

Fact Sheet:
Making Sure That Courts Protect Women's Legal Rights

Judges appointed to the federal courts have the responsibility of ruling on women's crucial legal rights.

Federal judges make decisions every day that have an impact on women's lives. Judges decide issues of particular importance to women, including:

- Whether the government can interfere in a woman's personal decision-making, including the decision to have an abortion under *Roe v. Wade*;
- Whether women have effective legal protection against pay discrimination, and other forms of on-the-job discrimination, including sexual harassment;
- Whether young women will have a strong Title IX, protecting them against discrimination and harassment in the classroom and on the playing fields;
- Whether public schools and state universities will be prevented from adopting programs to break down barriers that girls and women still face in education and employment, particularly in fields in which they are underrepresented, such as science and engineering;
- Whether women will be able to enforce rights established under federal laws and programs, including the right to benefits like Medicaid, public housing, child support enforcement, and public assistance that are especially important to low-income women and their families.

Judges' decisions have a broad and lasting impact.

- Federal judges are appointed for life. The decisions they make can affect women and their families for generations.
- Since 1970, the average length of time Justices spend on the Supreme Court is 25.5 years.

The judicial nominations process matters.

- The President nominates federal judges, and the President's nominees must be confirmed by the Senate.
- The only real opportunity to make sure that judges are committed to upholding legal rights important to women is *before* they are confirmed.

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