

# Trump choosing white men as judges, highest rate in decades

BY CATHERINE LUCEY and MEGHAN HOYER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is nominating white men to America's federal courts at a rate not seen in nearly 30 years, threatening to reverse a slow transformation toward a judiciary that reflects the nation's diversity.

So far, 91 percent of Trump's nominees are white, and 81 percent are male, an Associated Press analysis has found. Three of every four are white men, with few African-Americans and Hispanics in the mix. The last president to nominate a similarly homogenous group was George H.W. Bush.

The shift could prove to be one of Trump's most enduring legacies. These are lifetime appointments, and Trump has inherited both an unusually high number of vacancies and an aging population of judges. That puts him in position to significantly reshape the courts that decide thousands of civil rights, environmental, criminal justice and other disputes across the country. The White House has been upfront about its plans to quickly fill the seats with conservatives, and has made clear that judicial philosophy tops any concerns about shrinking racial or gender diversity.

Trump is anything but shy about his plans, calling his imprint on the courts an "untold story" of his presidency.

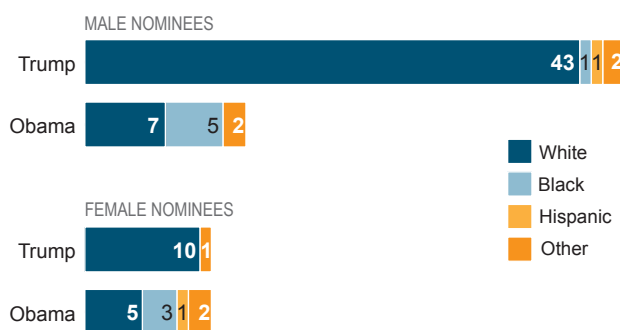
"Nobody wants to talk about it," he says. "But when you think of it ... that has consequences 40 years out." He predicted at a recent Cabinet meeting, "A big percentage of the court will be changed by this administration over a very short period of time."

Advocates for putting more women and racial minorities on the bench argue that courts that more closely

## Trump's judicial picks vs. Obama's

Since taking office, President Donald Trump has nominated far more white males to the federal bench than his predecessor, Barack Obama, according to an analysis of demographic data for the federal judiciary.

Judicial nominations during president's first 10 months



Data is for Jan. 20-Oct. 31, 2017 for Trump and Jan. 20-Oct. 31, 2009 for Obama. "Other" refers to those who do not identify themselves as white, black or Hispanic.

SOURCES: AP; Federal Judicial Center

reflect the demographics of the population ensure a broader range of viewpoints and inspire greater confidence in judicial rulings.

One court that has become a focus in the debate is the Eastern District of North Carolina, a region that, despite its sizeable black population, has never had a black judge. A seat on that court has been open for more than a decade. George W. Bush named a white man, and Barack Obama at different points nominated two black women, but none of those nominees ever came to a vote in the Senate.

Trump has renominated Bush's original choice: Thomas Farr, a private attorney whose work defending North Carolina's redistricting maps and a voter identification law has raised concerns among civil rights advocates.

Kyle Barry, senior policy counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, said that when diversity is lacking, "there's a clear perception where the courts are not a place people can go and vindicate their civil rights."

In recent decades, Democrats have consistently named more racial minorities and women on the courts. But even compared to his Republican predecessors, Trump's nominees stand out. So far, he has nominated the highest percentage of white judges in his first year since Ronald Reagan. If he continues on his trend through his first term, he will be the first Republican since Herbert Hoover to name fewer women and minorities to the court than his GOP predecessor.

The AP reviewed 58 nominees to lifetime positions on appellate and district courts, as well as the Supreme Court, by the end of October. Fifty-three are white, three are Asian-American, one is Hispanic and one is African-American. There are 47 men and 11 women. Thirteen have won Senate approval.

The numbers stand in marked contrast to those of Obama, who made diversifying the federal bench a priority. White men represented just 37 percent of judges confirmed during Obama's two terms; nearly 42 percent of his judges were women.

# Half of U.S. adults have high blood pressure in new guidelines

ANAHEIM, Calif. — New guidelines lower the threshold for high blood pressure, adding 30 million Americans to those who have the condition, which now plagues nearly half of U.S. adults.

High pressure, which for decades has been a top reading of at least 140 or a bottom one of 90, drops to 130 over 80 in advice announced Monday by a dozen medical groups.

The change means an additional 14 percent of U.S. adults have the problem, but only an additional 2 percent will need medication right away; the rest should try healthier lifestyles, which get much stronger emphasis in the new advice. Poor diets, lack of exercise and other bad habits cause 90 percent of high blood pressure.

"I have no doubt there will be controversy. I'm sure there will be people saying 'We have a hard enough time getting to 140,'" said Dr. Paul Whelton, a Tulane University physician who led the guidelines panel.

But the risk for heart disease, stroke and other problems drops as blood pressure improves, and the new advice "is more honest" about how many people have a problem, he said.

Currently, only half of Americans with high blood pressure have it under control.

The upper threshold for high blood pressure has been 140 since 1993, but a major study two years ago found heart risks were much lower in people who aimed for 120. Canada and Australia lowered their cutoff to that; Europe is still at 140 but is due to revise its guidance next year.

The guidelines were announced Monday at an American Heart Association conference in Anaheim.

