



The Length of Major Steps in the Supreme Court Appointment Process (1975-2022)

April 13, 2026

This Insight provides historical data and information related to the length of time it has taken to appoint new Justices to the [Supreme Court](#) from 1975 to 2022. Specifically, for individuals nominated to the Court during this period, this Insight provides information about how long it has taken for each major step in the appointment process to occur, from the date on which it was publicly known a vacancy would occur to the date on which the Senate voted on the nomination.

Additional information about the Supreme Court appointment process can be found in CRS reports related to a [President's selection of a nominee, consideration by the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Senate debate and confirmation vote](#).

Days Elapsed from Vacancy to Nomination Announcement

Figure 1 shows the number of days that elapsed between the date on which it was publicly known that a Justice was leaving the Court (due to retirement or death) and the date on which the President publicly identified a nominee to replace the Justice.

The figure only shows those vacancies on the Court for which a single nomination was made for the vacancy to be filled. Consequently, for example, the vacancy created by the death of Justice Scalia is not included in **Figure 1** (since more than one nomination was made before it was filled).

Overall, for the 14 vacancies included in the figure, approximately 20 days, on average, elapsed between the date on which it was publicly known that a Justice was leaving the Court and the date on which the President publicly identified a nominee to replace the Justice (the median was 14 days).

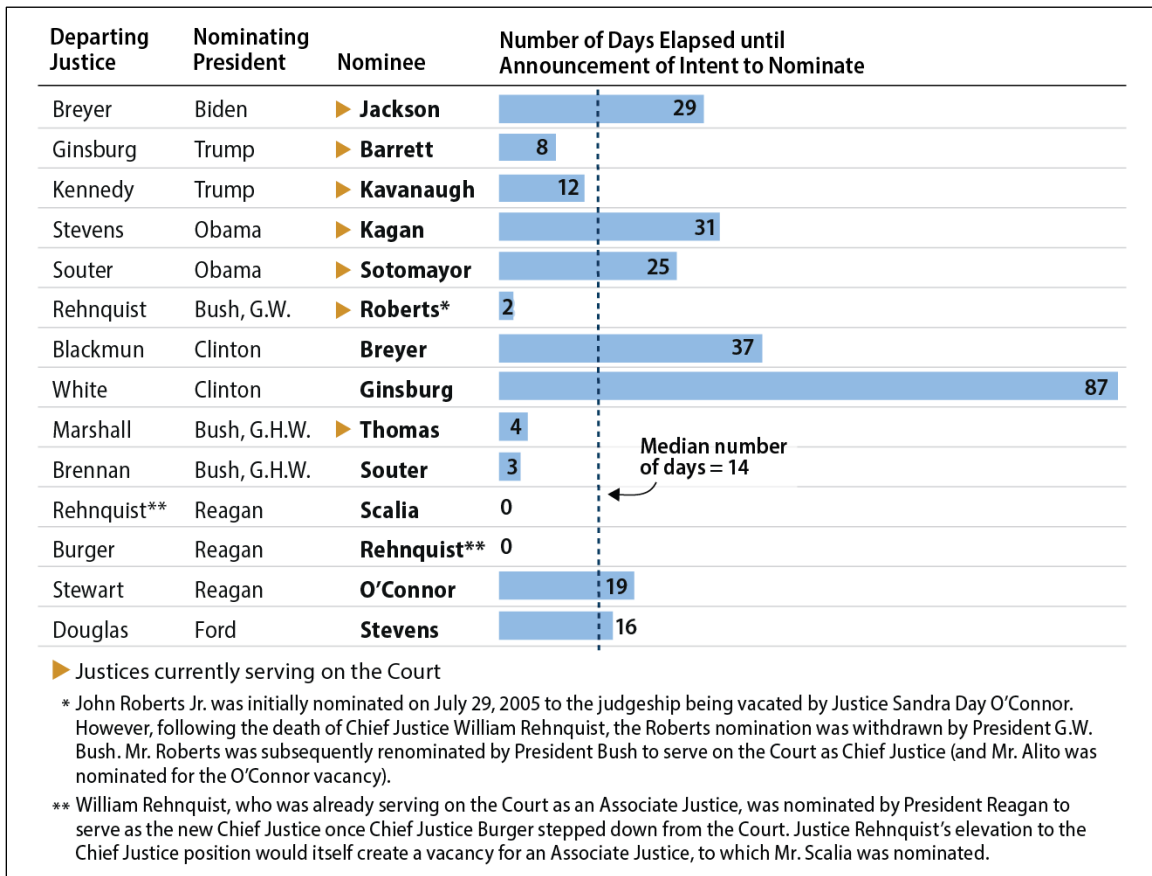
For the seven Justices currently serving on the Court who are also included in **Figure 1**, the average number of days from a vacancy occurring to a President's public announcement of a nomination to the Court was 16 days (the median was 12 days). For the most recent vacancy in 2022, President Biden nominated Judge [Ketanji Brown Jackson](#) 29 days after Justice Stephen Breyer announced his intention to vacate his seat on the Court.

