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What's At Stake: President Trump Promised To Nominate Justices Who Would Erode Healthcare Protections For Middle-Class Americans

Then-Candidate Trump: "We're Going To Have A Very Strong Test." … "I'm Disappointed In Roberts Because He Gave Us Obamacare."

Then-Candidate Trump Called Roberts "Among The Worst Appointments I Have Ever Seen" Because Of Decision To Preserve The Affordable Care Act

Asked About His Appointments To The Supreme Court, Trump Said "I Would Have Had Justice Roberts Not Come Out With That Horrible Decision On Obamacare, Which Was A Disaster."

QUESTION: It's January 20, it's President Donald J. Trump. I know you like the sound of that. There are a lot of really old Supreme Court justices. There are a lot of really close, 5-4 Supreme Court decisions: Obamacare, Citizens United, voting rights. Give us a sense of whether or not there is a litmus test for Supreme Court justices in a Trump administration. And who might be the kind of person who you'd pick to sit on the Supreme Court please?

TRUMP: We're going to have a very strong test. We want good strong conservative people that are extremely smart. Scalia is a terrific judge. Clarence Thomas, you look at him, he's been a stalwart, he's been terrific, and we have others. I'm disappointed in Roberts because he gave us Obamacare. He had two chances to end Obamacare, he should have ended it by every single measurement and he didn't do it, so that was a disappointing one. Everybody thought he was good, he was a Bush appointee, he was somebody that should have, frankly, ended Obamacare, and he didn't. That's one of the truly very important positions of a president, and I think you'll be very happy with the people we put in. [Trump Interview With WGBH, 2/8/16]

Then-Candidate Donald Trump:

HALPERIN: So let's talk about the Supreme Court. If you're president that's one of the big responsibilities, the president nominating justices. Is there somebody you have in mind, either a current or past justice who would be kind of a model for you?

TRUMP: I would have had Justice Roberts not come out with that horrible decision on Obamacare, which was a disaster. He should have ended Obamacare. I really liked his gait. I really liked his thought process. I liked his background, but he is not at -- I'm not at all a fan. [Bloomberg, 8/26/15]

Then-Candidate Donald Trump:

STEPHANOPOULOS: But Ted Cruz says he's going to appoint rock rib conservatives with a paper trail. What are you going to do?

TRUMP: Well, I'm going to appoint conservative judges. I'm going to appoint people that have great reputations, that are great with the legal profession...

STEPHANOPOULOS: Like?

TRUMP: Well, I can say like any -- you know a judge who is a totally underrated and not spoken is Justice Thomas. I mean, if you look at -- if you look at some of the judges that we have like on the Supreme Court, Justice Roberts turned out to be a nightmare for conservatives. I mean...

STEPHANOPOULOS: But how are you going to...

TRUMP: Wait, let me first say. Ted Cruz, was the one that really wanted Justice Roberts to go on the Supreme Court. You know that, right? Have you heard that? (CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: Let me just say, he was pushing him hard. Justice Roberts gave us Obamacare. Obamacare would have been terminated twice if it weren't for Justice Roberts. First time, 100 percent, second time 90 percent it would have died of its own weight. But Justice Roberts could have killed Obamacare, and should have, based on everything. Should have killed it twice. Ted Cruz is the one that was promoting him. Ted Cruz and also Jeb Bush. But Justice Roberts was the man that gave us -- and remember it -- he gave us Obamacare almost as much as Obama himself. [ABC This Week Special Edition, 1/17/16]

Then-Candidate Donald Trump: "Well, let me just tell you about appointees. Justice John Roberts gave us Obamacare twice. He could've foiled, he could've ended Obamacare twice. He had two votes. He went up, shockingly, he voted in favor of Obamacare. He got there because Ted Cruz pushed him like wild. And by the way, Jeb Bush pushed him through the brother. They were close. And Jeb Bush and Cruz pushed Justice John Roberts and now we have Justice John Roberts. What happened is he, twice, could have ended Obamacare and he didn't do it. So Cruz shouldn't be talking because that was among the worst appointments I have ever seen. We have Obamacare because of Ted Cruz, Jeb Bush and George Bush." [ABC This Week, 2/14/16]

Then-Candidate Donald Trump:

ROBERTS: Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio would certainly consider you to be the frontrunner, and you are their target. Ted Cruz especially going after you. There was a pro-Cruz commercial I saw today saying he was the only one that can defend the Constitution and protect our liberty.

He failed to overturn Obamacare. Do you think that you can overturn the ACA if elected?

TRUMP: Well, I'll tell you what. Not only did he fail to overturn Obamacare, he appointed the judge that gave us Obamacare because he was the one that pushed so hard for John Roberts to be a judge, you know, justice of the Supreme Court. So Ted Cruz really, really did a great disservice to the people like myself that want to see Obamacare totally repealed and replaced.

He was really -- I mean, if you look at John Roberts, he had two chances to end it, and he voted against. So it was a disaster and, you know, he gave us that. [MSNBC, 2/17/16]

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