

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson Will Be a Justice For All

On February 25, 2022, President Biden announced the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve as an associate justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. She is a brilliant, eminently qualified jurist with a demonstrated commitment to civil rights. When confirmed, she will be the first Black woman and first former public defender to serve on our nation's highest court.

Judge Jackson was a star student with a passion for speech and debate.

- She was born in Washington, D.C. in 1970, the daughter of two public school teachers, and grew up in Miami, where her father studied law. Doing her homework with her father, Judge Jackson was inspired to be a lawyer.¹
- As a high school student, she was nationally ranked in competitive speech and debate, a formative experience that made her want to attend Harvard University. Her guidance counselor told her not to set her sights so high, but Judge Jackson persisted.² She graduated with honors from Harvard University in 1992 and Harvard Law School in 1996.

Judge Jackson's impeccable credentials include three federal clerkships and experience in private practice early in her career.

- After law school, Judge Jackson clerked for Judge Patti Saris of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts, Judge Bruce Selya of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, and Associate Justice Stephen Breyer of the U.S. Supreme Court — the justice whose seat Judge Jackson has been nominated to fill.
- At respected firms in D.C. and Boston, Judge Jackson gained key legal experience, including trial-stage civil litigation, civil and criminal appeals in state and federal court, and filing petitions and briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court.

“We are now charged with the responsibility... of doing the work that is necessary to protect the rule of law and to promote equality and justice for all.”

- Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson³

¹ Jackson, Ketanji B. “**Rising Through the Ranks: A Tale of Hard Work, Big Breaks & Tough Skin.**” Keynote speech, Husch Blackwell Diversity Retreat, Washington D.C., October 10, 2019. [Senate Judiciary Questionnaire Attachments](#). Pgs. 696-97.

² Jackson, Ketanji B. “**Three Qualities for Success in Law and Life.**” Keynote speech, University of Chicago School of Law Third Annual Judge James B. Parsons Legacy Dinner, February 24, 2020. [Senate Judiciary Questionnaire Attachments](#). Pg. 575.

³ Jackson, Ketanji Brown. Remarks for the Empowering Women of Color Sixth Annual Constance Baker Motley Gala, Columbia Law School. March 12, 2021. [Senate Judiciary Questionnaire Attachments](#). Pg. 554.

Judge Jackson will be the first former public defender to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, bringing much-needed perspective and vital experience to our highest court.

- From 2005 to 2007, Judge Jackson served as an assistant federal public defender in Washington, D.C., representing people who cannot afford an attorney and playing a crucial role in protecting the civil rights of all people.
- As vice chair and commissioner on the U.S. Sentencing Commission from 2010 to 2014, she helped reform the unjust discrepancy between sentences for crack and powder cocaine, which disproportionately affect Black, Brown, and indigenous people.⁴
- Judge Jackson has seen how the criminal-legal system impacts real people, and she will bring that crucial perspective to the Supreme Court.

Judge Jackson has nearly a decade of experience as a highly respected, fair-minded jurist, and the Senate has confirmed her with bipartisan support three times.

- Judge Jackson served with distinction for more than eight years on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, where she wrote nearly 600 opinions.
- Due to her impeccable qualifications, Judge Jackson was confirmed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in 2021 with bipartisan support.⁵
- The Senate also confirmed her without objection twice — in 2010 for her nomination to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and again in 2013 for her nomination to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.⁶

Judge Jackson has the demonstrated commitment to civil rights and equal justice for all that we need in our next Supreme Court justice.

- On the federal bench, Judge Jackson has issued many decisions showing her commitment to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities, workers' rights, immigrant rights, reproductive freedom, and environmental protections.⁷
- Judge Jackson would bring a new understanding and fresh perspectives to the Supreme Court, broadening its grasp of the issues most important to our daily lives and bringing it closer to the promise of equal justice for all.

“I can only hope that my life and career, my love of this country and the Constitution, and my commitment to upholding the rule of law and the sacred principles upon which this great nation was founded will inspire future generations of Americans.”

- Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson⁸

For more information, please visit OurCourt.Org or contact Samantha Cyrulnik-Dercher at cyrulnikdercher@civilrights.org.

⁴ See “[U.S. Sentencing Commission Public Meeting Minutes](#),” U.S. Sentencing Commission. April 6, 2011. Pgs. 11-12.

⁵ U.S. Senate. [Vote no. 231](#). 117th Congress. June 14, 2021.

⁶ U.S. Senate. [PN 802](#). 111th Congress. Feb. 11, 2010; U.S. Senate. [PN 18](#). 113th Congress. March 23, 2013.

⁷ See *Pierce v. District of Columbia*, 128 F.Supp.3d 250 (D.D.C. 2015) (disability rights); *Equal Rights Ctr. v. Uber Tech., Inc.*, 2021 WL 981011 (D.D.C. 2021) (disability rights); *AFGE v. Trump*, 318 F.Supp.3d 370 (D.D.C. 2018) (workers' rights); *Make the Road N.Y. v. McAleenan*, 405 F.Supp.3d 1 (D.D.C. 2019) (immigrants' rights); *Kiakombua v. Wolf*, 2020 WL 6392824 (D.D.C. 2020) (immigrants' rights); *Policy and Rsch. LLC v. HHS*, 313 F.Supp.3d 62 (D.D.C. 2018) (reproductive freedom); *Healthy Futures of Tex. v. HHS*, No. 1:18-cv-992 (D.D.C. June 1, 2018) (reproductive freedom); *Government Accountability Project v. FDA*, 206 F.Supp.3d 420 (D.D.C. 2016) (environmental protections); *Watervale Marine Co. v. DHS*, 55 F.Supp.3d 124 (D.D.C. 2014) (environmental protections).

⁸ Jackson, Ketanji Brown. [Remarks on President Biden's nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve as an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court](#). February 25, 2022.