"…Please also be advised that the University will also be required to obtain the approval of the Marshal of the Supreme Court to determine whether any responsive records may be disclosed…"

Apologies if you have already discussed this with Jonathan, but we have some questions:
[redacted]

"…You need to contact the Public Information Office of the United States Supreme Court directly for guidance on the Court's process to retrieve copies of the emailed information you requested..."

Hi [redacted]
[redacted]

"…The University will also be required to obtain the approval of the Marshal of the Supreme Court to determine whether any records identified as responsive (if any) may be disclosed.

This record, and all records created in response to it, are records of the Supreme Court of the United States, and are not "agency records" under 5 U.S.C. § 552 or similar state statutes. No such records may be disclosed without the prior written approval of the Marshal of the Supreme Court…

Broken Records

The Supreme Court Is Seeking to Reduce Access to Documents About Justices' Events That Should Be Accessible Via State Open Records Requests

By Gabe Roth, with research by Manny Marotta and Emma Donahue

November 23, 2026

FIX THE COURT

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Introduction

In this report, Fix the Court is releasing and analyzing thousands of pages of documents obtained via state open records requests over the last six months. The documents shed light on the gifts, flights, hotels and meals Supreme Court justices enjoy when they give a talk at a public college or university, and they demonstrate ways in which the Court is trying to restrict access to these types of documents.

Though the Supreme Court— at least for now — is not subject to the federal Freedom of Information Act, public higher ed institutions are subject to state open records laws, so requesting information from them about the justices' events is one of the only ways the public can learn more about what happens during those appearances. Even if we know from press reports that, say, Justice Sotomayor spoke at the University of Kansas School of Law in April, we don't typically know much more than that, even though the justice had several other events of interest during her time in Kansas this past spring.

Starting in May, Fix the Court compiled a list of every time a Supreme Court justice spoke at a public college or university since 2020, which was the last time we wrote a report like this one.

We then omitted some of their remote talks — including a couple given in 2021 during one of the COVID spikes and Justice Alito's talk to Scalia Law students a week after the *Dobbs* leak in 2022 —and ones we had asked about previously, like Justice Barrett's "not partisan hacks" talk at the University of Louisville. In the end, we identified 32 that occurred between 2022 and 2026 that fit the bill.

Again, the goal of these requests was to learn more about the justices' domestic travel, whom they meet with and speak to when they leave the Court's confines, along with the perks they received. Though some of this information is included on the justices' financial disclosure reports, many key details are not. For example, the justices, unlike members of Congress, are not required to file post-travel reports within a month of returning from a free trip (congressional example here). The justices are not required to include the costs of their reimbursed flights, meals and lodging on their annual disclosures. And they are not required to report most gifts and reimbursements valued at less than $415 (2022), less than $480 (2023-2025) or less than $525 (2026).

We also wanted to learn more about how the justices' staffs and the staff of the Public Information Office are managing these events, including the extent to which they're ensuring the events are within the bounds set out in the Code of Conduct that was implemented in Nov. 2023.

The report's four main takeaways

1. The Supreme Court is making it more difficult to obtain these records in the first place.

That we were able to obtain so many documents produced by Supreme Court employees at all is somewhat surprising given the restrictions placed on their release in recent years.

Here's the timeline: in Feb. 2020, the U.S. Marshals Service issued a manual containing the "Standard Operating Procedures" for fulfilling FOIA requests, which included a section concerning how to handle FOIA requests for "Documents Pertaining to Supreme Court Justice Travel." Is it a coincidence that the section was drafted at a time when the Justice Department was the defendant in a FOIA lawsuit we filed the year prior over documents related to the justices' travel? We'd guess not.

The manual states that "once [responsive] documents have been processed for release," a USMS FOIA specialist must "receive the concurrence of the FOIA/PA Officer, Deputy General Counsel, General Counsel, and" — here's the critical part — "legal representatives for the Supreme Court prior to any public dissemination" (11). So that's the first roadblock to document release, though it doesn't apply directly to documents from public universities.

But then in Mar. 2022, the Court and the U.S. Marshals Service signed a Memorandum of Agreement in which the Court asserted:

> "All Supreme Court records are at all times under the exclusive legal custody and control of the Supreme Court. [...] Once the USMS has completed providing security for a Supreme Court Justice, the records relating to such security have no continuing usefulness to the USMS. [...] The USMS will transfer all Supreme Court records on a quarterly basis, and it will not retain copies of such records except as necessary to facilitate the transfer of those records to the Supreme Court or pursuant to a litigation hold" (10).

None of the 32 requests described in this report was made to USMS. But what happened next does have an implication for our work here: we believe that that very spring, some Court employees began adding the following disclaimer, also seen on the cover of this report, to their email signatures as a result of the MOU:

> "This record, and all records created in response to it, are records of the Supreme Court of the United States, and are not 'agency records' under 5 U.S.C. § 552 **or similar state statutes**. No such records may be disclosed without the prior written approval of the Marshal of the Supreme Court of the United States" (emphasis ours).

We first saw these lines included in an email dated May 2022, p. 6, that we received in 2024 via a different FOIA lawsuit versus USMS, and they were included in the Court employees' email signatures in eight of the 13 sets of documents we received that included emails from Court staff.

As for why five of the 13 didn't include the disclaimer, we believe one likely did but was redacted, and the other four were limited to emails from chambers staff, who we can say, based on our review of thousands of pages of documents, are less likely than PIO staff or security staff to include the disclaimer.

The disclaimer implies the Court believes it can withhold not only the emails that Court employees send to the U.S. Marshals but **also the emails that Court employees send to staff at public universities**. In most cases, this paragraph did not deter university records officers from complying with our requests and sending responsive documents. But in some cases, it did, or at least it significantly reduced the number of documents a university was willing to release. In those cases, the disclaimer "worked."

For example, Texas A&M-San Antonio, where Justice Sotomayor spoke last year, opted to answer a few questions from our records request about gifts and flights via email but sent us no responsive documents. The A&M-SA records officer told us in June we'd have to seek permission from the Supreme Court before receiving any. He added: "Emails from Justice Sotomayor's staff to A&M-SA that are related to your request contain [a] disclaimer […]. As a result, you would need to contact the Public Information Office of the United States Supreme Court directly for guidance on the Court's process to retrieve copies of the emailed information you requested."

Sotomayor spoke at the University of Alabama earlier this year, and a communications specialist at the school appears to have been referencing the disclaimer when she wrote in October: "The University will also be required to obtain the approval of the Marshal of the Supreme Court of the United States to determine whether any records identified as responsive (if any) may be disclosed. The Marshal may also deem that none of the records can be disclosed." When we received documents from the school, they only sent emails that came from Alabama employees and not the replies from Court staff.

Relatedly, a representative from McLennan Community College — a Waco, Tex., school where Justice Kavanaugh spoke last year — reached out to the Court after we filed our records request "regarding the potential security implications of disclosure." The school also sent a memo in September to the Texas attorney general's office effectively asking permission to "determine that the security-sensitive information may be withheld from public disclosure under the applicable provisions of the Texas Public Information Act and Texas Government Code."

We responded by saying the last thing we want to do is endanger the justices or unnecessarily expose any internal security protocols, adding that we'd expect the names of security personnel and any details related to the operations of a justice's protective force to be redacted. We await the Texas AG's response, which was scheduled to be completed by mid-November but still hasn't reached our inboxes.

Whether the Supreme Court has the legal authority to assert privilege over emails that Court employees send to officials at public universities is a question for another day. They very well might.

But Court employees likely do not have the authority to assert privilege over "all records created" by university staff "in response to" SCOTUS employee emails, as the disclaimer implies. That side of the conversation, at least, should be both responsive and obtainable, and in many cases, it hasn't been.

