

January 15, 2016

Roger Ailes  
CEO  
Fox News  
1211 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10036

Deborah Turness  
President  
NBC News  
30 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, NY 10112

Dear Mr. Ailes and Ms. Turness,

In coming days, presidential candidates from both political parties will appear on your respective networks to debate the issues of the day as they seek the nation's highest office.

Past debates have addressed national security, foreign policy and the economy, among other issues. But one topic has been largely absent: the future of the United States Supreme Court.

During the next President's term, four Justices, from both sides of the ideological spectrum, will be in their 80s. Considering that the average retirement age for a Justice is 78, it's likely that the person the Americans elect in November, whether a Democrat or a Republican, will have the opportunity to drastically reshape the Court for a generation.

As recent decisions have made clear, the ability to shape the Court represents an enormous opportunity to influence our nation's future, including critical issues that most voters care about.

The importance of the Supreme Court is not a partisan or ideological issue. Progressives and conservatives alike have pointed out that the Court is at stake in 2016. Despite our many disagreements with our colleagues at organizations like the Judicial Crisis Network, for instance, we agree completely with their television ads that state "On the most important issues, the Supreme Court decides."

As you prepare for the upcoming Democratic and Republican debates, we urge you to ask the candidates what they would look for in a potential Supreme Court Justice. Which current Justices, if any, would they use as models? What values, principles, legal philosophy and experience would they want to find in a nominee? Candidates' answers would provide voters with critical information in both primary and general elections as they consider for whom to cast their vote.

Voters deserve to know where the candidates stand on the future of our federal courts, and especially the Supreme Court, as they make their decisions in 2016. We urge you to use the upcoming debates to make sure that they do.

Sincerely,

The Advocates for Human Rights  
Alliance For Justice  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Constitution Society  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (AFSCME)  
Americans for Democratic Action Iowa  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Black Women's Roundtable  
Common Cause

Constitutional Accountability Center  
Every Voice  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Friends of the Earth  
Human Rights Campaign  
Iowa Citizen Action Network  
Latino Victory Project  
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Maine Women's Policy Center  
MoveOn.org  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP)  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Law Center  
Native American Rights Fund  
Nevada Immigrant Coalition  
Nevadans for Judicial Progress  
OneAmerica  
People For the American Way  
Progress Florida Education Institute  
Progress Iowa  
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
Public Citizen  
Why Courts Matter Iowa