

# Barrett unscathed by tough confirmation probing

WASHINGTON — Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett battled back Democrats’ skeptical questions on abortion, health care and a possible disputed election in a lively Senate confirmation hearing Tuesday, insisting she would bring no personal agenda to the court but would decide cases “as they come.”

The 48-year-old appellate court judge declared her conservative views with often colloquial language, but refused many specifics. She declined to say whether she would recuse herself from any election-related cases involving President Donald Trump, who nominated her to fill the seat of the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and is pressing to have her confirmed before the the Nov. 3 election.

“Judges can’t just wake up one day and say I have an agenda — I like guns, I hate guns, I like abortion, I hate abortion — and walk in like a royal queen and impose their will on the world,” Barrett told the Senate Judiciary Committee during its second day of hearings.

“It’s not the law of Amy,” she said. “It’s the law of the American people.”

Barrett returned to a Capitol Hill mostly locked down with COVID-19 protocols, the mood quickly shifting to a more confrontational tone from opening day. She was grilled in 30-minute segments by Democrats strongly opposed to Trump’s nominee yet unable to stop her. Excited by the prospect of a conservative judge aligned with the

late Antonin Scalia, Trump’s Republican allies are rushing ahead to install a 6-3 conservative court majority for years to come.

Trump has said he wants a justice seated for any disputes arising from his heated election with Democrat Joe Biden, but Barret testified she has not spoken to Trump or his team about election cases. Pressed by panel Democrats, she skipped over questions about ensuring the date of the election or preventing voter intimidation, both set in federal law, and declined to commit to recusing herself from any post-election cases without first consulting the other justices.

“I can’t offer an opinion on recusal without short-circuiting that entire process,” she said.

A frustrated Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the top Democrat on the panel, all but implored the nominee to be more specific about how she would handle landmark abortion cases, including Roe v. Wade and the follow-up Pennsylvania case Planned Parenthood v. Casey, which confirmed it in large part.

“It’s distressing not to get a good answer,” Feinstein told the judge.

Barrett was unmoved. “I don’t have an agenda to try to overrule Casey,” she said. “I have an agenda to stick to the rule of law and decide cases as they come.”

She later declined to characterize the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion as a “super-precedent” that would not be overturned.

# USPS to raise stamp rates

The U.S. Postal Service announced increased rates for 2021, but the cost of a First-Class Forever Stamp for a letter of 1-ounce or less will stay at 55 cents.

A single-piece letter additional ounce will increase from 15 cents

to 20 cents, USPS said Friday. The metered mail 1-ounce price will go up from 50 cents to 51 cents.

Domestic postcards will cost more, from 35 cents to 36 cents.

Single-piece, 1-ounce flat rates will stay at \$1. The Postal Regulatory

Commission must review the prices before they take effect on Jan. 24, 2021.

USPS says it receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to operate.



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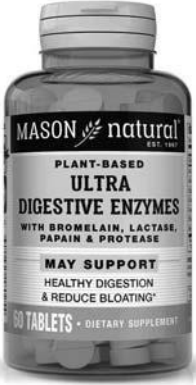
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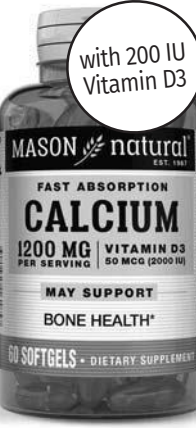
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