2. Disclaimer aside, the records you ask for won't simply appear after you make a request. You have to work for them and sometimes pay for them.

Of the 32 requests we made, we have received documents or some form of response with relevant information from 19, with an average of 66 days to get them (as few as 14 days; as many as 157).

Of the 13 requests for which no documents have been sent, all of them save three (Arizona State, Fayetteville State and California State University Dominguez Hills) have been acknowledged, and we're in various stages of negotiations and/or waiting.

For some requests, we were asked by records officers to narrow the scope to certain "custodians," i.e., university staff whose emails will be searched. We're generally fine with that since it's not difficult to determine who planned a justice's appearance (and if we're wrong the first time, we can always submit a new request).

At time, we reduced the number of custodians of our own accord, since records officers would sometimes come back to us with exorbitant quotes, and no, we were not going to pay the University of Mississippi $6,953.66 fee to search and produce the requests we requested.

To date, we have spent $1,299.59 on the documents linked to in this report. Two sets of "records" (FSU and A&M-SA) were merely emails comprising less than a page. Otherwise, eight of the 17 actual sets of records we received cost money to obtain: $99 for the University of Vermont; $121.59 for Ole Miss; $200 each for William & Mary and the University of Kansas; $120 for Alabama (which we split with AL.com); $187 for UVA-Roberts talk; $70.84 for UVA-Barrett talk; and $432 for the University of Texas.

The other nine sets of records were produced without cost.

3. There is increased focus from the Supreme Court on the ethics of justices' events.

The records indicate the increased energy that, at least in some cases, the justices, their staffs and the Court's PIO team are putting toward the ethical responsibilities justices have when appearing at events.

In years past, chambers staff and PIOs have communicated to universities that a justice's event can't be a fundraiser (e.g., p. 4 from 2016). But in the last year, at least four chambers — Roberts', Thomas' (p. 27 reference), Sotomayor's and Jackson's — have begun asking their hosts to complete a "Speaking Engagement / Appearance Form" and an "Event Detail Form" to reinforce the fundraising point and include other notes about how events can maintain a high level of ethics.

Per the form, that means an event organizer must confirm the justice is not appearing at a "fundraising event"; that it's "not sponsored by or associated with a party or a campaign for political office"; that the event organizer "is not currently a party to a case pending at the Supreme Court"; that event organizer will not use a justice's "name or image for any promotional or fundraising purpose."

The form also requires organizers to confirm that all attendees "will be screened with magnetometers or scanned with hand wands prior to entry" and that "[a]ll publicity or promotional material relating to the event will be submitted in writing prior to release for approval by the Justice's Chambers and the Supreme Court's Public Information Office." (Does this last note about materials approval sound a bit over-the-top? Yes, and that's another theme this report will explore.)

When asked, the Court's press office would not say whether all nine justices are using the form.

4. Even with an increased focus on ethics, the intersection of fundraising, politics and justices' events is unavoidable. Plus, the justices are still receiving gifts.

The fundraising point is not difficult to understand: if you've donated significant funds to a school, you probably expect to be invited to a justice's events when he or she comes to town.

So it was not unexpected that a dinner the University of Hawaii arranged for Justice Sotomayor was attended by the largest single donor in the school's history ($25 million) and several other major donors, or that Harlan Crow, who's given at least $35 million to the University of Texas, attended several meals honoring Justice Thomas when he was in Austin, though it's also worth mentioning that Crow and Thomas are friends, and we're not going to rehash that relationship here. (We flag other large donors below.) When Sotomayor received the Brandeis Medal from the University of Louisville's Brandeis School of Law, Christina Lee Brown was in attendance; she gave the university its largest-ever private gift, totaling $47 million, in 2022.

On the political front, Justice Sotomayor appears to have spoken before at least three governors, two current and one former, during her speaking tour: Hawaii Gov. Josh Green, with whom she also dined and whose administration has been at SCOTUS of late defending the state's gun laws; Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, who is planning to run for president and very well may name her replacement (he's been a party to SCOTUS litigation in his official capacity over the years but only as the respondent); and former Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, who was the lead respondent in the best-known of the Court's Obamacare cases.

On gifts, the justices collectively received 18 gifts across the 19 events for which records were sent. (Ten sets of records mentioned a gift or gifts; nine did not.) Though collectively their value topped $2,500, none of them was above the reporting threshold, so we likely wouldn't have learned about most had it not been for our records requests. They're described throughout the report and are also listed here.

Strangely, it appears that some SCOTUS staff are under the impression that $525 is the gift acceptance limit. It's not; at the moment, there is no gift limit for SCOTUS and the lower courts. So when Sotomayor's senior judicial assistant wrote that for a medal the justice received earlier this year, "We will need to list the value. The value cannot exceed $480," that was inaccurate in three different ways: one, there's no limit; two, only gifts above the limit must be reported; and three, the limit in 2026 is $525.

Notes on style and substance

The events below are in chronological order. All the documents we've received are linked to here. Page numbers from the documents are listed in parenthesis and without a "p."

The events

When we write "events," we mean a justice's trip to, for example, the University of Alabama. From the documents we received, **we have learned about a whole host of other appearance** — meals the justices had with faculty and donors, classes the justices taught, tours they took and more — that we would not have known about without these records requests.

Here is a list of the 32 “events” we requested records for and are described in more detail on pp. 9-28.

1. Justice Breyer, University of Virginia School of Law, Apr. 12, 2022: Jefferson Medal and teaching
2. Justice Gorsuch, George Mason University’s Scalia Law School, July 17-28, 2023: teaching in Lisbon, Portugal
3. Justice Barrett, University of Minnesota Law School, Oct. 16, 2023: Stein Lecture
4. Justice Sotomayor, University of California, Berkeley, Law School, Jan. 29, 2024: talk
5. Justice Sotomayor, University of Hawaii Richardson School of Law, Jan. 31, 2024: talk and teaching
6. Justice Sotomayor, University of Minnesota Law School, Oct. 23, 2024: brief law school visit
7. Chief Justice Roberts, United States Military Academy, Nov. 4, 2024: talk
8. Justice Sotomayor, Texas A&M University-San Antonio, Jan. 29, 2025: talk
9. Justice Sotomayor, University of Louisville’s Brandeis School of Law, Feb. 5, 2025: Brandeis Medal and local events
10. Justice Jackson, University of the Virgin Islands, Feb. 7, 2025: talk and honorary degree acceptance
11. Justice Sotomayor, Miami Dade College, Feb. 11, 2025: talk
12. Justice Barrett, George Mason University’s Scalia Law School, Feb. 13, 2025: talk
13. Justice Sotomayor, Florida State University College of Law, Feb. 21, 2025: remote talk to a student group
14. Justice Sotomayor, City College of New York, Apr. 7, 2025: Powell Award and talk
15. Justice Jackson, Fayetteville State University, Sept. 4, 2025: talk
16. Justice Kavanaugh, McLennan Community College, Sept. 11, 2025: talk
17. Justice Sotomayor, University of Vermont, Oct. 20, 2025: talk and events around the university
18. Justice Jackson, California State University Dominguez Hills, Oct. 23, 2025: talk
19. Justice Kagan, University of the District of Columbia Clarke School of Law, Oct. 30, 2025: teaching
20. Justice Jackson, University of Mississippi, Nov. 15, 2025: talk
21. Justice Breyer (ret.), Arizona State University, Jan. 16, 2026: award acceptance and talk
22. Justice Sotomayor, UCLA School of Law, Feb. 6, 2026: talk
23. Justice Sotomayor, College of William & Mary, Feb. 20, 2026: talk and award reception
24. Justice Sotomayor, University of Kansas, Apr. 6-7, 2026: talk and several other local events
25. Justice Sotomayor, University of Alabama, Apr. 9, 2026: talk and several other local events
26. Justice Breyer (ret.), University of Kentucky, Apr. 13, 2026 : talk
27. Chief Justice Roberts, University of Virginia School of Law, Apr. 14, 2026: Jefferson medal and teaching

28. Justice Thomas, University of Texas at Austin, Apr. 15, 2026: talk
29. Justice Jackson, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, July 14, 2026: talk
30. Justice Sotomayor, University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, Sept. 16, 2026: talk
31. Justice Barrett, University of Virginia School of Law, Sept., 17, 2026: talk
32. Justice Barrett, University of Georgia Law School, Oct. 20, 2026: talk

Number of events per justice

Roberts: 2

Thomas: 1

Alito: 0

Sotomayor: 14

Kagan: 1

Gorsuch: 1

Kavanaugh: 1

Barrett: 4

Jackson: 5

Breyer: 3

What we asked for

A sample request is below, with the words in bold replaced to personalize each request:

> *Dear Custodian of Records:*
>
> *Pursuant to the **state's** open records law, I request access to and copies of all correspondence sent by **school** personnel to the **justice** and his/her staff and all correspondence sent by the **justice** and his/her staff to **school** personnel regarding his/her **event at the school**.*
>
> *This includes but is not limited to correspondence about:*
> *1. The date, time, topic and proposed guests for the main event;*
> *2. The date, time, topic and proposed guests of any other events that the **justice** attended and that occurred within three days of the main event;*
> *3. Any transportation, food and/or lodging details for the **justice**, for his/her staff and, if applicable, for the security detail accompanying the justice, and any discussion of reimbursement thereof;*
> *4. Any gifts or honoraria offered or discussed related to the event or events; and*
> *5. The recording policy for the main event — specifically, whether the **justice**, his/her staff and/or other Supreme Court staff permitted audio or video recording of it.*

The documents and what they tell us

1. Justice Breyer, University of Virginia School of Law, Apr. 12, 2022 (Jefferson Medal and teaching): Documents (29 pages)
Date requested: June 16 | Date received: Aug. 17 | Days to receive: 62 | Cost: $0

Within the documents we received from several universities, we found proposed questions from students and faculty for various justice events. We're not going to reproduce all of the back-and-forth, but we found this one to be the most overwrought: Justice Breyer's longtime assistant, Toni Daluge, was asked whether the justice, who was weeks away from retirement, would eat lunch with some law students. She replied, "It can be a group of 25-30 but I hope they don't bombard him with questions the entire time during the lunch. Perhaps only a few questions should be asked during that last 20 min or so. It would be preferred to have the questions vetted before hand [sic] if possible" (2).

Later in the same email she added, "Vetted questions might be a good idea" for Prof. Larry Solum's constitutional law class, which Breyer planned to sit in on.

As is common throughout the documents we received, the Supreme Court press office requested advance review and approval of any social media posts from the law school mentioning Justice Breyer. "At the appropriate time in your planning, please provide for our review and approval any draft materials that mention the Justice (invitations, website and social media posts, programs, press releases, etc.) before publication or release. We will also review and approve any plans for, and proposed use of, photography or video recording" (10), a deputy SCOTUS PIO writes.



Justice Breyer speaks with then-UVA Law Dean Risa on Apr. 12, 2022. Credit: Julia Davis, UVA School of Law

Daluge also wrote that the $10,000 honorarium that comes with acceptance of the Jefferson Medal should be directed to the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, one of the country's oldest Jewish charities that has 1,000 grantees annually.

Interestingly, he (and Justice Sotomayor in 2020) accepted and directed the full $10,000, whereas Chief Justice Roberts, who was awarded the Jefferson Medal earlier this year, only accepted and directed $2,000 (see later in the report), which according to Judicial Conference regulations (p. 6) is the limit for charitable donations that judges are permitted to accept and redirect.

UVA provided one hotel room at the Boar's Head Resort in Charlottesville for one night; no price was included, and rooms there in April, per a recent search, can range from $238/night to $672/night.

2. Justice Gorsuch, George Mason University's Scalia Law School, July 17-28, 2023 (teaching in Lisbon, Portugal): Documents (9 pages)
Date requested: June 10 | Date received: Nov. 12 | Days to receive: 155 | Cost: $0

Justice Gorsuch co-taught a course titled "Separation of Powers" with Jamil Jaffer, assistant professor of law and the founder and executive director of the National Security Institute at Scalia Law, with 2023 being the sixth consecutive year Gorsuch participated in the program.

We received only a few pages from this request but expect more documents in the coming weeks. Within the nine pages, there are no references to travel logistics, gifts, reimbursements, payments, costs or receipts associated with travel, lodging, meals, hospitality, recreation or other expenses. Rather, they mostly comprise a script of, and questions for, a "Justice Neil Gorsuch Podcast" episode recorded in early 2024 (4), a recording of which we have not been able to locate. There is also a note about a "grading spreadsheet for Justice Gorsuch's Separation of Powers class" (2). Wonder if we'll learn from a future document release whether he and Jaffer are tough graders?

3. Justice Barrett, University of Minnesota Law School, Oct. 16, 2023 (Stein Lecture): **Documents** (8 pages)
Date requested: June 10 | Date received: June 17, but followed up Aug. 31 to ask why so few documents; no response to that | Days to receive: 37 | Cost: $0

The records provided for Justice Barrett's appearance were substantially less extensive than those produced for Chief Justice Roberts' 2018 Stein Lecture. When we requested documents about Roberts' appearance in 2019, the university provided 405 pages; for Barrett's visit, it provided only eight.



Justice Barrett delivers the Stein Lecture (conversation with former Minnesota Law Dean Robert Stein, also pictured) at the University of Minnesota on Oct. 16, 2023. Credit: University of Minnesota Law School

We asked the university on Aug. 31 to explain the discrepancy but have not received a response.

The blanket that Barrett received from Faribault Mill, a Minnesota-based textiles company, cost $191.25 (5) — the same amount spent on the same blanket Roberts received in 2018. Barrett's airfare, lunch and coffee, meanwhile, cost a combined $1,242 (5), though we did not receive an itemized receipt.

Like the Chief Justice, Barrett declined an honorarium for the talk: "$5,000 [was] offered" to Barrett "but not accepted" (5). In 2018, the documents said (21), "Chief Justice [was] not able to accept" the honorarium.

Security accounted for a significant portion of the event's $51,666 total cost. The University of Minnesota Police Department billed $17,545 for 37 deputies, at a rate of $116 per hour for 151.25 combined hours. An additional $5,882.50 was paid to ASIA Security, a local contractor, for its services.

4. Justice Sotomayor, University of California, Berkeley, Law School, Jan. 29, 2024 (talk): **Acknowledged but no documents produced**
Date requested: Aug. 31 | Date received: N/A | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A

5. Justice Sotomayor, University of Hawaii Richardson School of Law, Jan. 31, 2024 (talk and teaching): **Documents** (79 pages)
Date requested: June 10 | Date received: June 30 | Days to receive: 20 | Cost: $0

While in Hawaii, Justice Sotomayor attended an intimate dinner (58) with a notable group of guests, including Gov. Josh Green and his wife, Jaime; Mark Davis, the founding partner of one of Hawaii's most successful plaintiffs' firms who has donated at least $1 million to the law school; bankruptcy lawyer Ted Pettit, who's also a major UH donor; hedge fund executive Bill Reeves, known more as a major donor to progressive causes; and real estate executive Jay Shidler, who in 2006 donated $25 million to the university, which, per the documents (68), was its "largest single gift ever […]."

None of these individuals appear to have cases or business interests before the Supreme Court, save Gov. Green, who's been a national leader in gun policy on the left and who has been sued by gun rights groups several times over the years, including in 2024.



