

## POLITICS

# Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas accepted gifts worth millions of dollars over 20 years, analysis finds

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## KEY POINTS

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas accepted millions of dollars' worth of gifts over two decades on the bench, according to a new data analysis.

The figure sets Thomas far apart from his current colleagues, according to the nonprofit Fix the Court.

The analysis provides fodder for Supreme Court critics who have called for reforms in the wake of a series of politically incendiary rulings and ongoing ethics scandals.



Associate Justice Clarence Thomas poses during a group photo of the Justices at the Supreme Court in Washington, April 23, 2021.

*Erin Schaff | Pool | Reuters*

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas accepted millions of dollars' worth of gifts over the past two decades on the bench, a total nearly 10 times the value of all gifts received by his fellow justices during the same time, according to a [new analysis](#).

Thomas received 103 gifts with a total value of more than \$2.4 million between 2004 and 2023, the judicial reform group [Fix the Court](#) said in a report Thursday.

In contrast, Thomas' fellow justices over the same period accepted a total of just 93 gifts worth a combined value of only about \$248,000, according to the nonprofit group.

Thomas' fellow conservative justice Samuel Alito accounted for the lion's share of that value. Fix the Court's analysis found that Alito accepted 16 gifts worth a combined \$170,095.



	Total dollar amount	No. of gifts
<b>Thomas</b>	<b>\$2.4M</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Roberts</b>	<b>\$49K</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Alito</b>	<b>\$170.1K</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Sotomayor</b>	<b>\$15.7K</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Kagan</b>	<b>\$1.2K</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Gorsuch</b>	<b>\$2.5K</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Kavanaugh</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Barrett</b>	<b>\$500</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Jackson</b>	<b>\$8.8K</b>	<b>5</b>
Stevens	\$79.1K	20
Rehnquist	\$0	0
Kennedy	\$3.2K	18
Scalia	\$175.9K	42
Breyer	\$15.5K	5
Ginsburg	\$55K	44
O'Connor	\$14K	18
Souter	\$349	1

Source: [Fix the Court](#)



Fix the Court identified another 101 “likely gifts” — with a total estimated value of almost \$1.8 million — that Thomas received in the form of free trips and lodging from billionaire businessman Harlan Crow, and at the exclusive Bohemian Grove club.

Counting those gifts, Thomas’ total two-decade haul is valued at nearly \$4.2 million.

Fix the Court’s analysis is largely based on investigative reporting by the media outlet ProPublica over the past year, which has been focused on Thomas and Alito and which has sparked calls for ethics reform at the Supreme Court.

The group also factored in data from the Congressional Record, the justices’ annual financial disclosures, other news sources, and its own law clerk-led research.

The value and number of gifts Thomas received also eclipsed those accepted by eight retired or



The late Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who served more than 34 years on the court, received 73 gifts until she retired in early 2006, putting her in second place behind Thomas in total number of gifts.

But the combined value of O'Connor's gifts was less than \$36,000.

**Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and Justice Samuel Alito attend a private ceremony for retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor before public repose in the Great Hall at the Supreme Court on December 18, 2023 in Washington, DC.**

*Jacquelyn Martin | Getty Images*

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Antonin Scalia, a conservative justice who died in 2016 while on the court, accepted 67 gifts worth about \$210,000 during his tenure, which began in 1986.

The late Chief Justice William Rehnquist, whose career on the court spanned 33 years until 2005, accepted just six gifts, with a total value of less than \$13,000.



	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Thomas (34)						
Roberts (19)						
Alito (16)						
Sotomayor (15)						
Kagan (14)						
Gorsuch (7)						
Kavanaugh (6)						
Barrett (4)						
Jackson (2)						
Stevens (35)						
Rehnquist (33)						
Kennedy (30)						
Scalia (30)						
Breyer (28)						
O'Connor (25)						
Ginsburg (27)						
Souter (19)						

Note: Years on the court in parentheses

Source: Oyez



“Supreme Court justices should not be accepting gifts, let alone the hundreds of freebies worth millions of dollars they’ve received over the years,” Fix the Court’s executive director, Gabe Roth, said in a statement.

“The ethics crisis at the Court won’t begin to abate until justices adopt stricter gift acceptance rules,” Roth said.

Fix the Court noted that the total figures it calculated for gift values are likely lower than the actual values because the analysis erred on the low end of the cost of some gifts, such as free travel or tickets to sports events.

Its tally also makes some assumptions. The group assumed the cost per hour of a flight on a private plane is \$10,000, for instance, and it counted each leg of a roundtrip flight as a separate gift.

The Supreme Court did not immediately respond to CNBC’s request for comment on Fix the Court’s findings.

ProPublica first revealed that Thomas had accepted [years of luxury trips](#) from Republican



Thomas said his judicial colleagues had told him that he [did not have to disclose](#) those travel expenses.

The analysis nevertheless provides fodder for the Supreme Court’s increasingly vocal critics who have called for reforms in the wake of a series of [politically incendiary rulings](#) and [ongoing ethics scandals](#).

The court under Chief Justice John Roberts has made some concessions, including adopting a formal — though unenforceable — code of ethics in November.

The court in that document aimed to “dispel” the “misunderstanding” that the court’s nine justices “regard themselves as unrestricted by any ethics rules.”

The federal judiciary, meanwhile, implemented new rules this year requiring Supreme Court justices to disclose the value of [travel-related gifts](#) on their financial disclosure forms.

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