Religious discrimination
- n. Disability discrimination
- o. Climate change or environmental disasters
- p. "DEI" or Diversity Equity and Inclusion

Response: I have not published written material or made public statements relating to the topics listed in Question 14.a-p above.

15. Under what circumstances would it be acceptable for an executive branch official to ignore or defy a federal court order?

Response: Litigants, including executive branch officials, are expected to comply with all lawful court orders.

- a. If an executive branch official ignores or defies a federal court order, what legal analysis would you employ to determine whether that official should be held in contempt?

Response: It would depend on the facts and circumstances. Generally speaking, a court could consider initiating contempt proceedings by providing notice, normally through a show-cause order, to the official and provide an opportunity to be heard on the matter through written response or by holding a hearing, or both. The court would then seek to determine whether the official had knowledge of a lawful order, willfully failed to comply, and whether the party had a valid defense.

- b. Is there any legal basis that would allow an executive branch official to ignore or defy temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions issued by federal district

court judges? Please provide each one and the justification.

Response: With rare exception (e.g., lack of jurisdiction, impossibility), litigants, including executive branch officials, are expected to comply with all lawful court orders, including temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions. If a litigant receives an adverse ruling, the standard options are to request a stay and seek appellate review.

16. Does the president have the power to ignore or nullify laws passed by Congress?

Response: The Constitution requires the President to “take Care that the laws be faithfully executed.” Art. II, § 3. However, how the President ensures that laws are faithfully executed is a matter of public debate.

17. Does the president have the power to withhold funds appropriated by Congress?

Response: Whether a president can impound funds is a matter of public debate. Proponents of a president’s power to impound funds argue that the Vesting Clause, Commander-in-Chief Clause, the President’s foreign affair powers, and the duty to “Take Care” in Article II authorize the President to manage, control, or delay expenditures. Some argue that while Congress has the “power of the purse,” appropriated funds set a ceiling on spending, not mandate that every dollar be spent. By contrast, opponents cite the Impoundment Act and *Train v. City of New York*, 420 U.S. 35 (1975) as authority for the argument that the President lacks authority to impound funds appropriated by Congress. As a judicial nominee, it would be inappropriate to comment or opine on this issue because it is currently being debated and litigated.

18. Does the president have the power to discriminate by withholding funds against state or local jurisdictions based on the political party of a jurisdiction’s elected officials?

Response: This question relates to an issue that is currently being debated and litigated. I believe it would be inappropriate to opine on this issue.

19. Does the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution establish that federal laws supersede conflicting state laws?

Response: Generally, yes.

20. Does the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution apply to non-citizens present in the United States?

Response: The Supreme Court has stated that “the Due Process Clause applies to all ‘persons’ within the United States, including aliens, whether their presence here is lawful, unlawful, temporary, or permanent.” *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 693 (2001).

21. Is it constitutional for Congress to delegate to federal agencies the power to implement statutes through rulemaking?

Response: Yes, as long as “Congress has set out an ‘intelligible principle’ to guide what it has given the agency to do.” *FCC v. Consumers’ Research*, 606 U.S. 656, 657 (2025). In doing so, “Congress must make clear both ‘the general policy’ the agency must pursue and ‘the boundaries of [its] delegated authority.’” *Id.* at 658 (quoting *American Power & Light Co. v. SEC*, 329 U.S. 90, 105 (1946)).

22. Was *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), correctly decided?

Response: Yes.

23. Is *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965), binding precedent? Please describe the facts and holding of this case.

Response: The Supreme Court in *Griswold* held that the Fourteenth Amendment protects the rights of individuals to use contraceptives. The Court held that a Connecticut law banning contraceptives violated a right to privacy. *Griswold* is binding precedent and I would faithfully follow it.

24. Is *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003), binding precedent? Please describe the facts and holding of this case.

Response: The Supreme Court in *Lawrence* held that laws criminalizing same-sex intimacy violated the Fourteenth Amendment. *Lawrence* is binding precedent and I would faithfully follow it.

25. Is *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644 (2015), binding precedent? Please describe the facts and holding of this case.

Response: The Supreme Court in *Obergefell* held that the Fourteenth Amendment required states to license marriages between two people of the same sex on the same terms and conditions as marriages between two people of the opposite sex. *Obergefell* is binding precedent and I would faithfully follow it.

26. Do you believe that President Biden won the 2020 election? Note that this question is not asking who was certified as president in the 2020 election.

Response: This question calls for a response that could be interpreted as a comment or opinion on a topic of significant political debate. I believe it would be inappropriate to say anything beyond noting that President Biden was certified the winner of the 2020 election and served four years as President of the United States.

a. Did Biden win a majority of the electoral vote in the 2020 election?

Response: Please see my response to Question 26 above.

- b. Do you believe that the results of the 2020 election, meaning the vote count, were accurate? If not, please provide why not and examples.

Response: Please see my response to Question 26 above.

27. The 22nd Amendment says that “no person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice.”<sup>4</sup>

- a. Do you agree that President Trump was elected to the office of the President in the 2016 election?

Response: President Trump was certified the winner of the 2016 election and served four years as President of the United States.

- b. Did Trump win a majority of the electoral vote in the 2016 election?

Response: Please see my response to response to Question 27.a. above.

