



Howard Schultz to outline how he'd make presidential appointments

BY ED O'KEEFE

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Former Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz is set to outline how a centrist independent like himself might staff a Cabinet and select U.S. Supreme Court justices as president, arguing that the changes he's proposing could help cure the nation's "crisis of division."

Schultz is not yet a declared presidential candidate but is in the midst of a national tour - formally tied to the release of his new book - and has said he will make a final decision about whether to mount an independent 50-state campaign later this year. He is slated to speak Wednesday at Miami Dade College, where he will outline how someone not tied to either political party could hope to recruit potential aides and Cabinet secretaries - and somehow get them through a U.S. Senate controlled by either party.

- Highlights from Howard Schultz's "60 Minutes" interview

"Over the past few weeks, I've heard a similar refrain as I've travelled the country discussing that I'm seriously considering running for president as a centrist independent outside the two-party system: It won't work, people are saying. It can't be done," Schultz will say, according to prepared text of his speech provided by campaign aides. "I don't accept that. I also refuse to be deterred by the naysayers -- because I love this country, and because so much is at stake."

In his remarks, Schultz will vow not to sign legislation that isn't passed with bipartisan support - a high hurdle in today's sharply-divided Washington. He also will pledge to assemble a Cabinet that "truly represents American in every way, including a cross-partisan group" of Democrats, Republicans, independents, "and a greater share of women than any previous president."

Schultz would need to exceed the eight women that Barack Obama appointed to

Cabinet or Cabinet-level positions over his two terms. George W. Bush appointed four to his Cabinet or Cabinet-level positions.

Schultz also plans to say that once Cabinet secretaries are confirmed, "I won't humiliate them on Twitter or make decisions so outrageous that they feel compelled to resign in protest. The loyalty I will expect from them is to the Constitution and the rule of law."

In a nod to the increasingly fractious, high-stakes nature of Supreme Court confirmation fights, Schultz will vow to only nominate potential justices who can be confirmed by two-thirds of the Senate.

"The courts have become yet another battlefield in the ongoing war between Democratic and Republican leaders," he will say, according to the prepared text. "These battles have undermined our faith in the rule of law and the impartiality of the entire judicial system. All of this has to change."

Schultz shared the basic outline of his plan in an interview with CBS News last Friday at the South by Southwest Conference in Austin.

"I'd make a promise to the American people that as president my administration and the Oval Office would be the most diverse administration in the history of the country in terms of bipartisanship, diversity, women, people of color and that I would do everything I can that the Cabinet and the administration would be emblematic of the American people," he said.

Schultz ruled out setting specific benchmarks for his staff and Cabinet, meaning

he won't specify the number of women, minorities, or member of either political party that he would recruit.

"What I'm talking about as a centrist is assembling a group of people in which the ideology is not what is going to be in the room, what's going to be in the room is love of country, restoring faith and trust in the United States government and bringing a group of people and thought leaders together," he said. "We're there for one purpose, to exceed the expectations of the American people."

Schultz also batted away questions about whether a Democrat- or Republican-controlled Senate would be even willing to confirm officials of either political party to important political posts.

"If I'm fortunate enough to win, if I do run, I think the American people will have spoken with such a loud voice to demonstrate to the members of Congress that we want significant transformative change. And I would lead that change and lead that charge," he said.

Schultz's promises regarding Supreme Court nominees comes as Democrats are beginning to debate whether to attempt reshaping the high court in order to rebalance its ideological balance.





In recent speeches, former Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. has pushed for the next Democratic president and Democrat-controlled Senate to add as many as six more seats to the Supreme Court. He cited the Republican-controlled Senate's refusal to vote on Judge Merrick Garland to succeed the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia as the reason to do so.

"Given the Merrick Garland situation, the question of legitimacy is one that I think we should talk about," Holder said in one of his speeches. "We should be talking even about expanding the number of people who serve on the Supreme Court, if there is a Democratic president and a Congress that would do that."

Schultz wouldn't commit to the idea when asked by CBS News about it last Friday. But some Democratic presidential contenders, like Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, have said they are willing to explore the idea of expanding the Supreme Court.

In a separate interview with CBS News, Sen. Amy Klobuchar said Saturday that she's less concerned about the number of justices on the high court and more worried about how long it takes to confirm nominees.

"One of the problems we've had, even when President Obama came in, there's been a lot of delay to in starting that process," Klobuchar, another Democrat who is running for president, said.

"I know a lot of people who are qualified people all across the country that I think

would make excellent judges, some of whom are left hanging, right, because when the new president came in we weren't able to re-up their nominations so I think that is very important to get judges in place immediately."

Benjamin Mitchell contributed to this report.

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