

Response of Colin S. Bruce
Nominee to be United States Judge for the Central District
of Illinois to the Written Questions of Senator Amy Klobuchar

1. If you had to describe it, how would you characterize your judicial philosophy?

Response: My judicial philosophy is that a judge should decide matters fairly, impartially and promptly. Further, I believe a judge should treat all parties coming before the court with courtesy and respect. In deciding any issue before the court, a judge should apply the rule of law without regard to prevailing popular opinion or personal beliefs. I also believe judges should exercise judicial restraint in all matters by deciding only the issues in controversy before them and applying the applicable precedent.

2. What assurances can you give that litigants coming into your courtroom will be treated fairly regardless of their political beliefs or whether they are rich or poor, defendant or plaintiff?

Response: I strongly believe that judges must be impartial and treat all parties with respect and courtesy, regardless of their socio-economic status, posture before the court or political beliefs. As an Assistant United States Attorney, I have carefully handled all the matters brought to me with an open mind, and exercised my prosecutorial discretion in such a manner that opposing counsel generally perceive me as a person who strives for fairness and justice. I fully embrace the responsibility toward fairness and justice that comes with the judiciary. I have a bedrock belief in the rule of law and equal justice under the law. If I am confirmed as a district court judge, I will treat all persons with courtesy and respect, and I will base my decisions not on the person or party appearing before me, but instead on the rule of law.

3. In your opinion, how strongly should judges bind themselves to the doctrine of stare decisis? How does the commitment to stare decisis vary depending on the court?

Response: I believe the doctrine of *stare decisis* is fundamental to American jurisprudence. Supreme Court precedent is binding on all lower federal courts; Circuit Court of Appeals precedent is binding upon the district courts within a particular circuit. If I am confirmed as a district judge, I would faithfully apply controlling Supreme Court and Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals precedent. Further, while the Supreme Court may overturn its earlier rulings or those of a Court of Appeals, and an *en banc* panel may overturn a three-judge panel decision in the same Court of Appeals, I do not believe a district court may ever overturn a decision of the Supreme Court or Court of Appeals.