

In early 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt expressed frustration with the Supreme Court, which he viewed as obstructing his New Deal policies. After his significant election victory in 1936, he delivered a message to Congress advocating for reforms to ensure that the legislative and judicial branches aligned with the needs of modern democracy. Roosevelt proposed a plan to "pack" the court by appointing six new justices, expanding its size from nine to fifteen, aiming to secure a majority that would support his policies.

However, this plan faced strong opposition, with critics arguing that it would undermine judicial independence and violate the principle of separation of powers. They contended that altering the court's makeup for political purposes could set a dangerous precedent, threatening the stability of the Constitution and the protection of civil liberties. Critics within Congress proposed alternative solutions, such as constitutional amendments to limit judicial tenure or establish methods for Congress to override Supreme Court decisions.

While the idea of court-packing was ultimately never implemented, it ignited a significant national debate about the balance of power between branches of government, the independence of the judiciary, and the appropriate methods for constitutional reform. Although Roosevelt aimed to modernize the court, critics highlighted the importance of upholding traditional checks and balances within the government structure. The aftermath of this episode led to notable changes in the composition of the court through retirements, securing a liberal majority that aligned more closely with Roosevelt's vision, albeit without formal changes to the court's structure as he had intended.