

Justice Brett Kavanaugh Expresses Optimism for Supreme Court and Criticizes US News Law School Rankings

Justice Brett Kavanaugh, a United States Supreme Court member, has made public comments in which he expresses optimism about the court, his colleagues, and the country. He also criticized the US News & World Report's law school rankings. In a speech at Notre Dame Law School, Kavanaugh did not mention the recent leak investigation but did say that while judges receive a lot of criticism, he strives to be an optimist. He said, "I'm optimistic about the court, I'm optimistic about the country, I'm optimistic about my colleagues."

Kavanaugh also spoke about the unusually long lag in releasing the court's first opinion of the term, stating that it was simply a "coincidence" concerning "which mix of cases" was argued in October and November. Court watchers had speculated that the reason for the delay was that the court was anticipating the release of the investigative report. However, Kavanaugh suggested that there was no connection between the report and the lag in opinions.

He said that the relationships between justices were good despite the divisive opinions released last term, which essentially broke down along ideological lines. He said, "We work well together. We get along together." He also praised his two most recent colleagues, Justice Amy Coney Barrett, whom he called an "unusually good person," and Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, whom he said is always "fully prepared" and off to a "great start."

Kavanaugh also launched into a lengthy criticism of US News & World Report's ranking of law schools. The publication had recently announced that it was changing the formula used to determine its list of best law schools after several prestigious institutions, including Kavanaugh's own Yale Law School, decided to bow out of the famed rankings. Kavanaugh said, "I think those ratings are very problematic. I think they're based on things, from what I understand, that are very amorphous, very subjective, and very word-of-mouth. Factors that don't correlate well with the education that you're receiving." He said, "The reputation score – that's kind of a joke, isn't it? I mean, who knows all the different scores that are judged to give anything approaching a good analysis of that?"

Kavanaugh also stated that he does not consider the publication's rankings when looking for law clerks. In a letter to law school deans published earlier this month, the publication announced that it would place less importance on surveys that ask academic administrators, lawyers, and judges to rate the quality of institutions and more emphasis on measures such as bar exam pass rates and employment outcomes. According to the letter, the changes stem from conversations with more than 100 law school deans and representatives.

REFERENCES:

Kavanaugh says he's 'optimistic' about the Supreme Court and trashes US News law school rankings

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