



Written by [Steven Yates](#) on July 28, 2009

Senate Judiciary Committee Votes to Confirm Sotomayor

Earlier today the Senate Judiciary Committee voted 13 to 6 to confirm federal appeals court judge Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court. She would be the first Hispanic to be appointed to the court.

The vote nearly followed partisan lines. While Sotomayor had the full support of the committee's Democrats, just one Republican, Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) crossed party lines to vote for her.

Graham said, "I'm deciding to vote for a woman I would not have chosen." He called President Obama's choice to nominate the first-ever Latina to the highest court "a big deal," and added, "America has changed for the better with her selection." Senator Graham's pragmatic vote reflects the deep division in the GOP.



Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) maintained that Sotomayor's speeches and a few of her rulings indicate that she will allow her opinions to guide her decisions on the court, an allegation she and her supporters deny. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) stated, "There's not one example, let alone a pattern, of her ruling based on bias or prejudice or sympathy. She has administered justice without favoring one group of persons over another."

Republicans point to her decision in the Ricci case and continue to express concern over her views on the Second Amendment, which she did not clarify during the confirmation hearings. The latter prompted the National Rifle Association to publicize its opposition to her confirmation. The GOP has also expressed worry over President Obama's comment that a judge should have "empathy" — an understanding of the effects of court rulings on people's lives — holding Sotomayor up as a model.

On the other hand, David Souter, a judge with a minimal paper trail appointed by the first George Bush, turned out to be a liberal. Since it is Souter that Sotomayor will be replacing, many observers therefore conclude that her appointment will not change the overall ideological composition of the nation's highest court.

The Sonia Sotomayor confirmation goes for a vote before the full Senate next week.



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