

# [***Here s How Much Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh Is Worth***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69Y4-VP51-JBCM-F49R-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Kyle Mullins, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Brett Kavanaugh has less money than almost everyone else on the nation s highest court. It s still enough to live quite comfortably.

**Body**

**Brett Kavanaugh has less money than almost everyone else on the Supreme Court. It s still enough to live quite comfortably.**

**By Kyle Mullins, Forbes Staff**

Brett Kavanaugh is worth an estimated $2 million. That might sound like a lot, but for an attorney at the top of his field, it s really not much at all. Why isn t Kavanaugh richer? Simple: He has spent most of his career in the public sector and, at 58, is still seven years away from qualifying for his Supreme Court pension, which could double his net worth the instant he turns 65.

For now, Kavanaugh s largest asset is his Chevy Chase, Maryland home, worth roughly $1.6 million. He has an estimated $700,000 of debt against it. He has already locked in a smaller pension, from his days serving in both Bush administrations and on Ken Starr s investigation of Bill Clinton. There s also several hundred thousand stuffed into the government s equivalent of a 401(k), his wife s retirement account and some bank accounts. Other than that, there s nothing else no rental real estate, private business or extensive stock portfolio.

**BRETT S BELONGINGS**

**A nice house in the D.C. suburbs makes up just under half of Kavanaugh s net worth, and he has little in the way of liquid assets.**

For Kavanaugh, who frequently notes that he lives on the sunrise side of the mountain, life has always been comfortable, though. He was born to two D.C.-area lawyers. His mother, to whom he credits his interest in government service, was a history teacher for much of his childhood, then went to law school when he was 10 and eventually became a circuit court judge in Maryland. He talks less about the career of his father, a retired lobbyist who made millions working for 31 years as the president of the Cosmetics, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association, an industry group now called the Personal Care Products Council. It is based three blocks from the White House.

The family had enough money to send Kavanaugh to Georgetown Preparatory School, an elite Jesuit boarding school in the Maryland D.C. suburbs that today charges over $40,000 for day students and nearly $70,000 for boarding students. Other prominent alumni include fellow Justice Neil Gorsuch, who was two years behind Kavanaugh, and Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell not to mention a crowd of congresspeople and ambassadors. Kavanaugh stayed elite in college, earning his undergraduate and law degrees from Yale. He never reported owing student loans.

After law school, Kavanaugh advanced in the D.C. conservative legal scene. He completed three elite clerkships with Republican-appointed judges, including a year with Justice Anthony Kennedy, whose seat on the Supreme Court he later filled. Kavanaugh served in the solicitor general s office during the first Bush administration, where he briefly overlapped with now-Chief Justice John Roberts. After Bill Clinton took office, Kavanaugh joined independent counsel Ken Starr in investigating the president s affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. In that role, he argued before the Supreme Court.

Kavanaugh s only brief stint in the private sector came when he left government in 1997 to become a partner at Kirkland and Ellis, today the top-grossing law firm in the world. But even then, he didn t stay long. By 1998, he was back helping Starr, writing portions of his final report to Congress before returning again to Kirkland and Ellis in 1999.

He returned to ***politics*** the following year, jetting into Florida to represent then-candidate George W. Bush in the most important recount in modern times. When Bush took office in 2001, the president rewarded Kavanaugh with a job in the administration, ending the lawyer s brief flirtation with private practice. Working in the White House Counsel s office and later as a staff secretary and assistant for the president, Kavanaugh met his future wife, Ashley; their first date was September 10, 2001. The two married in 2004 at the White House and had a daughter a year later.

Kavanaugh remained ambitious in his career. George W. Bush nominated him to the D.C. Circuit in 2003, but Kavanaugh had a problem: At just 38 years old, he had already earned a partisan reputation in a bitterly divided Washington. Mr. Kavanaugh is a person of high integrity, of skilled professional competence, and outstanding character, Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Orrin Hatch, Republican of Utah, said in Kavanaugh s 2004 confirmation hearing. Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York, was less complementary, saying that If there has been a partisan political fight that needed a good lawyer in the last decade, Brett Kavanaugh was probably there. And if he was there, there is no question what side he was on. Ultimately, the Senate returned his nomination to the president without a vote.

Bush tried again in 2005, nominating Kavanaugh to the same court. He didn t even get a hearing that time. But on a third attempt, in 2006, Kavanaugh finally made it through the nomination process. Bush attended the Rose Garden swearing-in ceremony, joking that the Kavanaughs marriage was the first lifetime appointment I arranged for Brett.

Just before Kavanaugh s confirmation, he bought a 2,500-square-foot house in the Maryland suburbs for $1.2 million. It was a lot of money for the 41 year old. In a 2005 Senate filing, Kavanaugh reported only $10,000 in Bank of America accounts, $25,000 in credit card debt, and some retirement savings. By the end of 2006, after buying the house, Kavanaugh owed $980,000 on his mortgage and held four loans worth between $15,000 and $50,000 apiece, according to his 2006 disclosure, which required him to list the value of liabilities in broad ranges.

The new job came with a $175,100 salary, a figure that increased each year and reached $220,600 in 2018, before Kavanaugh stepped up to the Supreme Court. To supplement his income, Kavanaugh taught short classes at various law schools, earning him roughly $300,000 over 12 years. His wife, meanwhile, turned her focus to taking care of their daughters they had a second after he became a judge while also picking up prestigious part-time positions, such as helping get the younger Bush get his presidential library off the ground. Today, she serves as the town manager of their Maryland suburb, a part-time gig that pays $88,000 a year.

The Kavanaughs live well, buying season tickets every year to the Washington Nationals, sending their kids to a private school that runs $12,000 a year and joining the exclusive Chevy Chase Club, whichreportedlycosts $92,000 to join and $9,000 a year after that. They ve also spent a good amount updating their home.

For a while, they fueled part of their lifestyle with debt. Kavanaugh disclosed tens of thousands in credit-card liabilities almost every year between 2006 and 2016. The debt seemed to decline gradually over time, except when it spiked in 2016. (Kavanaugh explained that he had bought baseball tickets for friends who subsequently paid him back.) At any rate, when President Donald Trump nominated him for the Supreme Court in 2018, Kavanaugh told Congress he had paid off all debts except his mortgage.

His Supreme Court nomination initially seemed likely to proceed like that of Neil Gorsuch, Kavanaugh s Georgetown Prep peer who joined the court the year before. But after his hearing and before the Judiciary Committee voted on whether or not to report Kavanaugh to the full Senate for confirmation, Christine Blasey Ford, a California psychology professor,went publicwith allegations that Kavanaugh had raped her while they were both in high school. Further sexual-misconduct allegations from Kavanaugh s time in high school and at Yale followed from two additional women, one of whom later retracted her claims. The country then heard testimony from Ford and Kavanaugh, during which Kavanaugh categorically denied all the allegations and angrily accused Democrats on the committee of a calculated and orchestrated political hit. He was, in the end, confirmed by the Senate 50-48, the narrowest margin of any justice since the 1930s.

Kavanaugh s new position came with a $35,000 raise. He still reports between $15,000 and $50,000 in bank accounts, and presumably still has his federal savings account, which**Forbes** estimates could be worth over $800,000 today if he has continued to contribute generously to it. He also has a big windfall on the horizon. When he turns 65, he ll have access to a judicial pension that will pay him his final year s salary likely more than $300,000 at that point for the rest of his life. The instant Kavanaugh qualifies,**Forbes** estimates his pension will be valued at $2.7 million, or more than his entire net worth today.

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