Beat: News

U.S. Vice President Biden sworn in for second term

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USPA News - U.S. Vice President Joe Biden on Sunday took the oath of office for his second term during a small ceremony with friends and family at his official residence in Washington, D.C. President Barack Obama will also take his oath during a private ceremony later in the morning. Approximately 120 guests attended the administration of the oath of office which took place at the vice president`s official residence at the United States Naval Observatory in the U.S. capital.

The event began just after 8:15 a.m. local time when Biden and Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor were introduced. Biden personally selected Sotomayor to administer the oath of office, making her the first ever Hispanic judge to administer an oath of office for one of the nation`s highest offices. She is also only the fourth female judge to swear-in a president or vice president, following Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg who swore-in Vice President Al Gore in 1997. "It`s an incredible honor to have Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor swear me in," Biden said. "From the first time I met her, I was impressed by Justice Sotomayor`s commitment to justice and opportunity for all Americans, and she continues to exemplify those values today. Above all, I`m happy for the chance to be sworn in by a friend - and someone I know will continue to do great things." Biden took the oath of office for a second term as vice president at 8:21 a.m. local time while surrounded by friends and family. The U.S. Constitution requires that both Biden and Obama are sworn in before noon local time on January 20, when the presidential term expires and a new one begins. Prior to the swearing in, Rev. Kevin O`Brien offered a prayer on behalf of Biden. "Amid all the complexities of our world, a world so beautiful but also broken, give him a share of your wisdom so that he can know what is good and give him the courage to always do what is right," he said. The bible used during the ceremony has been in the Biden family since 1893 and has a Celtic cross on the cover. Biden has used the bible every time he was sworn in as a U.S. Senator and when he was first sworn in as vice president in January 2009. His son, Beau, also used it when he was sworn in as Delaware`s attorney general. After being sworn in by Sotomayor, Biden thanked the Supreme Court Justice and told the guests it was a "wonderful honor". "I thank you very, very, very much for sharing this morning with Jill and me," he said, referring to his wife. "And Madame Justice, it`s been an honor - a great honor." Donna Brazile, the Vice Chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, said she was grateful to be part of a "historic occasion." "I`ve known Joe Biden for over 25 years and to witness his private swearing in with his friends, close friends and family, with Justice Sonia Sotomayor, I don`t think it gets any better," she said. One person notably absent during the ceremony was Chuck Hagel, the former Nebraska senator who has been nominated by Obama to be the next Defense secretary. A seat card indicated Hagel was expected to attend, but he was not seen during the ceremony and there was an empty seat in his row. Later on Sunday morning, at approximately 11:55 a.m. local time, Obama will take the oath of office at an official swearing-in ceremony in the Blue Room of the White House. Both Biden and Obama will repeat their oaths on Monday during a public inauguration ceremony which takes place at the U.S. Capitol.

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