



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on February 14, 2016

Justice Antonin Scalia Found Dead at a West Texas Ranch

Associate Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia was found dead Saturday morning in his bedroom at a luxury ranch in west Texas according to several reports. It is also being reported that natural causes resulted in the death of the longest serving member of the high court.

Scalia, 79, was reportedly staying at the Cibolo Creek Ranch, a resort in the Big Bend region near Marfa, Texas.



First reported by the *San Antonio News Express*, the story has been updated by El Paso ABC-TV news channel KVIA, which quotes sources close to Scalia reporting that the justice “died in his sleep last night after a day of quail hunting” at the ranch.

That same reporter, Darren Hunt, quotes a representative from the El Paso Roman Catholic Diocese saying that “Catholic Priest Mike Alcuino, in Presidio, was called to the ranch, and administered Justice Scalia’s last rites Saturday afternoon.”

The source providing information to KVIA claims that Scalia went up to his room after dinner and did not report feeling unwell.

Scalia enjoyed a remarkable reputation among conservatives and constitutionalists for his inflexible insistence that the words of the Constitution be interpreted according to the meaning given them at the time of the drafting.

His scholarship on this point was powerful and persuasive. His 1997 book, *A Matter of Interpretation: Federal Courts and the Law*, was a bombshell at the time, revealing the jurist’s own tack toward interpreting and applying constitutional principles.

Scalia was not afraid to speak the truth and to say things that embarrassed the D.C. plutocrats and intelligentsia.

One such statement was made on February 3, 2014 when Scalia told a group of law students at the University of Hawaii that internment camps to detain Americans would eventually return. *The New American’s* Alex Newman [reported on the explosive story](#):

Acknowledging that the infamous Supreme Court-approved [internment of Japanese-Americans](#) in wretched camps during World War II was wrong, the conservative-leaning justice followed up by adding that “you are kidding yourself if you think the same thing will not happen again.” In “times of war,” Scalia said, citing a Latin expression attributed to Cicero, “the laws fall silent.”...

“Well of course *Korematsu* was wrong. And I think we have repudiated in a later case,” Scalia was quoted as telling students and faculty during a lunchtime question and answer session. “But you are kidding yourself if you think the same thing will not happen again.” Pointing to the Latin expression about laws falling silent during war-time, the longest-serving justice said, “That’s what was going on — the panic about the war and the invasion of the Pacific and whatnot.”

“That’s what happens,” Scalia continued. “It was wrong, but I would not be surprised to see it



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happen again, in time of war. It's no justification, but it is the reality." In other words, one of the nation's top judicial officials believes that during a "time of war," Americans run the risk of being unconstitutionally rounded up by the federal government and detained in camps like over 110,000 almost certainly innocent Japanese-descent individuals during World War II.

Scalia's opinions in the cases of *D.C. v. Heller* and *Printz v. U.S.* are witty, well-crafted treatises on the separation of powers, federalism, and the right of the individual to keep and bear arms.

As for his personal life, Scalia and his wife Maureen were the parents of nine children and were proudly practicing Catholics.

This unpopular (with the media) position, too, drew criticism from the secularist media when during an interview with *New York* magazine in 2013 Scalia admitted believing in God, the Devil, Heaven, and Hell.

Of course, the report of Justice Scalia's tragic and unexpected death is being made fodder for speculation as to who would be chosen to replace him on the Supreme Court, and when.

In fact, in a statement issued by U.S. District Judge Fred Biery, the specter of politics was mentioned when, after Biery describing Scalia's death as unfortunate, he mused about the impact the news would have on the presidential campaigns currently underway.

"I was told it was this morning," Biery said of Scalia's death. "It happened on a ranch out near Marfa. As far as the details, I think it's pretty vague right now as to how," he said. "My reaction is it's very unfortunate. It's unfortunate with any death, and politically in the presidential cycle we're in, my educated guess is nothing will happen before the next president is elected."

On that theme, a message on social media messages from the spokesman of Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah), a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, also jumped into the macabre discussion of when Lee will be called on to give the constitutionally mandated "advice and consent" on the next Supreme Court nominee.

"What is less than zero?" Conn Carroll, Lee's communication director posted on Twitter. "The chances of Obama successfully appointing a Supreme Court Justice to replace Scalia."

Putting the politics to one side, there were messages of condolences from lawmakers, as well.

Senator John Thune (R-S.D.) was among the first to publish a statement lamenting the passing of Scalia:

Today we learned the sad news of Justice Scalia's passing. With his sudden death, our nation lost a stalwart for conservatives and a brilliant constitutional scholar.

He was a legal giant who devoted his career to serving our country and his life to serving the Lord. It's hard to imagine the Supreme Court without his sound legal judgment and remarkable wit.

Kimberley and I offer our deepest condolences to his family. You're in our thoughts and prayers.

On his Facebook page, senator and presidential candidate Ted Cruz of Texas posted the following message of mourning:

Today our Nation mourns the loss of one of the greatest Justices in history — Justice Antonin Scalia. A champion of our liberties and a stalwart defender of the Constitution, he will go down as one of the few Justices who single-handedly changed the course of legal history.

As liberals and conservatives alike would agree, through his powerful and persuasive opinions,



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Justice Scalia fundamentally changed how courts interpret the Constitution and statutes, returning the focus to the original meaning of the text after decades of judicial activism. And he authored some of the most important decisions ever, including *District of Columbia v. Heller*, which recognized our fundamental right under the Second Amendment to keep and bear arms. He was an unrelenting defender of religious liberty, free speech, federalism, the constitutional separation of powers, and private property rights. All liberty-loving Americans should be in mourning.

Justice Scalia's three decades on the Court was one of President Reagan's most consequential legacies. Our prayers are with his beloved wife Maureen, their nine children, and their precious grandchildren.

Details of the precise cause of death are at this time unknown, but will surely be determined by a coroner's inquest and autopsy, given Scalia's position and the shocking suddenness of his passing.

President Obama announced that he will nominate a successor "in due time" and that he expects the Senate to give his nominee "a fair hearing."



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