

# [***Justices Barrett and Sotomayor urge Americans to tone down political rhetoric despite charged atmosphere***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJ1-P1M1-JBSS-S2V3-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Two Supreme Court justices on Tuesday urged Americans to turn down the temperature of civic discourse - even as the high court is working through some of the most charged political cases to land on its docket in years.

"Why should any of us want to obliterate the opposition or even see another person as the opposition?" Justice Amy Coney Barrett told an audience in Washington, DC, during an event focused on civic education.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor said that on the Supreme Court she and her colleagues come to disagreements with an assumption that all nine are operating in good faith.

"I think the public discourse has lost some of that," Sotomayor lamented. "There's a lot of personal attacks on people's character."

The comments came as the Supreme Court has been wrestling with several high-profile political controversies, including a recent case challenging former President Donald Trump's eligibility to appear on Colorado's ballot and his claims of immunity from criminal prosecution.

Neither justice mentioned those cases - or any others - in their remarks at George Washington University during the annual Civic Learning Week National Forum.

Barrett, a Trump nominee, noted at one point that justices have the "ability to write an opinion more broadly or more narrowly" as one way to find compromise and that "not everything has to be decided in an opinion."

The justice had made a similar point in a concurring opinion in the [*Trump ballot case last week*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/04/politics/amy-coney-barrett-supreme-court-trump-analysis/index.html), chastising the majority for a decision that some felt swept more broadly than necessary. She also [*admonished the court's liberal wing*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/04/politics/amy-coney-barrett-supreme-court-trump-analysis/index.html).

"In my judgment, this is not the time to amplify disagreement with stridency," Barrett wrote in her concurring opinion. "The court has settled a politically charged issue in the volatile season of a presidential election. Particularly in this circumstance, writings on the court should turn the national temperature down, not up."

Sotomayor and Barrett also spoke together in late February at a meeting of the National Governors Association focused on how to "disagree better."

During that event, Sotomayor noted the president who nominates each justice remains in power for, at most, eight years.

"So for us to be beholden to one of them is a little crazy," said Sotomayor, who was nominated by former President Barack Obama. "That should give us the freedom to grow as we grow in the job as well."

Barrett agreed, adding that life tenure on the court "does insulate us from ***politics***."

"We don't sit on opposite sides of an aisle," Barrett said. "We all wear the same color black robe."

By John Fritze, CNN

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