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Figure 1. Number of Days from Vacancy Announcement or Occurrence to President’s Public Announcement Identifying Nominee (1975-2022)



Source: Congressional Research Service.

Note: The figure includes those vacancies on the Court for which a single nomination was made for the vacancy to be filled. Consequently, nominations to fill the vacancies created by the departures of Justices Lewis Powell (1987) and Sandra Day O’Connor (2006), and the death of Justice Antonin Scalia (2016), are not included.

As noted previously, **Figure 1** includes only those vacancies on the Court since 1975 that did not require multiple nominations in order for the vacancy to be filled. During this period, three vacancies required multiple nominations to fill—specifically, the vacancies following the departures of Justices [Lewis Powell](#) (1987) and [Sandra Day O’Connor](#) (2006), and the death of Justice [Antonin Scalia](#) (2016). For additional information about these particular vacancies, which involved the collective nominations of [Robert Bork](#), [Anthony Kennedy](#), [John G. Roberts, Jr.](#), [Harriet Miers](#), [Samuel A. Alito, Jr.](#), [Merrick Garland](#), and [Neil Gorsuch](#), see [CRS Report R44235](#).

Days Elapsed from Nomination to First Committee Hearing

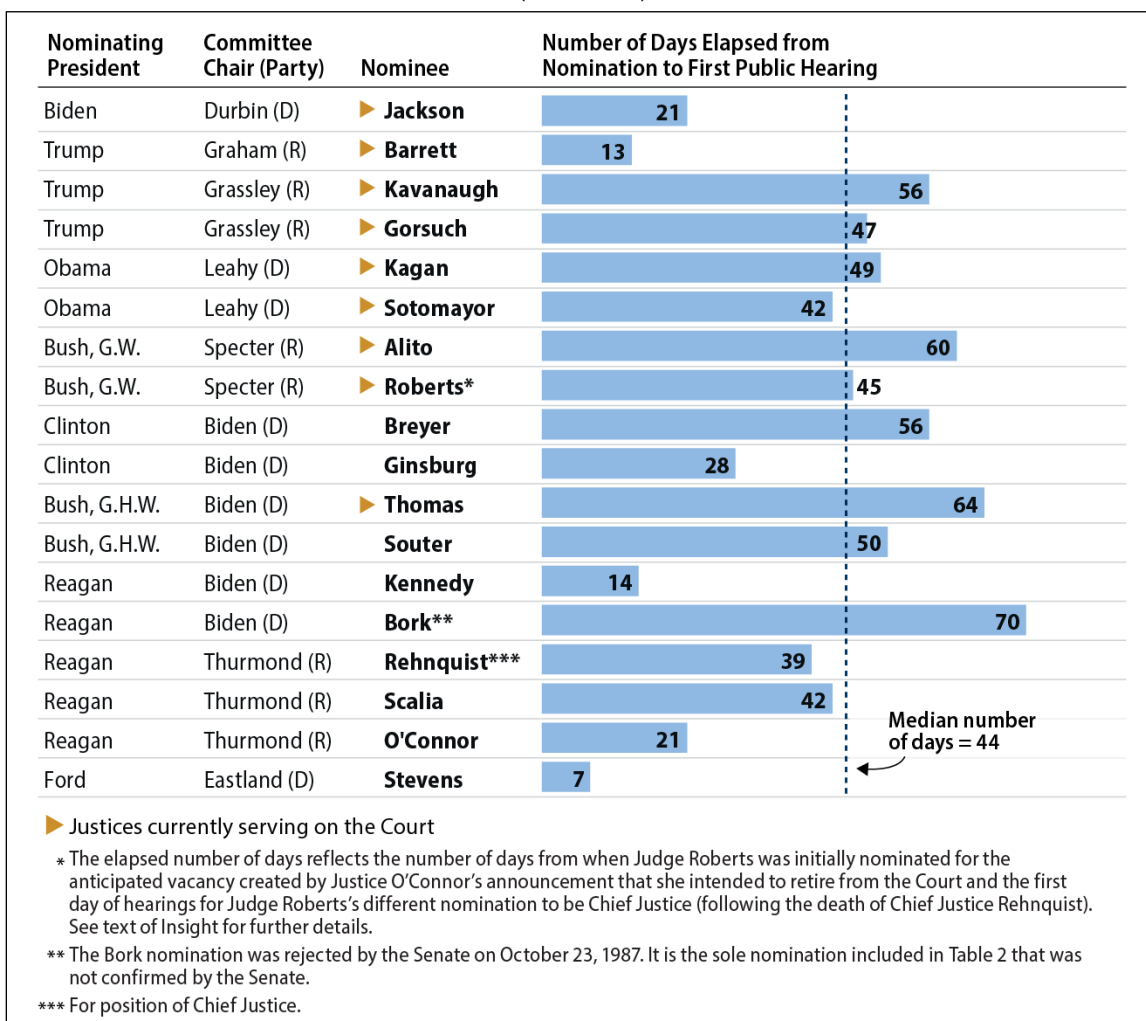
For nominees since 1975 who received hearings before the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#), **Figure 2** shows the number of days that elapsed from the date on which the nomination was formally submitted to the Senate to the date on which the nominee had his or her first public hearing.

