

LEVIN CENTER
FOR OVERSIGHT AND DEMOCRACY

November 26, 2024

The Honorable John Thune
United States Senate
SD-511
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Thune:

Congratulations on being chosen Majority Leader of the Senate for the 119th Congress.

We are the directors of centers and institutes established to honor the legacies of former Members of Congress, both Republican and Democratic. We are writing to share with you our strong support for the exercise of the U.S. Senate's advice and consent power. We feel confident in representing to you the views we know our members held on this subject – a firm commitment to the constitutionally-founded duty of the Senate to evaluate, and based on that evaluation, to accept or reject the president's nominees for the highest positions in the executive branch.

As you well know, the Senate plays an essential role in our system of government that includes the constitutional power to declare war, ratify treaties, and confirm the president's nominees to cabinet and other top-level positions through the power of advice and consent. Like many Americans, we have heard that next year there may be an effort to avoid the Senate's role in advice and consent with respect to presidential nominations. We urge you and your colleagues to carefully reflect on the broader consequences of circumventing the Senate.

The Constitution grants each senator the power to provide advice and consent with respect to certain actions proposed by the president. The

duty to exercise this power derives from the right of every senator's constituents to have their voices heard on the qualifications of each presidential nominee.

While the Senate customarily grants a degree of deference to the president in the confirmation process, it has for nearly 250 years asked each senator to make an informed judgment about the fitness of the president's nominations to the most important posts in the executive branch. This aspect of the Senate's oversight responsibility is essential to our system of checks and balances and helps to ensure transparency and accountability in the executive branch and ultimately a better functioning federal government for the American people.

Thank you for your service to the Senate and to our country. We wish you well as you take up your new duties at this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Jim Townsend, Director
Carl Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy

Dan Diller, Director of Policy
The Lugar Center

Seth S. Andersen, Director
John C. Culver Public Policy Center

Valerie Pena, Executive Director
Center on Representative Government

Evelyn Farkas, Executive Director
The McCain Institute

John Shaw, Director
Paul Simon Public Policy Institute

cc: Members of the U.S. Senate

