

An easy guide to federal judicial nominations

9 steps from vacancy to confirmation

Every day federal judges make decisions that affect our lives. Not only do they hear cases impacting the environment, health care, Social Security benefits, and immigration, for example, but they often have the final say in determining who we can marry, whether our speech is protected, or how we can vote. Despite these important decisions, most Americans don't know how or why a judge is chosen. Under the Constitution, the president nominates federal judges by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Our simple step-by-step guide illustrates the process.



POTENTIAL ROADBLOCKS

The above process assumes there are no procedural roadblocks to an appointment. This process can be affected by partisanship and can be delayed indefinitely.

Home state senators fail to recommend a candidate to the president.

Home state senators fail to return the blue slip or disapprove of the nominee.

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee can delay the committee vote.

Senators can block the Senate majority leader from promptly scheduling a full Senate vote.