Justice Sotomayor at the University of Hawaii School of Law on Jan. 31, 2024. Credit: Honolulu Star-Advertiser

Though the mingling of university donors and justices is likely inevitable — if you've given millions to a university, you likely expected to be invited when a Supreme Court justice shows up on campus — we hope the Court is ensuring none of these individuals have cases before them at the time of the appearance. Though there's no indication in the documents that such a check occurred, we'll give the Court the benefit of the doubt and assume for now that it may have been done internally, though we plan to follow up with the Court on this point.

Elsewhere, according to Hawaii Law Prof. Kamaile Turcan, Sotomayor received "a ceremonial wooden paddle" that was "well under the gift monetary limit," along with several lei (6), though the cost of neither was included in the documents. Of course, there is currently no monetary limit for a gift a justice may receive (we see this error throughout the documents); there's merely a gift-reporting threshold. We find it odd that a university would want to give a justice a gift that the justice would then be able to hide from their disclosure.

Sotomayor stayed at the Kahala Hotel & Resort (33), though no cost for her stay was included. Rooms in January (non-holiday, mid-week) can run between $600 and $1,600 per night.

It's unclear which of the justice's many events prompted her staff to inquire about a judicial robe, but the staff nevertheless offered to "pay for any dry cleaning following the event" (11).

6. Justice Sotomayor, University of Minnesota Law School, Oct. 23, 2024 (law school visit): **Documents** (12 pages)
Date requested: June 10 | Date received: July 16 | Days to receive: 36 | Cost: $0

Per a Sept. 2024 email from Minnesota Law Dean Bill McGeveran, Justice Sotomayor was planning to be in town the following month for the investiture of Minnesota Court of Appeals Judge Betz Bentley, her former clerk, and that, at Sotomayor's request, the visit would be different from the Stein Lectures in that there would be no public component (1).



Justice Sotomayor with Minnesota Court of Appeals Judge Elizabeth Bentley and Minnesota Law Dean Bill McGeveran on Oct. 23, 2024. Credit: Tony Nelson.

That said, the law school hosted a faculty meet-and-greet at Walter Mondale Hall with Sotomayor, for which "[p]hotography or video recording by attendees [was] prohibited" (3).

The records also reveal that Minnesota Law had planned to invite Justice Jackson to give the Stein Lecture at a future date, possibly as early as 2026 (1). To date, no 2026 or 2027 lecturer has been announced.

Robert Stein, the former ABA executive director and Minnesota Law dean who endows the lecture, sought to spend a few minutes with the justice before her meet-and-greet with the faculty, but that ultimately didn't happen due to a last-minute change in her schedule (9).

7. Chief Justice Roberts, United States Military Academy, Nov. 4, 2024 (talk): Acknowledged but no documents produced
Date requested: Aug. 18 | Follow-ups: Aug. 19, Aug. 20 | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A

This request is technically a FOIA, since West Point is part of the Department of Defense, which is under the federal Freedom of Information Act. We received the following on Nov. 17 from the West Point FOIA office: "Your request has been sent for final review to The Initial Denial Authority (IDA). Please do not take the IDA name literally, as their title can be misleading. The Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army will respond directly to you."

8. Justice Sotomayor, Texas A&M University-San Antonio, Jan. 29, 2025 (talk): **Document** (1 page)
Date requested: May 21 | Date received: June 5 | Days to receive: 15 | Cost: $0

According to an email from John Wickline, the Texas A&M-San Antonio director of the Office of Risk, Ethics & Compliance, Sotomayor's one-night hotel stay cost $394.23, her airfare cost $640, and her gift of "A&M-SA memorabilia" cost $89.60 (1).

Wickline did not respond to the rest of our request, however, and instead pointed to the disclaimer, mentioned in the introduction to this report, saying that emails from Sotomayor's Supreme Court records could not be disclosed without the prior written approval of the Marshal of the Court.

Wickline directed us to contact the SCOTUS public information office for guidance on obtaining the records.

We responded by saying that A&M-SA is not bound by 5 U.S.C. §552, the federal Freedom of Information Act, and that our request was made under the Texas Public Information Act. We have yet to receive a response.



Justice Sotomayor speaks at Texas A&M-San Antonio with San Antonio Economic Development Foundation CEO Jenna Saucedo-Herrera on Jan. 29, 2025. Credit: Texas A&M-San Antonio

9. Justice Sotomayor, University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law, Feb. 4-6, 2025 (Brandeis medal and local events): **Documents** (200 pages)
Date requested: June 9 | Date received: June 23 | Days to receive: 16 | Cost: $0

This event was the most expensive in the group. The 500-person dinner at the Marriott Louisville Downtown (47), where Sotomayor received the medal, cost $86,789 (39), while the total cost of the event — including gifts, flights, hotel stays and security — exceeded $100,000.

Sotomayor's three flights related to her appearance totaled $2,100: she traveled business class from LaGuardia to Louisville (38) first class from Louisville to Atlanta (36) and then from Atlanta to Ft. Lauderdale (36). Her one-night hotel stay, listed as "Justice Sotomayor lodging" but bearing the name of the Brandeis Law office manager on the reservation, cost $246 (40). A second room for an unknown person was booked for one night at the same price.

The value of her gift from Brandeis Law — a $361.41 medal (32) — fell below the year's $480 gift-reporting threshold. An unnamed gift from Central High School (198), which Sotomayor visited the day after the medal presentation, appears to have been shipped to her office after the event.

SCOTUS staff reminded Brandeis Law of judicial ethics restrictions surrounding the event. In correspondence, the Court instructed that Sotomayor's name or image could not be used for promotional or fundraising purposes or in a manner suggesting endorsement, and that photographs could not be used for political or campaign purposes (26).

The staff specifically asked Brandeis Law to relay those guidelines to any political figures planning to attend the event; Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman and Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg all attended.



Justice Sotomayor receives the Brandeis Medal from Brandeis Law Dean Melanie Jacobs (left) and University of Louisville President Kim Schatzel (right) on Feb. 5, 2025. Credit: University of Louisville

SCOTUS separately told Brandeis Law that photos of Sotomayor taken by guests should not be posted on social media (good luck) (17)

The organizers also decided not to livestream the event, although it is unclear whether that was a decision made by SCOTUS or Brandeis Law (13). The law school did order four "no photography" signs for the event at a cost of $56 (68).

In addition to her Brandeis Medal-related events, Sotomayor attended a buffet dinner with Brandeis Law faculty and staff — 80 guests, plus $480 worth of security from the University of Louisville Police Department (60) — at the Muhammad Ali museum on Feb. 4 (33).

On Feb. 6, she held two "sessions" with students at Central High School, three miles from the law school, which included a book signing.

For that event, Sotomayor's staff asked Central High School staff, "How many books – numbers will dictate if they need to be signed ahead of time" (87). The question of how many books, as well as who would pay for them, was left unanswered, which is a shame given the dust-up over her chambers staff hawking the justice's books a few years back.

10. Justice Jackson, University of the Virgin Islands, Feb. 7, 2025 (talk and honorary degree): Acknowledged but no documents produced
Date requested: July 31 | Follow-ups: Sept. 1, Oct. 13 | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A

11. Justice Sotomayor, Miami Dade College, Feb. 11, 2025 (talk): Acknowledged but no documents produced
Date requested: July 31 | Second request via email (they didn't receive the first, which was sent via snail mail, per their requirement): Sept. 11 | Follow-up: Oct. 13 | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A

12. Justice Barrett, George Mason University' Scalia Law School, Feb. 13, 2025 (talk): Documents (42 pages)
Date requested: June 8 | Follow-ups: Aug. 25, Oct. 13 | Days to receive: 157 | Cost: N/A

The talk, part of Scalia Law's 7th Annual Scalia Forum, was followed by a dinner and a reception (1), the guest list for which featured five dozen federal judges and half a dozen state attorneys general (16-17). Not surprisingly, all of them either are Republicans or were appointed by Republican presidents.