- c. Do you agree that President Trump was elected to the office of the President in the 2024 election?

Response: President Trump was certified the winner of the 2024 election and is serving as President of the United States.

- d. Did Trump win a majority of the electoral vote in the 2024 election?

Response: Please see my response to Question 27.c. above.

- e. Do you agree that the 22nd Amendment, absent a constitutional amendment, prevents President Trump from running for a third presidential term?

Response: The 22nd Amendment prevents a person from being “elected to the office of the President” more than two terms. U.S. Const., amend. XXII.

28. Has any official from the White House or the Department of Justice, or anyone else involved in your nomination or confirmation process, instructed or suggested that you not opine on whether any past Supreme Court decisions were correctly decided?

Response: No.

29. Have you spoken or corresponded with Elon Musk since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. CONST. amend. XXII.

Response: No.

30. Have you spoken or corresponded with any member of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) since November 2024? If yes, identify the member(s) and provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: Not to my knowledge.

31. Have you spoken or corresponded with Stephen Miller since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

32. Have you spoken or corresponded with Chad Mizelle since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

33. Have you spoken or corresponded with Pam Bondi since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

34. Have you spoken or corresponded with Todd Blanche since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: When I was at the Department of Justice in preparation for my hearing, Mr. Blanche briefly attended and wished the nominees good luck.

35. Have you spoken or corresponded with Emil Bove since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

36. Have you spoken or corresponded with Leonard Leo since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

37. Have you—personally or through any of your affiliated companies or organizations, agents, or employees—provided financial support or other resources to any members of the Proud Boys or of the Oath Keepers for their legal fees or for other purposes? If yes, state the amount of financial support provided, dates provided, and for what purposes.

Response: No.

38. Have you ever spoken or corresponded with any of the following individuals? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.
- a. Enrique Tarrío
  - b. Stewart Rhodes
  - c. Kelly Meggs
  - d. Kenneth Harrelson
  - e. Thomas Caldwell
  - f. Jessica Watkins
  - g. Roberto Minuta
  - h. Edward Vallejo
  - i. David Moerschel
  - j. Joseph Hackett
  - k. Ethan Nordean
  - l. Joseph Biggs
  - m. Zachary Rehl
  - n. Dominic Pezzola
  - o. Jeremy Bertino
  - p. Julian Khater

Response: To my knowledge, I have not spoken to or corresponded with any of the individuals listed in Question 38.a-p. above.

39. Have you ever spoken or corresponded with any individuals convicted and later pardoned of offenses related to the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol? If yes, identify the individual(s) and provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: Not to my knowledge.

40. Have you ever been demoted, terminated, or experienced any other adverse employment action?

Response: No.

- a. If yes, describe the events that led to the adverse employment action.
- b. If no, affirm that, since becoming a legal adult, you have left each place of employment voluntarily and not subject to the request or suggestion of any employer.

Response: I so affirm.

41. Federal judges must file annual financial disclosure reports and periodic transaction reports. If you are confirmed to the federal bench, do you commit to filing these disclosures and to doing so on time?

Response: Yes.

42. Article III Project (A3P) “defends constitutionalist judges and the rule of law.” According to Mike Davis, Founder & President of A3P, “I started the Article III Project in 2019 after I helped Trump win the Gorsuch and Kavanaugh fights. We saw then how relentless—and evil—too many of today’s Democrats have become. They’re Marxists who hate America. They believe in censorship. They have politicized and weaponized our justice systems.”<sup>5</sup>

a. Do you agree with the above statement?

Response: As a judicial nominee, I don’t believe it would be appropriate to comment or opine on statements from public officials or on matters of political controversy. If confirmed, I would treat all parties and attorneys impartially regardless of political affiliation.

b. Have you discussed any aspect of your nomination to the federal bench with any officials from or anyone directly associated with A3P, or did anyone do so on your behalf? If yes, identify the individual(s) and provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: Not to my knowledge.

c. Are you currently in contact with anyone associated with A3P? If so, who?

Response: Not to my knowledge.

d. Have you ever been in contact with anyone associated with A3P? If so, who?

Response: Not to my knowledge.

43. Since you were first approached about the possibility of being nominated, did anyone associated with the Trump Administration or Senate Republicans provide you guidance or advice about which cases to list on your Senate Judiciary Questionnaire (SJQ)?

Response: No.

a. If so, who? What advice did they give?

Response: Not applicable.

b. Did anyone suggest that you omit or include any particular case or type of case in your SJQ?

Response: No.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.article3project.org/about>

44. During your selection process did you talk with any officials from or anyone directly associated with the Article III Project, or did anyone do so on your behalf? If so, what was the nature of those discussions?

Response: Not to my knowledge.

45. During your selection process did you talk with any officials from or anyone directly associated with the Federalist Society, or did anyone do so on your behalf? If so, what was the nature of those discussions?

Response: I have several friends and acquaintances associated with the Federalist Society in Texas. I have spoken to a few of those individuals generally about my application and the selection process. They have been encouraging and congratulated me upon my nomination.

46. Please explain, with particularity, the process whereby you answered these written questions, including whether you personally drafted initial responses and whether anyone helped draft, review, or edit the answers.

Response: I prepared my responses to the written questions. I then received feedback from officials at the Office of Legal Policy. I finalized my responses and authorized them to be submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee.