The Supreme Court Retirement Act was created as a response to the Supreme Court's rulings that were seen as obstacles to the implementation of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The act provided for the retirement of Supreme Court justices who had reached the age of 70 and a reduction in the number of justices on the court from nine to seven.

The motivation for the creation of this act was to allow Roosevelt to appoint new justices who were more likely to support his policies and programs. Roosevelt believed that the Supreme Court had become an obstacle to progress and that he needed to take action to ensure that his policies could be implemented.

Although the act was never used to force the retirement of any sitting justices, it remains a controversial piece of legislation that raised serious concerns about the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary.