

Senate Expected to Confirm Amy Coney Barrett Today

The Senate's rare weekend session stretched into a marathon Sunday as it discussed the pending confirmation of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court.

On Saturday, the Senate met for five hours. Sunday, however, senators met for 15 hours and 48 minutes. The only item of business: Barrett's confirmation.

A vote taken Sunday, with a recorded vote of 51-48, invoked cloture, a procedure which places a time limit on consideration of a bill or other matter to break a filibuster. It's the latest in a series of steps expected to lead to today's confirmation.

The vote is more evidence that Republicans have the votes to back President Donald J. Trump's pick of a conservative judge to replace Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, creating an overall conservative tilt.

Republicans voting against the cloture motion were Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. On Saturday, Murkowski said she would vote Sunday against cutting off debate on the motion, but would vote to confirm Barrett on Monday.

In the remaining hours, Democratic leaders in the Senate are asking Vice President Mike Pence to not preside over today's session due to potential health risks. He has had staff aides test positive for the coronavirus. Pence tested negative Sunday, and it is unclear whether he will preside over today's vote.

The compressed timeline for confirmation precedes the upcoming election and would position Barrett on the court before

anticipated cases such as challenges over the election and the 2010 health care law.

While voters are being urged to go to the polls Nov. 3, there has also been a push to have them contact their senators through today's vote. The Family Research Council (FRC) is spearheading one of these initiatives.

"Democrats know that the debate over Justice Ginsburg's vacant seat has incredibly important implications for the 2020 election," the FRC said in its call to action. "They know that whoever fills it will impact any litigation sure to arise after the election. They know that a Justice Barrett will impact countless important cases that are sure to come before the Supreme Court in coming years, perhaps even a challenge to Roe v. Wade. In addition, religious liberty is increasingly under attack, and we need a strong defender of the First Amendment like Judge Barrett on the Supreme Court."

If confirmed today, Barrett will be the third Supreme Court justice installed by President Trump. {eo}