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Trump's Supreme Court Nominee Is Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh

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With landmark rulings such as *Roe v. Wade* and same-sex marriage at stake, the world watched closely on Monday night as President Donald Trump announced Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh as his choice to replace retiring Justice Anthony M. Kennedy on the U.S. Supreme Court.

The nomination, lauded by conservatives and derided by most liberals, sets up a monumental battle in Congress, but Republicans, who hold a razor-thin majority, are expected to confirm Judge Kavanaugh -- a move many believe would tilt the court firmly to the right and potentially jeopardize abortion and gay rights.

At the White House, where Mr. Trump introduced his pick to the world, the president described the judge as "one of the finest and sharpest legal minds in our time." Mr. Trump also declared him a jurist who would set aside his political views and apply the Constitution "as written."

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But the nomination elicited immediate reproach from Senate Democratic Leader, Chuck Schumer from New York, who vowed to fight the Judge Kavanaugh "with everything I have."

Equally, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who had expressed misgivings with Judge Kavanaugh as Mr. Trump's choice before the announcement, said the president had made a "superb choice."

"Judge Kavanaugh has impeccable credentials, unsurpassed qualifications and a proven commitment to equal justice under the law," Mr. Trump said in his introductory remarks. "A graduate of Yale College and Yale Law School, Judge Kavanaugh currently teaches at Harvard and Georgetown. Throughout legal circles he is considered a judge's judge, a true thought leader among his peers. He is a brilliant jurist with a clear and effective writing style universally regarded as one of the finest and sharpest legal minds of our time."

Judge Kavanaugh, 53, is also a federal appeals court judge, former aide to President George W. Bush and onetime investigator of President Bill Clinton. He has deep ties among the Republican legal groups that have advanced conservatives for the federal bench, and was one of Mr. Trump's early favorites in the list of contenders.

Democrats, still bitter from Republicans block of President Barack Obama's chance to fill a third Supreme Court seat (Mr. Obama filled two vacancies, Justice Sonya Sotomayor in 2009, and Justice Elena Kagan in 2010), have vowed to fight to the end to prevent the nomination from going through. But their battle will be an uphill one even with the Republicans' thin majority in the Senate, as some Democratic senators in conservative states are expected to vote for Judge Kavanaugh in hopes of saving their own seats. According to The New York Times, among Democrats facing this dilemma is Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Joe Donnelly of Indiana and Joe Manchin III of West Virginia. All three voted to confirm Justice Neil Gorsuch, Mr. Trump's first Supreme Court nominee.

According to The Times, the White House will roll out an intensive campaign to sell the nominee to the Senate and the American public. Judge Kavanaugh will embark on a busy schedule of courtesy calls to key members of the Senate Judiciary Committee and other senators.