

# Justice Kagan Takes Oath

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Five Republicans broke ranks to back the 50-year-old former Harvard Law School dean, and just one Democrat, Senator Ben Nelson of Nebraska, voted against her.

She was sworn in on Saturday by Chief Justice John Roberts, but will not be formally seated until Oct. 1 for the court's fall session.

Though never seriously in doubt, her confirmation to the lifetime post gave President Barack Obama and his Democratic allies a much-needed victory before November mid-term elections in which they are expected to suffer heavy losses.

Thanking the Senate, Obama said he was "confident that Elena Kagan will make an outstanding Supreme Court Justice."

The confirmation brought to two the number of justices named by the president -- after the court's first Hispanic justice, Sonia Sotomayor -- and the total number of women on the high bench to three for the first time ever.

Kagan's "legal qualifications are unassailable. She earned her place at the top of the legal profession," said Senator Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"Her qualifications, intelligence, temperament and judgment will make her a worthy successor to Justice



Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan is sworn into office on Saturday as the Supreme Court's 112th justice and the fourth woman in its history. (AP photo)

John Paul Stevens," he said, referring to the retiring leader of the court's liberal bloc.

But Kagan was not expected to tip the overall ideological balance of the court, which many observers have described as the most conservative in decades.

Nominating Supreme Court justices ranks among the most consequential powers of the presidency. And some of the toughest rulings have come in 5-4 decisions that can take a generation to reverse.

The 50-year-old Kagan, who as US solicitor general has argued the Obama administration's case before the high court, will be the youngest justice.



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