**What the changes mean**  
The guidelines set new categories and get rid of "prehypertension":



In this 2013 file photo, a patient has her blood pressure checked by a registered nurse in Plainfield, Vt. New medical guidelines announced Monday lower the threshold for high blood pressure, adding 30 million Americans to those who have the condition.

- Normal: Under 120 over 80
- Elevated: Top number 120-129 and bottom less than 80
- Stage 1: Top of 130-139 or bottom of 80-89
- Stage 2: Top at least 140 or bottom at least 90

That means 46 percent of U.S. adults have high pressure (stages 1 or 2) versus 32 percent under the old levels.

How common it is will roughly triple in men under 45, to 30 percent, and double in women of that age, to 19 percent.

For people over 65, the guidelines undo a controversial tweak made three years ago to relax standards and not start medicines unless the top number was over 150. Now, everyone that old should be treated if the top number is over 130 unless they're too frail or have conditions that make it unwise.

"The evidence with this is so solid, so convincing, that it's hard to argue with the targets," said Dr. Jackson Wright, a guidelines panel member from University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center. Older people "have a 35-to-50-fold higher risk of dying of a heart attack or stroke compared

to younger people." But the Cleveland Clinic's Dr. Steven Nissen said he's worried.

"Some more vulnerable patients who get treated very aggressively may have trouble with falls" because too-low pressure can make them faint, he said.

### Who needs treatment

Certain groups, such as those with diabetes, should be treated if their top number is over 130, the guidelines say. For the rest, whether to start medication will no longer be based just on the blood pressure numbers. The decision also should consider the overall risk of having a heart problem or stroke in the next 10 years, including factors such as age, gender and cholesterol, using a simple formula to estimate those odds.

Those without a high risk will be advised to improve their lifestyles — lose weight, eat healthy, exercise more, limit alcohol, avoid smoking.

"It's not just throwing meds at something," said one primary care doctor who praised the new approach, the Mayo Clinic's Dr. Robert Strohbehn. If people continue bad habits, "They can kind of eat and blow through the medicines," he said.

## BRIEFLY

### Earthquake kills 430 in Iranian border region

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Rescuers dug with their bare hands Monday through the debris of buildings felled by an earthquake that killed more than 430 people in the border region of Iran and Iraq, with nearly all the casualties occurring in an area rebuilt after their ruinous 1980s war.

The magnitude-7.3 earthquake struck Sunday at 9:48 p.m. Iran time, just as people were going to bed. The worst damage appeared to be in the Kurdish town of Sarpol-e-Zahab in the western Iranian province of Kermanshah, which sits in the Zagros Mountains that divide the two countries.

Residents fled without time to grab their possessions as apartment complexes collapsed into rubble. Outside walls of some buildings were sheared off, power and water lines were severed, and telephone service was disrupted. Residents dug frantically through wrecked buildings for survivors as they wailed. Firefighters from Tehran joined other rescuers in the desperate search, using dogs to inspect the rubble.

The hospital in Sarpol-e-Zahab was heavily damaged, and the army set up field hospitals, although many of the injured were moved to other cities, including Tehran.

### Trump Jr. messaged with WikiLeaks during campaign

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's oldest son on Monday released a series of private Twitter exchanges between himself and WikiLeaks during and after the 2016 election, including pleas from the website to publicize its leaks.

Donald Trump Jr.'s release of the messages on Twitter came hours after The Atlantic first reported them. In the exchanges — some of them around the time that the website was releasing the stolen emails from Democrat



People sit on the rubble of a destroyed house after an earthquake in the city of Darbandikhan, northern Iraq, Monday. Authorities reported that a powerful 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck the Iraq-Iran border region on Monday and killed more than three hundred people in both countries.

Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman — WikiLeaks praises his father's positive comments about WikiLeaks and asks Trump Jr. to release his father's tax returns to the site.

The revelations are sure to increase calls in Congress to have Trump Jr. testify publicly as part of several committee probes into Russian interference in the 2016 election. And they add a new element to the investigations that have been probing for months whether Trump's campaign colluded in any way with the Russian government.

In an intelligence assessment released last January, the NSA, CIA and FBI concluded that Russian military intelligence provided hacked information from the DNC and "senior Democratic officials" to WikiLeaks. WikiLeaks has denied that Russia was the source of emails it released, including those from Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta.

The private messages released by Trump Jr. show him responding to the WikiLeaks account three times, at one point agreeing to "ask around" about a political action committee WikiLeaks had mentioned. He also asked the site about a rumor about an upcoming leak. The messages began in September 2016 and ran through July.

### Sessions open to idea of Clinton Foundation special counsel

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Jeff Sessions is leaving open the possibility that a special counsel could be appointed to look into Clinton Foundation dealings and an Obama-era uranium deal, the Justice Department said Monday in responding to concerns from Republican lawmakers.

In a letter to the House Judiciary Committee, which is holding an oversight hearing Tuesday, the Justice Department said Sessions had directed senior federal prosecutors to "evaluate certain issues" raised by Republican lawmakers. President Donald Trump has also repeatedly called for investigations of Democrats.

The prosecutors will report to Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and recommend whether any new investigations should be opened, whether any matters currently under investigation require additional resources and whether it might be necessary to appoint a special counsel to oversee a probe, according to a letter sent to Rep. Robert Goodlatte of Virginia, the Judiciary Committee's Republican chairman.

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