

Kamala Harris, a History-Maker Herself, Presides Over Historic Confirmation of Ketanji Brown Jackson

The vice president's announcement of the vote was met with thunderous applause and a standing ovation from Democrats on one side of the Senate chamber

By Adam Carlson and Aaron Parsley

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CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK

Kamala Harris, the country's first Black and first female vice president — who made history herself two years ago when she was voted into office — presided over

another historic moment on Thursday when she affirmed Ketanji Brown Jackson's confirmation as the next Supreme Court justice.

"On this vote the yeas are 53, the nays are 47," Harris, in her official role as president of the Senate, said in the chamber after each lawmaker had made their choice. "This nomination is confirmed."

Her announcement that Jackson will be the high court's first Black woman judge was met with thunderous applause and a standing ovation from Democrats on one side of the chamber.

For more on Ketanji Brown Jackson's historic confirmation, listen below to our daily podcast PEOPLE Every Day.



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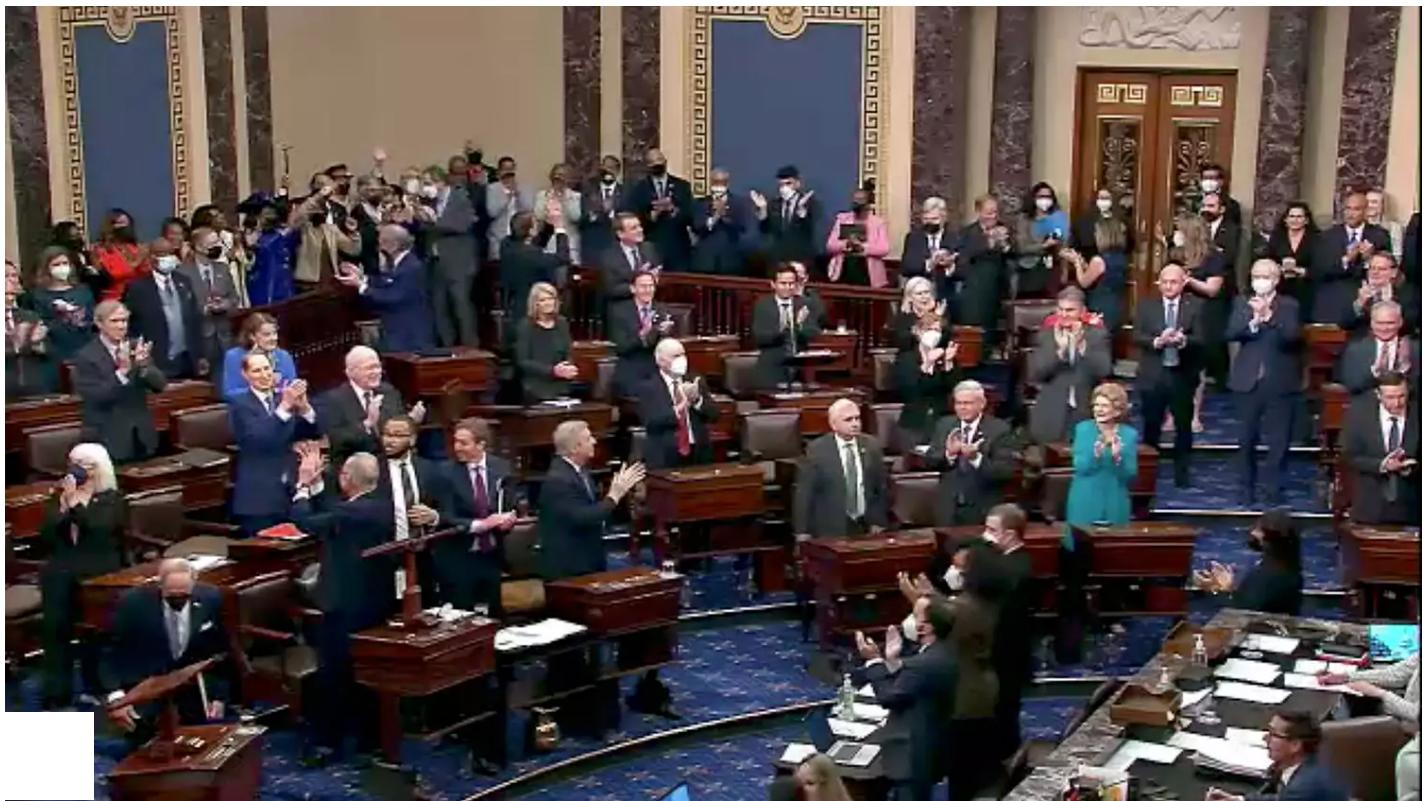
 

After the celebration, Harris, 57, turned again to the intricate regulatory language of the legislature. But the thrill was palpable.

"Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the president will immediately be notified of the Senate's action."

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer animatedly replied: "Madame President, very happily I note the absence of a quorum."

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The Senate confirmation vote for Ketanji Brown Jackson | CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK

Harris' office announced earlier Thursday that she was set to join the Senate vote, though it had become clear by then she would not be needed to break a tie because three Republicans — Sens. Susan Collins, Lisa Murkowski and Mitt Romney — had said they would support Jackson along with the 50 Democrats.

"The Vice President believes Judge Jackson will be an exceptional Supreme Court Justice, and she looks forward to presiding over the Senate to mark this important moment," her spokesman said of her attendance Thursday.

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Jackson watched the vote and celebrated with President Joe Biden at the White House.

All three are scheduled to address her confirmation on Friday.



Ketanji Brown Jackson | CREDIT: JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP/SHUTTERSTOCK

Harris — whose parents were Indian and Jamaican and who has been some kind of *first* in many of her roles through the years — knows well that shattering barriers can leave cuts.

"It is worth it," she told PEOPLE in 2019, "but it is not without sacrifice and not without pain."

"That's where I derive eternal optimism is the ability of the American people," she said then, "to be able to see what can be, even if they've never seen it before."

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Jackson, 51, for her part reflected on legacy and change in remarks during her confirmation hearings last month.

"I am here standing on the shoulders of generations of Americans who never had anything close to this kind of opportunity," she said. "This nomination is significant

to a lot of people, and I hope that it will bring confidence, it will help inspire people to understand that our courts are like them, that our judges are like them. Doing the work, being part of our government: I think it's very important."

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