Barrett's staff asked GMU to acknowledge that the event would not be a fundraiser (37), which they confirmed via email four minutes after being asked.

Barrett's staff suggested holding more of a conversation-style event rather than a traditional lecture (39), which is what occurred, though there is no public recording of the event, as far as we can tell.

According to a LinkedIn post about the event, there was an “exclusive” dinner that followed the talk, but there is no information about that in the documents we received, other than the phrase “followed by a dinner” in the invitation from Scalia Law Dean Ken Randall (1).

13. Justice Sotomayor, Florida State University College of Law, Feb. 21, 2025 (remote talk to student group): Response came via email
Date requested: May 21 | Response received: Aug. 17 (see below) | Days to receive: 88 | Cost: N/A

On Aug. 17, an FSU public records officer responded: "A search by FSU College of Law indicates that FSU has no records responsive to this request. Apparently, all communications between the Justice and her staff were handled by the student host, and were not directly with any FSU employee. Besides emails, there were no other records related to this virtual event. Accordingly, this request is now closed."

To date, we have not followed up with the student group, the College of Law’s Hispanic Law Students Association.

14. Justice Sotomayor, City College of New York, Apr. 7, 2025 (Powell Award and talk): Acknowledged but no documents produced
Date requested: May 21 | Response received: several (see below) | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A

CCNY and CUNY can’t get their open records stories straight.

First, our FOIL (the New York Freedom of Information Law) request was sent to CUNY since CCNY is part of CUNY, and CCNY’s FOIL requests are forwarded to CUNY. Taejong Kim, the records access officer for the CUNY School of Law said on May 29 that the school would respond within 20 business days.

We received no response until July 28, when they said they had no responsive documents. We appealed this decision, and they insisted there were no documents.



Justice Sotomayor receives the 2025 Colin L. Powell Distinguished Leadership Award from Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership Board of Visitors Chair Linda Powell on Apr. 7, 2025. Credit: CCNY

On Aug. 18, we asked Paul Occhiogrosso, CCNY records access officer, for the documents, but he told us to request them from CUNY. A loop.

15. Justice Jackson, Fayetteville State University, Sept. 4, 2025 (talk): Has not acknowledged
Date requested: May 21 | Follow-ups: Aug. 27 | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A

16. Justice Kavanaugh, McLennan Community College, Sept. 11, 2025 (talk): Acknowledged but no documents produced
Date requested: Aug. 31 | Follow-ups: Sept. 30 | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A



Justice Kavanaugh shakes the hand of an audience member at McLennan Community College on Sept. 11, 2025. Credit: Sam Gassaway

Two weeks after submitting our records request to McLennan Community College, we received the following note from Laura Wichman, MCC's vice president of strategic planning & enrollment: "[G]iven the nature of the request, McLennan Community College has [requested] a decision by the Texas Attorney General in the releasing of information. Attached is the letter submitted."

In the letter, MCC asks the Texas attorney general's office for permission to withhold security-sensitive documents pertaining to Justice Kavanaugh's visit to the College. McLennan raised concerns that disclosure of information pertaining to Kavanaugh's visit could expose security and protective measures, along with law enforcement tactics, other vulnerabilities and staff-identifying information.

Our response: "The last thing we want to do is endanger the justices of the Supreme Court or unnecessarily expose any internal security protocols." We added that we'd expect the names of security personnel and any details related to the operations of a protective force around a justice's event would be redacted.

According to a screenshot of the records request portal we were sent on Sept. 30, the estimated time for the Texas AG's response is mid-November, but to this point (we followed up on Nov. 17), we haven't been sent one.

17. Justice Sotomayor, University of Vermont, Oct. 20, 2025 (talk and other local events): **Documents** (16 pages)
Date requested: May 22 | Response received: Aug. 27 | Days to receive: 97 | Additional information requested: Sept. 2 | Follow-up: Oct. 16 | Response received: Nov. 6 | Cost: $99 (for the additional information)

The records indicate that one hotel room was reserved for Justice Sotomayor, several more for her security detail and another for a person traveling with her whose name was redacted (7).

The University did not provide the cost of the rooms, nor did they include the cost of the dinner at Englesby House (the UVM president's residence) in the justice's honor the night before her event, nor the cost of Sotomayor's flight or flights from the Washington, D.C., area to Burlington.

We requested and paid for this information on Sept. 2 and received it on Nov. 6. Sotomayor's room at the Courtyard Marriott cost $239 per night plus tax for two nights, totaling $502.12. Her flight in first class from LGA to Burlington cost $808.48, and her return flight from Burlington to DCA, also first class, cost $409.69.



Justice Sotomayor speaks with University of Vermont President Marlene Tromp at the Leahy Public Policy Forum on Oct. 20, 2025. Credit: Andy Duback

The dinner's bar tab alone was $1,260.75; in total (food and service), the cost was $4,563.05. We forgot to ask for a list of dinner attendees and did so on Nov. 19.

Elsewhere, the executive assistant to former Sen. Pat Leahy, Lydia Slauson, asked a redacted member of Supreme Court staff whether it would be permissible to give Sotomayor some small gifts for appearing. (The event was part of the school's Leahy Public Policy Forum.) Slauson added: "We understand there are strict rules around gifting but are wondering if it is OK to give her a small gift bag of maple syrup and some UVM branded items. We believe this meets the criteria but wanted to be certain" (12). In truth, the Supreme Court's rules around "gifting" are not so strict.

No response from SCOTUS was included in the documents, but following Sotomayor's visit, Slauson provided a list of the gifts presented to the justice to a redacted member of SCOTUS staff (14). They included a green-and-gold striped silk scarf ($44.95), a jug of maple syrup ($20), an engraved pewter oil lamp ($216.45), a Christmas ornament (likely this one, $49.95) and a UVM lapel pin ($4.95). The gifts totaled $336.30, so none was individually or collectively reportable on Sotomayor's financial disclosure report. (See all the justices' gifts mentioned in this report here.)

18. Justice Jackson, California State University Dominguez Hills, Oct. 23, 2025 (talk): Has not acknowledged
Date requested: May 22 | Follow-ups: July 23, Aug. 27 | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A

19. Justice Kagan, University of the District of Columbia Clarke School of Law, Oct. 30, 2025 (teaching): **Documents** (38 pages)
Date requested: May 22 | Date received: July 29 | Days to receive: 68 | Cost: $0

Justice Kagan taught Prof. David Wolitz's Constitutional Law II class, so Court staff requested the class roster to coordinate security clearance (2, 3).

As with many justice events and appearances, SCOTUS staff also asked UDC Law to submit photographs for approval before using them in university press releases, newsletters or other

communications. A member of the PIO office wrote, "[W]e ask for an opportunity to review and approve any photos you would like to publish, along with accompanying text or captions, prior to posting or release of any kind" (7).

Although UDC Law records its classes so students can watch them if they are unable to attend, PIO staff asked the school not to record any portion of the class in which Kagan was present, visited with students or offered remarks (8). The Court did approve the publication of a class photo including the justice on UDC's website and in *The Advocate*, the law school's newsletter (7).

Dean Emerita Shelley Broderick proposed a meeting between Kagan and student leaders, but the request was declined because of Kagan's limited time (5).

The justices are just like (some of) us: it appears that Kagan doesn't work on Yom Kippur (6).

