

Manchin becomes first Democrat to meet with Trump's Supreme Court pick

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Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) on Thursday met with Judge Amy Coney Barrett, President Trump's Supreme Court nominee, becoming the first Senate Democrat known sit down with her.



© Bonnie Cash Manchin becomes first Democrat to meet with Trump's Supreme Court pick

The meeting, confirmed by a spokesperson for the Democratic senator, took place on Thursday evening. Barrett has been making the rounds on Capitol Hill since Tuesday but each of her other dozens of meetings have been with Republican senators.

Manchin was the only Democratic senator to vote for Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court nomination in 2018 and one of three Democratic senators who voted for Neil Gorsuch's nomination in 2017.

But he's pledged that he will not support confirming a Supreme Court nominee before the Nov. 3 election. Absent an 11th-hour setback, Republicans are poised to confirm Barrett during the last week of October, just days for the November election. Though other nominees will have gone from nomination to confirmation in a fewer number of days, Barrett will set a record for being confirmed the closest to a presidential election.

"I cannot support a process that risks further division of the American people at a time when we desperately need to come together. I will not vote to confirm Judge Coney Barrett or any Supreme Court nominee before Election Day on November 3rd.

I urge my Republican friends to slow down, put people before politics, and give their constituents a chance to vote," Manchin said after Trump announced his intention to nominate Barrett.

Judd Deere, a spokesman for the White House, told The Hill earlier this week that they had extended invitations to Senate Democrats to meet with Barrett, adding that they hoped Democrats took "their constitutional duty to advise and consent seriously and confirm this well qualified nominee."

A senior administration official confirmed the meeting with Manchin, which was first reported by The Washington Post. The question of whether or not to meet with Barrett has been a point of contention among Senate Democrats.

Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and several Democrats including Sens. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) have said they will not meet with her. The meetings are more of a tradition in the Senate and are meant to give senators a chance to get to know a nominee and ask questions before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), a former chairman and current member of the committee, appeared critical of the White House outreach efforts. He told reporters earlier Thursday that they had reached out to him while the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was lying in state, calling the move "tasteless."

Other Democratic senators including Sens. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) have indicated they would at least hold a phone call, due to the coronavirus pandemic, with Barrett.

Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) told reporters that he is scheduled to speak by phone with Barrett next week.