

# [***Scotland s Push For Independence: Where It Stands After Leader Sturgeon s Resignation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67K1-HR91-DXVP-518N-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Sturgeon s resignation comes after years spent pushing for a second referendum for Scottish independence.

**Body**

**Topline**

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced her resignation Wednesday, leaving an unclear path for a new referendum for Scottish independence from the United Kingdom after her government spent the last decade pushing for a second vote.

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Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said she will step down when a successor is chosen. (Photo by JANE BARLOW/POOL/AFP via Getty Images)

POOL/AFP via Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Sturgeon was elected leader of the Scottish National Party and as First Minister just weeks after Scotland's 2014 referendum to leave the United Kingdom failed, but she announced herresignationin a surprise announcement this week because of the brutality of being a politician.

In the June 2016 Brexit referendum, 62% of Scottish voters wanted the United Kingdom to remain in the European Union but the majority of the United Kingdom voted to leave, meaning Scotland would leave, too which became aturning pointin the push for a second independence referendum.

The day after the Brexit vote, SturgeoncalledScotland s removal against our will from the EU democratically unacceptable and said a second vote for independence from the United Kingdom is highly likely.

In February 2017, the Scottish government voted 90-34 toopposethe UK leaving the EU, and by the next month hadvotedin favor of holding a second referendum on Scottish independence.

After Sturgeon s pro-independence party lost 21 seats in the 2017 UK general election and amid ongoing Brexit negotiations, shepostponedthe second independence referendum effort to at least fall 2018.

In April 2019, Sturgeondeclaredplans for a second referendum vote before the end of the Scottish parliamentary session in May 2021.

After Sturgeon s partywon80% of the Scottish seats in the House of Commons in December 2019, which she considered a mandate on independence, the Scottish Parliament passed aframeworkfor governing referendums and requested then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson to grant authority to administer a Scottish independence vote.

Johnson rejected Sturgeon s request for a second referendum in January 2020, saying the 2014 referendum was intended to be a once in a generation vote.

After the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted referendum plans, Johnsonrejectedanother request from Sturgeon to hold a referendum in June 2022, and the UK Supreme CourtdashedSturgeon s attempts to hold a referendum vote without the UK government's approval.

**Key Background**

Sturgeon haslong supportedindependence, maintaining Scotland would be better off politically and economically if governed directly by its residents. Public support for independence has fluctuated slightly, with a majority backing independence in 2020 as Scotsdisapprovedof Boris Johnson s pandemic response and his approval rating plummeted. But support haswaned, with a recent poll showing 44% of Scots supporting independence a similar result to the 2014 referendum where 45% voted in favor of independence.

**Chief Critics**

Sturgeon faced consistent opposition for a referendum from Boris Johnson, who led the UK government for several years of her First Minister tenure. Johnson made a cast-iron pledgein 2019 to not grant Sturgeon power to conduct a second referendum and claimed the result of the 2014 referendum should stand. Leaders of other Scottish political parties have criticized Sturgeon and their party for their focus on independence; Scottish Labour Party deputy leader Jackie Baillie hascalledSNP s push for independence an obsession amid the lack of a clear majority of voters in favor of independence according to recent polls.

**Tangent**

Sturgeon s resignation comes weeks after former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced she would step down. Ardern and Sturgeon drewcomparisonsfor resigning rather than being pushed out and opting to step down because of the emotional intensity of serving in ***politics***.

**What To Watch For**

Who the Scottish National Party will select as its new leader. Sturgeon will not step down until a successor is chosen.

**Further Reading**

Scotland's Nicola Sturgeon will resign, complicating the independence movement(NPR)

Nicola Sturgeon resigns: Scotland's first minister says ***politics*** has taken its toll(BBC)

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