20. Justice Jackson, University of Mississippi, Nov. 15, 2025 (talk): **Documents** (924 pages*)
Date requested: May 22 | Date received: July 30 | Days to receive: 69 | Cost: $121.59

*Note: *We are not including a link to the documents here, save the "Speaking Engagement / Appearance Form," since they include the cell phone of a special agent of the Supreme Court Police Department Dignitary Protection Unit, and at the moment, we have neither the time nor the manpower to redact the dozens of times the number appears (mostly from the same mass email reproduced over and over as people responded to it). If you would like any details from the information below, please let us know, and we'll send you the responsive page or pages.*



Justice Jackson addresses students at the University of Mississippi on Nov. 15, 2025. Credit: Olivia Cangelosi

On June 11, the person manning the publicrecords@olemiss.edu email address quoted us a $6,953.66 fee to search and produce the requests we requested. After narrowing the custodians, the subjects and the timeframe, the subsequent quote was $142, and in the end only $121.59 was requested and sent.

As mentioned in the introduction to the report, Justice Jackson's chambers is one of at least four (Roberts, Thomas and Sotomayor are the others) using the "Speaking Engagement / Appearance Form" that Fix the Court first uncovered this summer.

The event was moderated by N.D. Mississippi Chief Judge Debra Brown, with the university expecting 1,000-1,250 attendees, mostly law students and first-year undergraduates. The documents say the university would have to "[s]ubmit [a] vetted attendee list to Secret Service for approval" (438), but that is likely an error, since other emails imply that the list would instead be sent to a member of the Supreme Court Police Department's Dignitary Protection Unit.

Security protocols for the event included a "motorcade limo" that Jackson appears to have traveled in from her hotel to the speaking engagement (270), and there is a discussion between Ole Miss' police chief and SCOTUS security about where the Level 1 trauma center closest to Oxford, Miss., is located: it's in Memphis, 75 miles away (269).

It appears that 2,500 copies of Lovely One were purchased for the event, but who paid for them is unclear. A document produced by Rebecca Lingle Phillips, the university's special events director, says, "No state funds will be used" for the event but then adds parenthetically, without a subject, "Only responsible for purchase of the books and some travel fees" (435).

Jackson's 2025 financial disclosure states that Penguin Random House paid for her "transportation" to Mississippi. That means the subject of the "no funds" phrase above is likely the university, since "some travel fees" likely doesn't include the flights PRH covered. If that's the case, the university also paid for the books. We followed up on this point on Nov. 19 but have yet to receive a response.

There was no video of the event for public release, though attendees were given a brief window to take photographs and video. "Press and audience members may take photos as Justice Jackson comes onto the stage and then cameras must be put away so as not to distract from the event," wrote a PRH director of publicity, London King, adding, "Venue may videotape the event for archival purposes only" (18). In several places in the release, media guidelines sent by PRH staff note that "[v]ideo clips for social media must be approved by the publisher" — not SCOTUS — "prior to posting" (2).

These emails show that the event management role that the Court's press office typically takes was, at least in some part, farmed out to the publisher's representatives.

21. Justice Breyer (ret.), Arizona State University, Jan. 16, 2026 (award acceptance and talk): Has not acknowledged
Date requested: May 22 | Follow-ups: July 23, Aug. 27 and Sept. 10 | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A

22. Justice Sotomayor, UCLA Law, Feb. 6, 2026 (talk): Acknowledged but no documents produced
Date requested: May 22 | Follow-up: Oct. 16 | Records expected: Nov. 30 | Cost: N/A

23. Justice Sotomayor, College of William & Mary, Feb. 20, 2026 (talk and award reception): Documents (419 pages)
Date requested: July 27 | Date received: Sept. 18 | Days to receive: 52 | Cost: $200

Justice Sotomayor's senior judicial assistant wrote to W&M two days before the event, "Please send a photo of the award medal and the value. We will need to list the value. The value cannot exceed $480" (34).

There are three errors in this statement. First, there are few limitations to the gifts the justices can accept under current law, so the idea that a justice may only accept a gift valued at less than $480 is inaccurate. Second, a justice must only include in their disclosure gifts whose value exceeds the reporting threshold, which, and this is the third error, in 2026 is $525.

In response, W&M event staff, Bella RaeAnne, said they didn't know the medallion's cost because the school had purchased the awards in bulk years earlier, although the engraving cost $20 (324, 327). That email was from May 2025.

Prior to sending in our records request this summer, we asked W&M's staff the same question and received this response from RaeAnne: "We order the Marshall Wythe Medallion Awards in bulk (between 5-10 at a time) and get them engraved as award recipients are selected. Our last bulk order was in 2021. The manufacturing and shipping cost of one award is $402. Then the cost of engraving the Justice's name was $40 (receipt attached) which brings the total to $442."

Sotomayor's chambers is one of four (Roberts, Thomas and Jackson are the others) using the "Speaking Engagement / Appearance Form" (178) that Fix the Court first uncovered this summer. It's not filled out in the documents, and we followed up with W&M on Oct. 16 to ask for that. They provided the filled-out form on Oct. 21.

The law school maintained an attendee list for the fireside chat (94), while Sotomayor's chambers recommended security measures including a magnetometer, bag screening and ID verification, with specific details outlined in the Speaking Engagement / Appearance Form.



Justice Sotomayor fields questions from W&M Professors Alli Larsen and Neal Devins on Feb. 20, 2026. Credit: Elizabeth Blackney

W&M provided a seating chart for the dinner. We found that everyone who attended was associated academically with W&M in some way, from faculty to university leadership to a few law students who sat at Sotomayor's table. We did not find any major W&M donors among the attendees.

About 60 student questions were submitted for the Q&A portion of the Sotomayor event, with Court staff writing, "We ask that you please strike a few questions, as outlined attached in track changes. Please know that the Justices do not publicly discuss their opinions on issues either pending, decided, or likely to be brought before the Court" (93). The questions were not included in the documents produced.

As is common throughout the documents, we see the Supreme Court's press office playing the role as unofficial editor for the event, as the office planned to review W&M's post-event social media posts (93, 96).

Court staff likewise reviewed the two photographers officially commissioned to photograph the event; otherwise, the events were closed to outside press (298, 319), which is rare among the events described in this report. Further, attendees — "members of the current Law School Community (students, faculty, & staff)" (298) — were subject to a "rule on no cell phone photos/videos/audio recording, etc." (5).

W&M paid for one night of lodging for Sotomayor at the Williamsburg Inn, on Feb. 20, at a cost of "$385 plus tax," per RaeAnne (327).

24. Justice Sotomayor, University of Kansas, Apr. 6-7 (talk and local events), 2026: Documents (402 pages)
Date requested: May 26 | Date received: Sept. 25 | Days to receive: 91 | Cost: $200

Justice Sotomayor had a packed schedule during her time in the Sunflower State. She started out on Apr. 6 at the federal courthouse in Kansas City, Kan., where she was part of a Q&A session with 60 members of the Second Chance Reentry Program, an initiative of a local nonprofit that helps the formerly incarcerated with life skills like resume writing and job interview training (23).

She then traveled to the University of Kansas campus in Lawrence, about 40 miles away, where she attended an invitation-only reception and dinner at the Oread Hotel (where she'd be staying) for 70 guests, including state and federal judges (not limited to Democratic appointees) and university officials (45-49), as well as several attorneys from the Kansas City office of Shook, Hardy & Bacon. The law firm has offices in a dozen cities across the country, and its D.C. office is fairly active in Supreme Court litigation, though this year, it's primarily been involved in representing *amici*, like the National Association of Manufacturers in *Suncor v. Boulder Co.* and the American Tort Reform Association in *Monsanto v. Durnell*.

The next day, Sotomayor met with more than 200 students, teachers and parents from Emerson and New Stanley Elementary Schools (50), both of which are in Kansas City, though the attendees made the trip to Lawrence. Following that, she had lunch with KU Law faculty and staff, who were "[r]eminded that photos and videos are not allowed" and who had to show photo ID and go through security as part of check-in (70).



