



# U.S. Circuit Court Nominees Confirmed During the First Year of the Second Trump Presidency: Comparative Overview and Statistics

December 22, 2025

This Insight provides information related to the number of [U.S. circuit court](#) nominees confirmed to date during the first calendar year of the second Trump presidency (2025), as well as information about the number of circuit nominees confirmed during the first years of other presidencies from 1953 to 2021. This Insight also provides additional statistics about circuit court nominees confirmed in 2025 and compares these statistics with those from the first years of several recent presidencies.

For the purposes of this Insight, a President's first year is measured as the period from January 20 to December 31 of his first calendar year in office. So, for example, the first year of the second Trump presidency is represented as beginning on January 20, 2025.

The data presented below for the first year of the second Trump presidency are current through December 21, 2025. At present, there is a single [anticipated circuit court vacancy](#) for which a nomination has not yet been submitted to the Senate. If a nomination is confirmed for that anticipated vacancy, or for any other circuit court vacancy that arises prior to December 31, 2025, it will not be reflected in the data below (but would be included in a future update to this Insight).

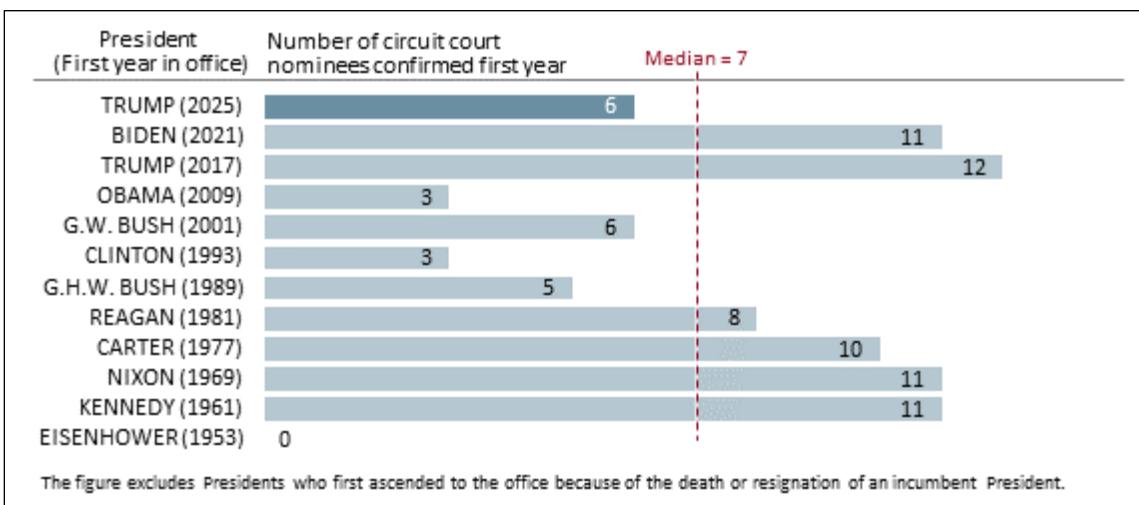
## Number of Confirmed Nominees

Overall, during the period from 1953-2025, the median number of circuit court nominees confirmed during the first year of a presidency was 7 (ranging from no nominees confirmed in 1953, during the first year of the Eisenhower presidency, to 12 nominees confirmed in 2017, during the first year of the first Trump presidency).

President Trump has had six circuit court nominees confirmed to date during the first year of his second presidency. As shown by **Figure 1**, this is half the number of circuit court nominees confirmed during the

first year of his first presidency (2017) and the same number of nominees confirmed during the first year of the George W. Bush presidency (2001).

**Figure 1. Number of U.S. Circuit Court Nominees Confirmed During the First Year of a Presidency (1953-2025)**



**Source:** Congressional Research Service.

**Note:** Data are current through December 21, 2025.

As discussed in a CRS report, the blue slip policy for circuit court nominations was changed in 2017 during the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress and has, since that time, remained the same. Of the six nominees confirmed in 2025 to date, five lacked the support of at least one home state Senator.

The number of circuit court nominees confirmed during a President's first year has not, at least since 1977, represented more than one-quarter of the circuit nominees confirmed during either his first or, in some cases, only term in office. Among recent presidencies, for example, the number of circuit nominees confirmed during a President's first year in office represented 24% of all circuit nominees confirmed during the Biden presidency, 22% during the first Trump presidency, 10% during President Obama's first term, and 17% during President George W. Bush's first term.

The relatively large number of circuit court nominees confirmed in 2017 and 2021 likely reflects, in part, the influence of institutional changes related to cloture during years when the President's party was also the majority party in the Senate. These changes likely allowed the majority party, both in 2017 and 2021, to confirm a relatively greater number of a President's circuit court nominees.

The number of circuit court nominees confirmed during a President's first year in office is also influenced by the [number of circuit court vacancies that exist when he assumes office](#). For example, there were 17 circuit court vacancies when President Trump assumed office in 2017 and 3 such vacancies at the beginning of his second presidency in 2025.

