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### 3 Supreme Court Justices Skip Obama Speech

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**By: Jim Meyers**

Three conservative members of the Supreme Court — Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas, and Samuel Alito — boycotted President Obama's State of the Union address on Tuesday night, one year after Obama castigated the court in his address to Congress.

During last year's address, Obama criticized the court for its Citizens United ruling that allowed corporate financing of political ad campaigns.

"With all due deference to the separation of powers," Obama said, "the Supreme Court reversed a century of law that I believe will open the floodgates."



**Justice Samuel Alito**

Democratic senators seated next to the justices reacted with thunderous applause, as the six justices in attendance sat somberly. Justice Alito couldn't quite hold his peace, however, and mouthed the words: "Not true."

This year, Alito skipped the speech to travel to Hawaii and deliver a speech.

Justice Thomas — who says justices hear "catcalls, the whooping and hollering and under-the-breath comments" — is usually a no-show at the State of the Union.

Scalia has not attended the speech since the 1990s and has called the event a "juvenile spectacle," adding: "I resent being called upon to give it dignity."

There was speculation that Chief Justice John Roberts might skip the speech, which he has criticized as a "political pep rally." But he did attend, along with Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Anthony Kennedy, who wrote the Citizens United opinion that Obama excoriated on national television last year.

Roberts is "taking the high road," Barbara Perry, a presidential and Supreme Court scholar at the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs, told Bloomberg News. "He is going to follow in the footsteps of those who have kept the court at the very highest level of the public's faith and confidence."

There is no constitutional requirement for justices to attend the speech.

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