Justice Sotomayor answers questions at the Lied Center in Lawrence, Kan., on Apr. 7, 2026. Credit: Anna Kaminski

Sotomayor continued to a KU Law student Q&A in the Burge Union, with nearly 300 students (74). That evening, she participated in a fireside chat at the Lied Center, where 1,750 people were expected. The visit concluded with an invitation-only dinner for approximately 50 guests at Hansen Hall at KU's Dole Institute of Politics in Lawrence (98).

Since there was an indication in the documents that the justice received gifts during her visit (99), but the gifts were not identified, we asked for a tally on Sept. 30. On Oct. 5, KU press staff sent us a list, comprising a rosewood box ($85) containing a brass jayhawk ($56.65), along with a KU sweatshirt ($49.99), totaling $191.64 in value (1-5).

KU Law secured multiple rooms at the Oread Hotel for Justice Sotomayor and her security detail at a rate of $109 per room (14, 342). Some of the justice's security detail appears to have arrived in Lawrence a couple days before these events, on Apr. 4, to perform advance work and other security checks, though the details of that are largely redacted (14-17, 20).

The U.S. Marshals Service was also involved in the security planning of these events (401), which is no surprise in general and makes all the more sense seeing as how more than a dozen federal judges were expected to attend the Sotomayor event at the Lied Center.

It's also interesting the extent to which D. Kansas Judge Holly Teeter, a 2018 President Trump appointee, was involved in the planning of these events. She is listed as "Committee Chair" throughout the documents and offers edits to press releases and other collateral materials.

After graduating from KU Law, Teeter clerked for D. Kansas Judge Carlos Murguia (2011-13); Murguia resigned in 2020 due to a sexual harassment scandal. Two of the former judge's siblings, Ninth Circuit Judge Mary Murguia and UnidosUS President Janet Murguía, attended several events with the justice and co-moderated the Lied Center event, which readers will remember is where Sotomayor criticized Justice Kavanaugh for his concurrence in an emergency docket ruling regarding immigration stops. Other Murguia family members attended some of the events, as well (46), though Carlos' name does not appear anywhere in the documents we received.

25. Justice Sotomayor, University of Alabama, Apr. 9, 2026 (talk and local events): Documents (43 pages)
Date requested: July 30 (by AL.com's Hannah Denham) | Date received: Nov. 11 | Days to receive: 104 | Cost: $120



Screenshot from a C-SPAN broadcast of Justice Sotomayor's talk with University of Alabama Law School Dean William Brewbaker III on Apr. 9, 2026

Open records requests in Alabama must come from an Alabama resident, so we asked AL.com's Hannah Denham if she would make the request on our behalf, which she did in July.

On Oct. 16, Alabama asked for $120 for the records, which Fix the Court and AL.com split. In addition to the cost estimate, an Alabama official wrote, "The University will also be required to obtain the approval of the Marshal of the Supreme Court of the United States to determine whether any records identified as responsive (if any) may be disclosed. The Marshal may also deem that none of the records can be disclosed."

When we did receive the documents from the university, it was thus not surprising they included not a single email originating from a Supreme Court employee.

Otherwise, the documents list the 209 people who were invited to a dinner following the event, which includes federal judges appointed by both Democratic and Republican presidents. Entertainment was provided by someone who goes by the name of DJ Danny B, along with a four-piece student ensemble (42).

One of the dinner attendees, Birmingham attorney James Timothy Francis, petitioned the justices in 2023 on behalf of a client who lost in the lower court, though *cert*. was denied. Also in attendance were the first Black female graduate of Alabama Law, Sarah Sue Thomson, and a former U.S. senator's son, Howell Heflin, Jr.

Before the event, Sotomayor was scheduled to spend time on a tour of the "Hugo Black Room" and to view the "Judge Johnson Scrapbooks" (11). The former appears to be a replica of Black's home study

in Alexandria, Va., and the latter comprises papers from Frank Minis Johnson's tenure as a federal judge. He's best well-known for ruling in favor of Rosa Parks in 1956, striking down the law that segregated Montgomery's buses.

26. Justice Breyer (ret.), University of Kentucky, Apr. 13, 2026 (talk): **Documents** (25 pages)
Date requested: June 9 (by Kentucky Public Radio's Joe Sonka) | Date received: June 23 | Days to receive: 14 | Cost: $0



Justice Breyer speaks at the University of Kentucky on Apr. 13, 2026. Credit: Scout Tarquino

Open records requests in Kentucky must come from a resident of the Bluegrass State, so we asked Kentucky Public Radio's Joe Sonka if he would make the request on our behalf, which he did in June. Sonka received the documents two weeks later, which he forwarded to us.

The most interesting detail in the documents was that Breyer and his brother Charles, who was also a part of the Apr. 13 event, were invited by Jim Duff (3), the former Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts director and then-dean of Kentucky Law, to spend the Sunday afternoon before the lecture in a private suite at Keeneland Race Track in Lexington, which Duff calls the "most beautiful [track] in the world!"

Fix the Court followed up with Duff on Aug. 27 to determine whether the invitation was accepted, and we await a response.

The Breyers were also invited to a 30-person dinner following the race (21), although no guest list was included. The following day, Breyer was scheduled to meet informally with UK Law student groups in the morning, have lunch at the university president's home and then deliver the talk (21).

The justice's two-night stay at the Lexington Marriott City Center cost $178 per night for two nights (6). It appears that on the way to Kentucky, Breyer stopped in D.C. "to work with his law clerk on a CA1 opinion" (20). Breyer sat by designation in the First Circuit this past March.

A month before the event, the Court's press office asked Duff if the event was a fundraiser, and he confirmed that it wasn't (18). The university was authorized to record the conversation and take photographs, with photography limited to the first two minutes "to avoid distraction" (19), per Court staff.

Finally, the Court's press office "ask[s] for the opportunity to review any proposed uses of the photos and accompanying text before posting or publication" (19). This language mirrors requests from other Court staff to review media before posting online; the difference here is that Breyer was retired at the time of the event, which goes to show that the Court keeps a tight grip on event press even after a justice ends his active service.

27. Chief Justice Roberts, University of Virginia School of Law, Apr. 14, 2026 (Jefferson medal and teaching): Documents (705 pages)

Date requested: May 28 | Date received: July 27 | Days to receive: 60 | Cost: $187

Chief Justice Roberts declined most of the $10,000 honorarium that accompanied the medal, although other recipients, including Sotomayor in 2020 and Breyer in 2022, accepted, and then donated, the full amount.



Chief Justice Roberts addresses a class at the University of Virginia School of Law on Apr. 14, 2026. Credit: UVA Law

According to a member of Roberts' staff, the Chief Justice asked the University of Virginia to direct $2,000 of the honorarium to the Supreme Court Historical Society. "Consistent with Judicial Conference Regulations on Outside Earned Income, Honoraria, and Employment §1020.30(c)," his staff wrote, "the Chief Justice must decline the remaining amount of the Honorarium" (141).

Roberts' chambers also asked a UVA Law contact for the cost of the Jefferson Medal. The response said the medal itself had cost $115 at the time of purchase, while its custom box cost another $105 (77).

Roberts' guests for the event were his wife, Jane; David Leitch (a Bush 43 attorney and UVA Law graduate); UVA Law Prof. Cate Stetson, who worked with Roberts for six years at Hogan & Hartson; and Australians Angela and Donald Speagle, who appear to be friends of Jane Roberts from the several years she spent in Australia (143).

At the private dinner, Jefferson Foundation board member Duane Hughes offered a toast to Roberts, praising not only his résumé but what Hughes described as his approach to the Court: adherence to principle, respect for its institutional role and reluctance to "capitulate to the pressures of the moment." Hughes' prepared remarks said the dinner honored "the enduring value of disciplined thought, institutional stewardship, and the quiet courage it takes to hold to principle in complicated times" (575).

Roberts' staff also emphasized keeping his classroom visits a surprise to students (13). McKenzie wrote that because the visits were intended to be unexpected, no special security protocol was required and students could attend class with whatever they would normally bring.