For the 18 nominees listed in **Figure 2**, the average number of days from nomination to first committee hearing was 40 days (the median was 44 days). For the nine Justices currently serving on the Court, the

average number of days from nomination to first committee hearing was 44 days (the median was 47 days).

The length of time from the date when Judge [John Roberts Jr.](#) was nominated to the Chief Justice position to the date his hearings commenced was 6 days. However, at the time Roberts was nominated for the Chief Justice position, his nomination to replace Justice O'Connor as an Associate Justice had already been pending for 39 days. Altogether, considering both nominations, Judge Roberts waited a total of 45 days from his initial nomination to replace Justice O'Connor to his first committee hearing date to replace Chief Justice [William Rehnquist](#). Consequently, **Figure 2** reports 45 days as the time interval from his nomination to first committee hearing.

Figure 2. Number of Days from Nomination to First Committee Hearing (1975-2022)



Source: Congressional Research Service.

Note: The figure includes nominees since 1975 who received hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Days Elapsed from Committee Vote to Final Vote

For nominees since 1975 who received a final floor vote, the average number of days that elapsed from the date on which the nomination was reported by the Judiciary Committee (or, in one case, the date on

which the committee was discharged from consideration of the nomination) to the date on which the Senate voted whether to approve the nomination was approximately 11 days (the median was 7 days). An accompanying figure and additional information for this step of the appointment process is provided in [CRS Report R44234](#).

