GORSUCH ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE ACTION CAMPAIGN
GORSUCH IS WRONG ON THE ENVIRONMENT

When it comes to environmental protections, Judge Gorsuch’s philosophy puts him squarely on the side of polluters and opposed to standards that keep our air and water clean. He has repeatedly turned away challenges by groups seeking to protect our natural resources and would undermine agencies’ abilities to enforce the laws that keep us safe.

KEY CASES

Wilderness Society v. Kane County: In Wilderness Society v. Kane County, Judge Gorsuch dismissed an effort by environmental organizations to protect a wilderness area. Kane County, Utah removed signs put up by the federal government, prohibiting off-road vehicles in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and three other federally managed parks. The county also passed an ordinance legalizing its actions.

The environmental groups sued to protect the areas from off-road vehicles, saying the county had no right to overrule federal law. But the Tenth Circuit threw out the claim, saying the groups did not have grounds to sue.

Undermining Protections for Clean Air and Water: Judge Gorsuch’s views on federal agencies could result in rolling back protections for clean air and water. He believes in restricting the ability of agency experts, like scientists at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to properly implement important acts of Congress and enforce protections designed to keep our communities safe. Judge Gorsuch wrote extensively about his legal views on these issues in the 2015 case United States v. Nichols and the 2016 case Gutierrez-Brizuela v. Lynch. If his views became law, it would be harder for the EPA to enforce laws that keep our air and water clean and safe. On this issue, Judge Gorsuch falls to the right of even the late Justice Antonin Scalia.

Opposing Advocacy: In New Mexico Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance v. U.S. Forest Service, Judge Gorsuch went against the majority when two members of a three-judge panel ruled to allow environmental groups to be involved in a case about protecting the Santa Fe National Forest.

The off-road drivers were challenging Forest Service efforts to limit the routes available to motorized vehicles in the National Forest. The court majority said three environmental groups, the Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, and WildEarth Guardians, had the right to take part in the case to protect their interests.

Judge Gorsuch, however, claimed there was no real difference between the Forest Service and the groups, and that the environmental groups should not be allowed to take part.

SOURCE: AFJ
QUESTIONS FOR SENATORS ABOUT SCOTUS NOMINEE NEIL GorsUCH

1. Given that Judge Gorsuch is disdainful towards protective agencies such as the EPA, can constituents count on you to stand up for the environment and oppose Judge Gorsuch’s nomination?

2. Many Americans are currently concerned about the Trump administration’s approach to environmental issues. Judge Gorsuch’s record suggests he will not be independent of the executive branch, and could rubber stamp the Trump administration’s aggressive policies that threaten to damage the environment. Do you support a Judge who will simply rubber-stamp the policies of the Trump administration?

3. Judge Gorsuch has repeatedly ruled on the side of big corporations, putting our access to clean air and water in harm’s way. Will you protect these fundamental rights and oppose Neil Gorsuch?

4. The voices of organizations dedicated to protecting our environment have been silenced by Judge Gorsuch. He denied groups like the Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, and WildEarth Guardians the right to be involved in a case about protecting the Santa Fe National Forest. These organizations represent the voices of many members of our community and should not be stifled or denied their day in court. Will you protect our right to advocate and oppose Neil Gorsuch for the Supreme Court?

Based on your senator’s position, make sure you tailor the tone of your questions. For instance, if your senator is still on the fence, you might want to end your questions with “Will you thoroughly review Judge Gorsuch’s record, and ensure and protect our rights as constituents?”
**ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE**

**Contact your senators:** Find your senators here and call, write or set up a meeting with them.

**Mobilize your network:** Start a call-in, petition, or letter drive, and ask others to join your meeting with your senator(s).

**Amplify your voice in media:** Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed in your local paper. Use your personal network and build the movement online with social media posts using the hashtag #StopGorsuch.

**Educate your community:** Hold a panel, an event or a visibility action to show others how the Supreme Court affects them and what they can do to take action.

**ACTIONS YOUR GROUP CAN TAKE**

**Mobilize your network:** Send an action alert to your list urging them to call, write, or otherwise contact their senator(s) demanding that they reject Neil Gorsuch for the Supreme Court.

**Contact senators directly:** Send a letter to and call Senate Judiciary Committee members and senators your organization is close to.

**Amplify your organization's voice in media:** Write a press release or letter to the editor in local, state, and national publications about your position on the nominee and how it affects your organization's issues. Amplify your organization's position on social media by using the hashtag #StopGorsuch.

**Educate and mobilize the public:** Host a panel discussion on the record of this nominee. Organize an action, protest, or press conference on the dangers of the nominee.
CONTACT YOUR SENATOR

Senators are elected to represent their constituents, and pay attention to the messages they’re receiving on an issue. In just the first few weeks of 2017, mass mobilizations of phone calls, rallies, demonstrations and other events have had a major impact on the public’s awareness of critical issues and nominations.

Contacting your senators directly is the most important way to highlight the public movement to #StopGorsuch and make a difference. They need to hear from constituents opposed to Gorsuch’s nomination – every day, everywhere, from everyone.

DON'T FORGET THE FOLLOW UP!

Thank the staff or the senator for a response. When your senators vote or announce a position, hold them accountable – it’s just as important to thank them for coming out strongly on your side as it is to express disappointment or continued opposition when they don’t.

Get patched through to your senator’s office at JusticeActionHub.org

STAY ON THEIR RADAR

Call your senators. Get 10 friends to call. Ask them to ask 10 friends to call. Then call again.

Identify others in your network who are particularly influential – political donors, community and business leaders, state elected officials – and ask them to call.

Set up an appointment or drop in to district offices.

Schedule a meeting with your senators directly, to be held as a phone call when they’re in DC or in person when they’re home.

Attend town halls, public appearances, and events and tell them to #StopGorsuch.
WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Be current: Check your local newspaper so you can respond to a recent article or a recent event in your area. When submitting your piece, make sure you refer to the article specifically by name and date. This will make it a lot more likely that your piece gets published.

Be clear, timely and concise: Before submitting your piece, check your paper’s guidelines on length. Use our talking points to get your point across concisely but remember to connect these issues to your local area. Always find a way to delineate how the next Supreme Court justice could affect your community now and in the future.

Include a call to action: End your piece by asking your community to get involved or by calling on your senators to take action and oppose Neil Gorsuch’s nomination.

Amplify your voice: Try your local or school paper first but also reach out to other publications. This is a very important issue and the media will be looking for local perspectives. You can also maximize your efforts by having others in your community write letters to the same papers. Even if they are not printed, this will let editors know that this issue matters.

If your letter is printed, send a copy to your senators’ offices: Senators often search for the issues that their constituents care about in these local papers. Make sure that you bring your piece to your next meeting or send their local aides a copy – this will ensure that your message reaches them.
SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES

STAND UP FOR
OUR PLANET
#STOPGORSUCH

For clean air
For clean water
For safe medicine
For our planet

STOP GORSUCH

For more resources, including signs, stickers, and more social media graphics, email outreach@afj.org