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NOVEMBER 28, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The nomination of a Justice to the Supreme Court of the United States is one of the most important decisions a President has to make. The opinions of the Court affect the course of our society and the lives of individual citizens for decades to come. The confidence in which the Court is held is the sum of the esteem extended to each of its nine Members, and nothing is more essential to our system of liberty under law than the integrity of the Judicial Branch of the Federal Government.

With this burden of responsibility in mind I have conducted a thorough search and considered an extensive list of distinguished men and women to fill the existing vacancy on the Supreme Court. The views of a wide range of Americans in the legal profession and in both public and private life have been sought and are appreciated.

I have decided to submit to Congress when it returns the name of the person I believe to be best qualified to serve as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court:

United States Judge John Paul Stevens of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago, Illinois.

Judge Stevens is held in the highest esteem by his colleagues in the legal profession and the judiciary, and has had an outstanding career in the practice and teaching of law as well as on the Federal bench. I am confident that he will bring both professional and personal qualities of the highest order to the Supreme Court.

Because of the urgency attached to the earliest consideration of this nomination by the United States Senate, in order that the Court may be at full strength in considering its current calendar, I am announcing my choice today and will submit Judge Stevens' name formally on Monday. I believe the best interests of the nation will be served by prompt confirmation proceedings in the Senate.

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