

U.S. District Court Nominees Confirmed During the Biden Presidency: Overview and Comparative Statistics

January 28, 2025

This Insight provides statistics related to the nomination and confirmation of U.S. district court nominees during the Biden presidency. This Insight also compares these statistics with those for district court nominees confirmed during the terms of his three immediate predecessors—Presidents Donald Trump (2017-2020), Barack Obama (2009-2016), and George W. Bush (2001-2008).

Number and Percentage of Nominees Confirmed

President Biden nominated 199 individuals to district court judgeships, of whom 187 (94%) were confirmed. In comparison, President Trump during his first presidency (2017-2020) nominated 208 individuals to district court judgeships, of whom 174 (84%) were confirmed. During the Obama and Bush presidencies, 322 and 286 individuals were nominated, respectively, to district court judgeships, with 268 (83%) and 261 (91%) nominees confirmed during each presidency.

Days from Nomination to Confirmation

Overall, the median number of days from nomination to confirmation for district court nominees confirmed during the Biden presidency was 138 days (the average was 163 days). The shortest length of time a nominee waited to be confirmed after being nominated was 32 days (1.1 months), while the greatest length of time was 692 days (22.8 months).

The median number of days from nomination to confirmation for district court nominees during the first Trump presidency was 237 days (with an average of 276 days). The median number of days from nomination to confirmation for district court nominees confirmed during the Obama and Bush presidencies was 215 and 141 days, respectively (with averages of 225 and 178 days).

Figure 1 provides a numerical breakdown in the length of time from nomination to confirmation for district court nominees confirmed within specified time periods during each presidency.

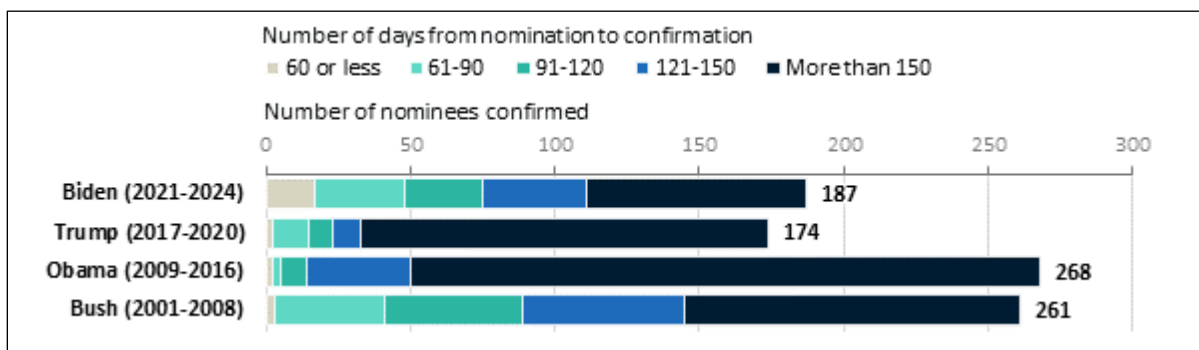
Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

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Figure 1. Length of Time from Nomination to Confirmation

U.S. district court nominees



Source: Congressional Research Service.

Notes: If a nominee was nominated more than once prior to confirmation, the first date he or she was nominated is used in calculating the number of days from nomination to confirmation.

A plurality (76 of 187, or 41%) of President Biden's district court nominees were confirmed more than 150 days after being nominated. Of the remaining nominees, 17 were confirmed within 60 days of being nominated; 31 were confirmed within 61 to 90 days; 27 were confirmed within 91 to 120 days; and 36 were confirmed within 121 to 150 days.

A majority (141 of 174, or 81%) of President Trump's district court nominees confirmed during his first presidency were confirmed more than 150 days after being nominated. Of the remaining nominees, 2 were confirmed within 60 days of being nominated; 13 were confirmed within 61 to 90 days; 8 were confirmed within 91 to 120 days; and 10 were confirmed within 121 to 150 days.

The figure also shows that a majority of district court nominees during the Obama presidency and a plurality during the Bush presidency were confirmed more than 150 days after being nominated (81% and 44%, respectively).

Nays Received When Confirmed

Figure 2 shows, for district court nominees confirmed during each presidency, the number of nominees confirmed by voice vote or unanimous consent. The figure also shows, for nominees confirmed by roll call vote, the number of nominees confirmed within specified ranges of nay votes.

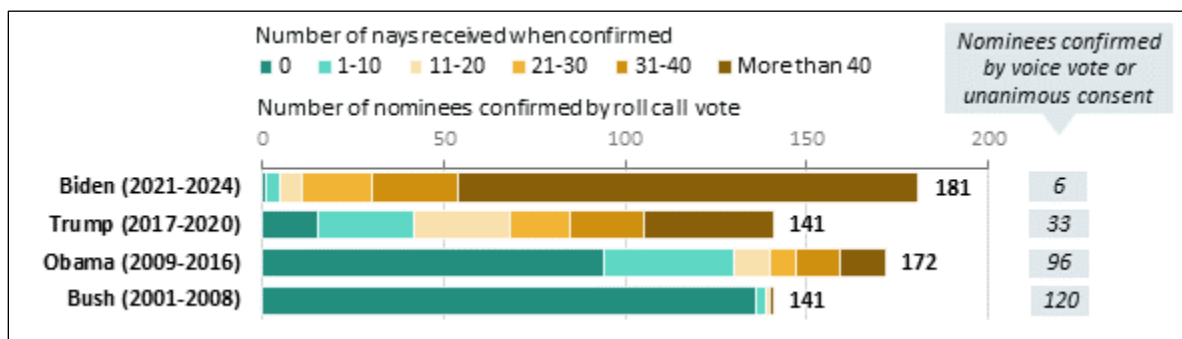
During the Biden presidency, six district court nominees were confirmed by voice vote or unanimous consent. Of those nominees confirmed by roll call vote, a majority (127 of 181, or 70%) received more than 40 nay votes when confirmed. Five nominees received 10 or fewer nay votes, representing 3% of the district court nominees confirmed by roll call vote.