## Length of Time from Nomination to Confirmation

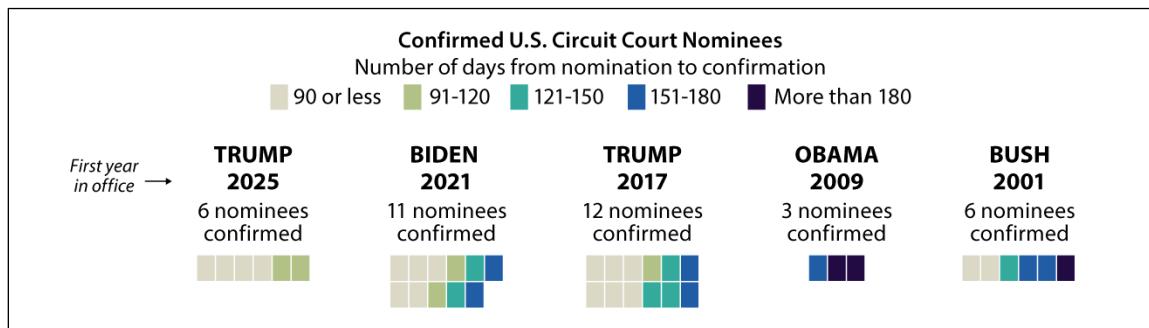
The average length of time from nomination to confirmation for the six nominees confirmed in 2025 was 68 days (the median was 53 days). This was the shortest average length of time from nomination to

confirmation for circuit court nominees confirmed during the first year of a presidency for the 2001-2025 period (the second-shortest average was 105 days in 2021).

**Figure 2** shows the number of circuit court nominees confirmed within a specified number of days during the first year of presidencies from 2001 to 2025. The decline in the length of time from nomination to confirmation during this period likely reflects, at least in part, the influence of institutional changes related to cloture and the blue slip process during years when the President's party was also the majority party in the Senate.

Of the six nominees confirmed in 2025 to date, four were confirmed within 90 days of being nominated and two were confirmed within 91 to 120 days of being nominated. Among the six nominees, the shortest duration of time from nomination to confirmation was [37 days](#), while the longest duration was [113 days](#).

**Figure 2. Length of Time from Nomination to Confirmation for U.S. Circuit Court Nominees Confirmed During the First Year of a Presidency**  
(2001-2025)



**Source:** Congressional Research Service.

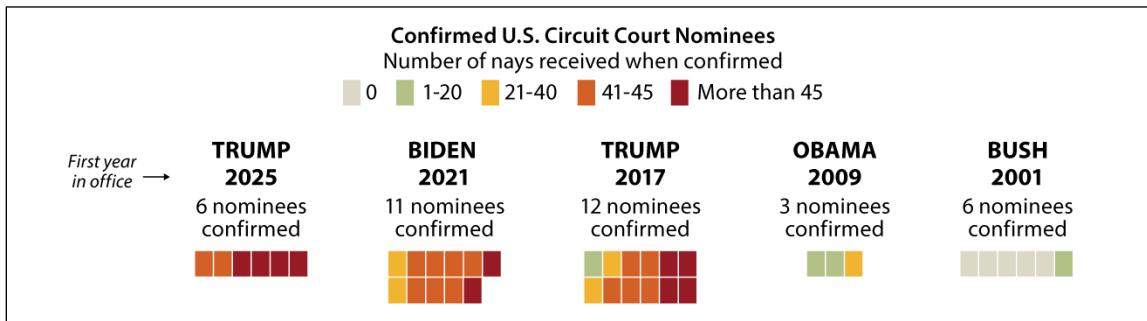
**Note:** Data are current through December 21, 2025.

## Number of Nay Votes Received When Confirmed

For the period 2001-2025, **Figure 3** shows the range of nay votes received by a President's circuit court nominees when confirmed by the Senate during his first year in office.

Each circuit court nominee confirmed during the first year of a presidency from 2001 to 2025 was confirmed by [roll call vote](#) (none were confirmed by voice vote or unanimous consent). The most recent circuit court nominee confirmed by voice vote or unanimous consent during the first year of a presidency occurred in [1993](#).

**Figure 3. Number of Nay Votes Received by U.S. Circuit Court Nominees Confirmed During the First Year of a Presidency**  
(2001-2025)



**Source:** Congressional Research Service.

**Note:** Data are current through December 21, 2025.

Of the 6 circuit court nominees confirmed to date during the first year of the second Trump presidency, each received more than 40 nay votes when confirmed (with 4 nominees having received more than 45 nay votes). During the first year of the first Trump presidency, 9 of 12 nominees were confirmed having received more than 40 nay votes (with 4 of the 9 having received more than 45 nay votes).

For related historical information about nay votes received by circuit court nominees at the time of confirmation, see CRS Report R45622, *Judicial Nomination Statistics and Analysis: U.S. Circuit and District Courts, 1977-2024*.

## Author Information

Barry J. McMillion  
Analyst in American National Government

## Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.