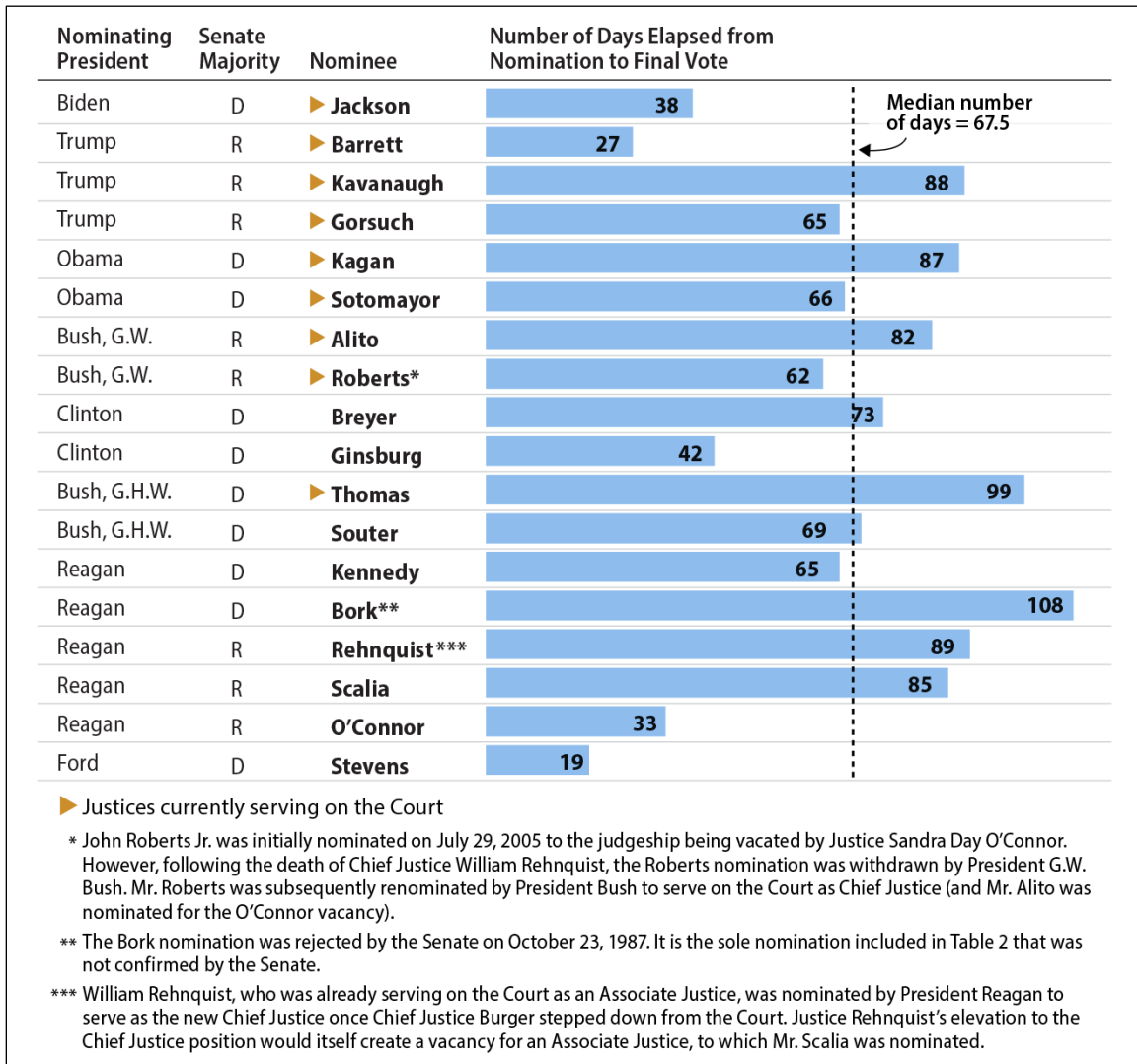
Most recently, in 2022, after the committee was discharged from consideration of Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination, three days elapsed until the final Senate vote occurred on her nomination (for additional information about committee action on the Jackson nomination, see [CRS Report R44234](#)).

Days Elapsed from Nomination to Final Vote

For nominees since 1975 who received a final floor vote, **Figure 3** shows the number of days that elapsed from the date on which the nomination was formally submitted to the Senate to the date on which the Senate voted on whether to confirm the nomination.

Of the 18 nominees listed in the figure, Robert Bork waited the greatest number of days (108) from nomination to a final Senate vote, followed by [Clarence Thomas](#) (99), whereas [John Paul Stevens](#) waited the fewest number of days (19), followed by [Amy Coney Barrett](#) (27). The most recent nominee to the Court, Ketanji Brown Jackson, waited 38 days from nomination to final Senate vote.

Figure 3. Number of Days from Nomination to Final Vote
(1975-2022)



Source: Congressional Research Service.

Note: The figure includes nominees since 1975 who received a final floor vote on his or her nomination.

Overall, since 1975, the average number of days from nomination to final Senate vote was 66.5 days (or approximately 2.2 months), while the median was 67.5 days.

Of the 9 Justices currently serving on the Court, the average number of days from nomination to final Senate vote was 68.2 days, while the median was 66.0 days. Among the current Justices, Amy Coney Barrett waited the fewest number of days from nomination to confirmation (27), whereas Clarence Thomas waited the greatest number of days (99).

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