



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Navajo Nation applauds the historic Swearing-In of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson to the United States Supreme Court

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Speaker Seth Damon and the 24th Navajo Nation Council applaud the swearing-in of Honorable Ketanji Brown Jackson who was sworn in as the 104th Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States on Thursday. Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. administered the Constitutional Oath making her the first African American woman to serve on the highest court in the country.

Jackson replaces Justice Stephen Breyer, whom she clerked for after graduating from Harvard Law School in 1996. In 2012, President Barack Obama nominated her to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, where she served from 2013 to 2021. She was appointed to the Defender Services Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States in 2017, and to the Supreme Court Fellows Commission in 2019.

“The swearing-in of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson reflects a long overdue but welcome historic milestone. She will join a court at a historic crossroads, where her lifetime of experience will allow her to write majority opinions protecting equal rights for all and the sovereignty of Tribal Nations. Justice Jackson is a powerful voice for the Court and the Navajo Nation applauds her historic nomination by President Joe Biden,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

In 2021, President Biden appointed her to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit before his nomination. Judge Jackson was confirmed by a 53-47 vote in April, with all 50 Democrats voting in favor. The lone three Republicans included Senator Mitt Romney (Utah), Senator Susan Collins (Maine), and Senator Lisa Murkowski (Alaska).

“Just as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg was a fighter for women across America, Judge Jackson makes history during an important time for the United States when women’s rights are under attack. Her presence on the highest court sends a message across Indian Country and the United States that women of color can serve in the highest public offices. What we are witnessing today in the United States, having a woman as Vice President of the United States and now, a woman of color on the Supreme Court, tells us we must embrace the power of diversity. Our young girls must no longer be told what might be possible - they must be shown it is possible,” said Madam Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock).

During Judiciary Committee confirmation hearings, Judge Jackson was given the opportunity to tell Congress what it would mean to her to serve on the nation’s highest court. It was noted that the federal government owes an obligation to tribal nations that is of a unique fiduciary nature.

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As part of her Congressional testimony, Judge Jackson further added, “Indian tribes are, as a general matter, considered to be sovereigns and the relationship is a sovereign-to-sovereign relationship, but it’s one in which the federal government has some responsibilities related to the Indian nation. There is a trust responsibility that the federal government has in terms of making sure that the tribes are recognized and cared for, in the context of our system.”

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson replaces Justice Stephen G. Breyer who officially retired at the end of the court’s session yesterday. The oath ceremony can be viewed here: https://www.supremecourt.gov/publicinfo/press/oath/oath_Jackson.aspx

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