During the first Trump presidency, 33 district court nominees were confirmed by voice vote or unanimous consent. Of the 141 nominees confirmed by roll call vote, a plurality (36 of 141, or 26%) received more than 40 nay votes when confirmed.

During the Obama and Bush presidencies, 96 and 120 district court nominees were confirmed, respectively, by voice vote or unanimous consent. Of the 172 and 141 district court nominees confirmed by roll call vote during the Obama and Bush presidencies, a majority were confirmed with zero nay votes (55% and 96%, respectively).

Figure 2. Number of Nay Votes Received When Confirmed

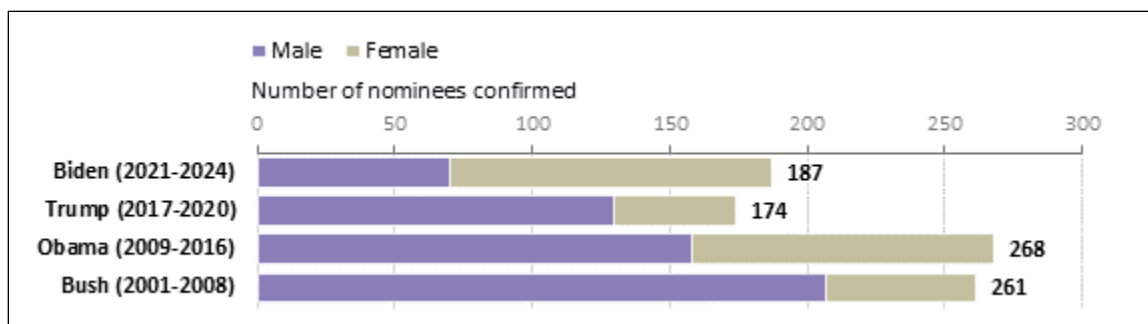
U.S. district court nominees



Source: Congressional Research Service.

Demographic Characteristics

Figure 3 shows the number of district court nominees confirmed by gender for each of the four presidencies. Of nominees confirmed during the Biden presidency, 117 of 187 (63%) were women. Of nominees confirmed, respectively, during the first Trump presidency, the Obama presidency, and the Bush presidency, 44 (25%), 110 (41%), and 54 (21%) were women.

Figure 3. U.S. District Court Nominees Confirmed by Gender

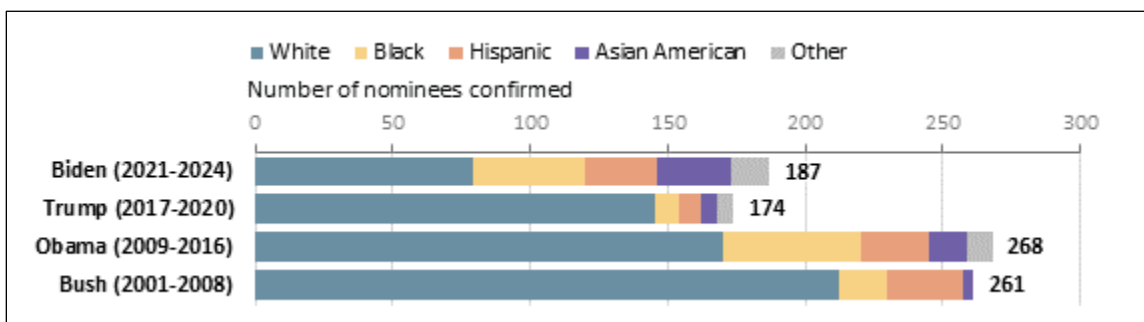
Source: Congressional Research Service.

Figure 4 provides a breakdown in the racial background of district court nominees confirmed during each of the four presidencies. During the Biden presidency, a plurality of confirmed nominees (79 of 187, or 42%) were White. Of the remaining nominees, 41 (22%) were Black, 26 (14%) were Hispanic, and 27 (14%) were Asian American. The Other category includes 3 American Indian nominees and 11 multiracial nominees.

During the first Trump presidency, a majority of confirmed nominees (145 of 174, or 83%) were White. Of the remaining nominees, 9 (5%) were Black, 8 (5%) were Hispanic, 6 (3%) were Asian American, and 6 (3%) were multiracial.

During the Obama presidency, a majority of confirmed nominees (170 of 268, or 63%) were White. Of the remaining nominees, 50 (19%) were Black, 25 (9%) were Hispanic, 14 (5%) were Asian American, and 9 (3%) were multiracial.

During the Bush presidency, a majority of confirmed nominees (212 of 261, or 81%) were White. Of the remaining nominees, 18 (7%) were Black, 27 (10%) were Hispanic, and 4 (2%) were Asian American.

Figure 4. U.S. District Court Nominees Confirmed by Race

Source: Congressional Research Service.

Notes: For the purposes of this Insight, the Hispanic category is treated as a non-White category (but individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race).

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