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**Subject:** : Kerry Will Filibuster SCOTUS Nominee

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Kerry says he'll filibuster Supreme Court nominees who do not support abortion rights  
NEDRA PICKLER, Associated Press Writer  
Friday, June 20, 2003  
\_2003 Associated Press

URL:  
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/news/archive/2003/06/20/national1340EDT0606.DTL>

(06-20) 10:40 PDT WASHINGTON (AP) --

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry said Friday that he is prepared to block any Supreme Court nominee who would not uphold the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion.

"I am prepared to filibuster, if necessary, any Supreme Court nominee who would turn back the clock on a woman's right to choose or the constitutional right to privacy, on civil rights and individual liberties and on the laws protecting workers and the environment," Kerry said in remarks prepared for delivery via satellite at a meeting of Democratic party officials in St. Paul, Minn.

"The test is basic -- any person who thinks it's his or her job to push an extreme political agenda rather than to interpret the law should not be a Supreme Court justice."

Kerry, a Massachusetts senator and one of nine Democrats seeking the party's presidential nomination, is staking out a position favorable to liberal women. Kerry also has said if elected president he would only appoint judges who support Roe v. Wade, while his opponents for the nomination say they would not impose a litmus test on nominees. All nine Democratic presidential candidates support abortion rights. President Bush has said he would fill any Supreme Court vacancies with judges such as Antonin Scalia or Clarence Thomas, two of the most conservative justices on the high court who are presumed to favor the abolition of Roe v. Wade.

None of the nine current Supreme Court justices has announced plans to retire, but Chief Justice William Rehnquist, 78, and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, 73, are considered the most likely possibilities. Both would prefer that a Republican president pick their successors.

Republicans control the Senate by two votes; there are 51 Republicans, 48 Democrats and one independent. But Democrats can block any potential nominee through a filibuster if they can get 41 votes.

Senate Democrats have used a filibuster to block President Bush's nominations of two federal judges this year.

Several Senate Democrats recently sent letters to the White House asking Bush to meet with Senate leaders from both parties to talk about possible nominations and ways to avoid a bruising battle in the Senate. White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales indicated on Thursday that there was a possibility of consultations with senators, but said no final decision has been made.

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