She said the team preferred surprise visits because they caused no disruption to students or professors.

As has been a common trend in this report, the Court's press office asked to review all social media posts related to the Roberts' visit to Charlottesville (38) and stated that a photo that an unidentified UVA Law student had either taken of or with the Chief Justice "may be used for personal mementos only, and not for publication, posting, or release, including on social media. Any other proposed photo uses require prior approval from the Court" (80).

28. Justice Thomas, University of Texas at Austin, Apr. 15, 2026 (talk and other local events): **Documents** (360 pages)
Date requested: May 26 | Date received: Sept. 9 | Days to receive: 106 | Cost: $432

Harlan and Kathy Crow, who are famously friends with Justice Thomas and his wife Ginni, feature prominently throughout the records. Harlan attended a small breakfast the morning of Thomas' talk (64), and he and Kathy attended a lunch that preceded the talk that otherwise included 12 students, four UT administrators and both Thomases (65). The Crows were also among the 36 guests who attended a dinner following the talk (1).



Justice Thomas delivers a lecture at the University of Texas at Austin on Apr. 15, 2026. Credit: Emmie Adams

Per the justice's assistant, Thomas "wants to invite Mrs. Thomas, Stephanie Coleman, and Omar Hamada to the lecture and dinner" (46). Coleman is the widow of Greg Coleman, an OT95 Thomas clerk who died in 2010. Hamada and Coleman are in a relationship. John Yoo, an OT94 Thomas clerk, also attended the dinner, which was held in UT Austin President Jim Davis's office.

The Crows' private jet is recorded as flying from Dallas to Austin on Apr. 14, but the Thomases appear not to have been on it. The records indicate that UT paid $2,574.78 for first-class round-trip flights on United for Justice and Ginni Thomas, booked through Anthony Travel using a university discount (83–84).

A total of 1,116 people were listed as attendees of Thomas' talk at Hogg Auditorium, although some names were redacted (2-24). Questions for Thomas were submitted in advance and are included in the records (25). Following the talk, Davis presented Thomas with a customized UT Austin football jersey as a gift (65), with "Thomas 91" on the back, in reference to the year Thomas became a justice.

UT also paid for hotel rooms for Thomas's security detail at the AT&T Hotel and Conference Center, booked at the "government rate" of $173 per night (64, 108). UT also provided meals for the security detail, although no cost was provided (49).

Credentialed media were allowed to attend the lecture, but photographers could take pictures only during the first one to two minutes (122). Ultimately, 20 journalists from 14 outlets RSVP'd to cover the lecture, and C-SPAN broadcasted it (246). The Court's press office kept tight control of the collateral materials released by the law school (e.g., "[w]e ask that you please provide for our review and approval any draft materials that mention the Justice (invitations, programs, website posts, social media posts, press releases, etc.) prior to publication or release." [117]).

One of the activities listed during Thomas' visit was simply "reviewing rare artifacts" (123), though there's no indication of what that might mean.

Two months before the event, UT staff indicates that she has "completed [the] Speaking Engagement and Appearance Form, along with an addendum that includes supporting details" (40). No form was included in the records we received. We asked UT for the form on Sept. 14 via email and Oct. 1 via voicemail but have yet to receive a response.

Thomas' chambers is one of four (Roberts, Sotomayor and Jackson are the others) that appear to be using the "Speaking Engagement / Appearance Form" that Fix the Court first uncovered this summer.

In comparison to Justice Jackson's Nov. 2025 event at Ole Miss, Court staff said that for the Justice Thomas lecture, "no advance background checks [are] required" (77).

That said, one student who was scheduled to attend the pre-talk lunch with Justice Thomas was "flagged in [the Court's] intel teams system" but, Court staff added, "it might not be the same [person]" (97). That person's name was redacted.

Thomas' chambers, as above, wanted to make sure the event was not a fundraiser, with a SCOTUS public affairs specialist writing, "[D]ue to judicial ethics rules, the Justices may not be a speaker, a guest of honor, or featured on the program of a fundraising event. In general, we consider an event to be a fundraiser if the revenues from the event are expected to exceed its costs, or if guests are asked for donations at the event. Would you please confirm the events the Justice is participating in are not fundraisers?" (117).

UT staff's response, "I want to also confirm the Justice will not be affiliated with any fundraising activities" (154). That is, of course, an awkward thing to write, seeing as how some large donors — including the Crows and two Texas-based multi-millionaires, Doug Bech and Sam Loughlin, who together have donated at least $8 million to the school — were invited to the private dinner following the talk.

29. Justice Jackson, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, July 14, 2026 (talk): Acknowledged but no documents produced
Date requested: Oct. 14 | *Date received: N/A* | *Days to receive: N/A* | *Cost: N/A*

30. Justice Sotomayor, University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, Sept. 16, 2026 (talk): Acknowledged but no documents produced
Date requested: Sept. 17 | *Follow-ups: Sept. 25, Oct. 13* | *Days to receive: N/A* | *Cost: N/A*

31. Justice Barrett, University of Virginia School of Law (talk), Sept. 17, 2026: Documents (567 pages)
Date requested: Sept. 18 | *Date received: Nov. 10* | *Days to receive: 53* | *Cost: $70.84*

We were initially quoted a fee of $972 to obtain the records we requested, but after some narrowing down of the custodians, the subjects and the dates, the new cost was $70.84. Unsurprisingly, and even though the records came to 571 pages, there was little information of interest within them.

On top of that, UVA did not bother to redact the name of one of Barrett's children who accompanied her, apparently for a campus tour given that he will soon head off to college. It's unclear if he is still a

minor (our best guess is he was born in 2009), but either way, the name should have been redacted. (In the link above, we took out the four pages that mention him.)



Justice Barrett speaks with UVA Law Prof. John Jeffries in Charlottesville on Sept. 17, 2026. Screenshot from YouTube.

UVA staff noted that they were working "closely with Justice Barrett's PIO to coordinate communications," consistent with what we've seen for other events (55), though of course Barrett does not have her own public information officer.

Tickets for the Barrett event "sold out within the first few hours" (proverbially, as they were free) (212), and during the two hours preceding it, the school arranged for Barrett to spend time in a quiet space on campus for some downtime to check in with her law clerks (in one of the pages we had to remove).

UVA apparently did not pay for any of Barrett's books to be distributed during her visit; the documents state, "Copies of 'Listening to the Law' will be available for purchase at the event" (99).

Finally, this note from the director of the Karsh Institute was interesting: "One more thing worth flagging: one of our [Karsh] interns, [name redacted], is a UVA 2L and a Fed Soc member, and we've enlisted him to be around all day as a continuous point of contact for Justice Barrett. He'll be at each of her arrival and departure points in case she needs anything" (347).

Why does it matter that Barrett's gofer is a member of FedSoc?

32. Justice Barrett, University of Georgia Law School (talk), Oct. 20, 2026: Acknowledged but no documents produced
Date requested: Oct. 22 | Request narrowed: Oct. 28 | Days to receive: N/A | Cost: N/A

UGA requested that we identify the custodians whose emails we'd like for them to search. We responded with the names of the law professor Justice Barrett spoke with as part of the event, the law school dean, a university event planner and two marketing and communications staff members, with the timeframe being Oct. 1, 2025, to Oct. 28, 2026, and the search terms being "@supremecourt.gov," "Barrett," and "Supreme Court."

The response we got back was that the "search, retrieval, review, redaction, and production charges in complying with this request will be 575 hours for a total estimate of $28,737.50, requiring at least 90 business days for production," roughly equal to the amount of money in Fix the Court's bank account at the present time.

On Nov. 19, we sought to narrow the request further by taking out "Supreme Court" and "Barrett" and excluding two of the aforementioned custodians.

We'll see how that goes.