

INTRODUCTION

Each year, SCOTUSblog publishes an end-of-term Stat Pack intended to provide data-driven analysis of the Supreme Court's term and identify trends over time. An archive of every Stat Pack dating to October Term 1995 is available [here](#).

Key findings in the October Term 2020 Stat Pack:

- 43% of cases were decided unanimously, slightly below the average of 47% over the past decade.
- 15% of cases were polarized along ideological lines (defined as every Republican-appointed justice in the majority and every Democratic-appointed justice in dissent).
- Justice Brett Kavanaugh was in the majority in 97% of the court's decisions (and 95% of its non-unanimous decisions), the highest of any justice.
- Justice Sonia Sotomayor was in the majority 69% of the court's decisions (and 45% of its non-unanimous decisions), the lowest of any justice.
- Justice Clarence Thomas and Sotomayor wrote the most total opinions, driven largely by their high numbers of concurring opinions and dissents.
- Among close cases (generally, those decided 6-3 or 5-4), 13 cases had an outcome we coded as "conservative," three cases had an outcome we coded as "liberal," and seven cases had an outcome we coded as "mixed."
- Of the 106 lawyers who argued before the court this term, 79% are men and 21% are women. The lawyers who argued most frequently this term are Paul Clement, Eric Feigin, Jeffrey Fisher, Kannon Shanmugam and Malcolm Stewart, each of whom argued four times.
- The court decided 16 cases from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit (far more than any other circuit). It reversed the 9th Circuit in 15 of them and affirmed only once.

A few notes on our methodology:

- The Stat Pack is based on the 67 decisions handed down in October 2020 that constitute formal [opinions of the court](#). They fall into three categories: 57 decisions in argued cases, eight "summary reversals" (unsigned decisions reversing a lower court without oral argument), and two unsigned decisions granting emergency relief on the [shadow docket](#). Our dataset excludes shadow-docket orders that grant or deny relief without an opinion of the court.
- Except as noted on the Circuit Scorecard, we treat consolidated cases as a single case, denoted by the case with the lowest docket number.
- In most graphics comparing the nine justices, we usually depict them by ideology, with the most liberal justice (Sotomayor) on the left and the most conservative justice (Thomas) on the right. We occasionally use the colors blue and red to denote liberal and conservative justices or decisions.
- We make infrequent small adjustments to obtain generalized data. Whenever possible, we do this by objective formula. For instance, plurality opinions are treated as majority opinions by the justice who announced the court's judgment and wrote for the most other justices; per curiam opinions are assumed to have garnered a vote from every justice who did not publicly note a dissent; and cases decided by eight justices are sometimes treated as if decided by nine.
- Other methodological notes specific to individual sections are noted in those sections.