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SCOTUS Justice Amy Coney Barrett Promotes Book, Shares Insight on Decisions

Barrett hopes to encourage familiarity about the court and evoke trust in the court

BY FELICITY GUAJARDO, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025, NEWS

The U.S. Supreme Court's reputation has taken a hit in the last few years. According to a [Pew Research Center study](#) done earlier this month, the court's favorability rating has decreased 22 percentage points since August of 2020.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett was confirmed to SCOTUS in October of 2020. That is not to imply that she somehow single-handedly ruined the court's reputation (those downward trends predate her appointment by decades), but to make clear that she was seated during a low time for the United States' highest court. (That court's recent decisions further consolidating executive branch power have done nothing to improve its reputation.)

The LBJ Presidential Library hosted Justice Barrett on Thursday, Sept. 18, with her new book, *Listening to the Law: Reflections on the Court and Constitution*, in tow. Released Sept. 9, the book depicts her life-changing appointment to SCOTUS and the impact of being in the public eye, and details how she has applied her interpretation of the Constitution to each case.

Barrett was nominated by President Donald Trump in 2017 to join the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, and then in 2020 to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the Supreme Court. She is the fifth woman to serve on SCOTUS and is perhaps best known for being part of the majority vote that overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

Her motivation for the book, she explained, was to engage public discourse and give an inside look into the court's proceedings. "Because even if you don't agree with any particular decision, I want you to be able to engage with it on the terms that the court has engaged with it," Justice Barrett said. "And my hope, my very great hope, is that people will have more confidence in institutions once they're familiar with them."

The discussion was moderated by Mark K. Updegrove, CEO of the LBJ Foundation, and touched on her approach in *Dobbs v. Jackson* and the uptick in political violence around the nation, relevant to the recent assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk. "Having no tolerance for violence I think is important," she said.

In regard to *Dobbs*, Justice Barrett said abortion failed to be an unenumerated right within the Constitution and found that it was not rooted within American tradition. "*Dobbs* laid out the evidence to demonstrate that *Roe* was incorrect to say that a right to terminate a pregnancy had been deeply rooted in the history and tradition of the American people," she said.

Justice Barrett discussed a photo from her book which shows Supreme Court justices Antonin Scalia (who she clerked for earlier in her career) and Ginsburg riding an elephant together in India. She spoke about the close relationship between the late justices and how they were able to set their political differences aside.

She said she also has friendly relationships with her colleagues and notes that younger generations often believe that political differences can't be put aside. "It seems like there's this idea that you can't be close friends with people that you disagree with, especially if it's about certain issues. And that's just not true, and that's not how justices Scalia and Ginsburg lived," Justice Barrett said.

The discussion also gave insight into how SCOTUS works to deliver an opinion and the shifting decline in public trust to federal courts. "I don't think justices can or do take public opinion into account in deciding cases, because that would interfere with the judicial obligation to do what the law requires, even if it's unpopular," Justice Barrett said.

Barrett writes in the book about having to make decisions based on the Constitution that she doesn't believe in personally. "Before I was on the bench, when I was a law student, I wrote an article expressing opposition to the death penalty. But I sit on death penalty cases, and I've voted to affirm death sentences or say that there's no legal error in those cases. I think that is the backbone that's required in the job," she said.

Overall, Barrett hopes to give a clear picture of the daily proceedings of SCOTUS and to encourage reading through opinions and dissents to understand why the justices rule one way or the other.

"I want you, who read the book, to feel like you come away understanding how the court operates, what the justices do, [and] be equipped to critique its work," she said. "And I didn't write the book because I want everyone to think that the court is a perfect institution. It's a human institution."

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