



Federal Bar Association

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

The Latest on Public Policy and Advocacy Developments

DECEMBER 2024

ADVOCACY UPDATE

Since Senate passage of the JUDGES Act in August, the FBA, working with outside Government Relations counsel and the Federal Judges Association (FJA), have contacted hundreds of key House Members to emphasize the urgent need to pass the JUDGES Act this year. Our efforts paid off with a bipartisan vote in favor of the bill on Dec. 12.

Our work is not done yet, however, because two days before the House vote, the White House released a Statement of Administrative Policy outlining concerns with the JUDGES Act and stating the President's intent to veto the bill. Consequently, FBA members and FJA members are working to respond to those concerns and to convey to the President the importance of cementing his legacy of support for the federal judiciary by signing the JUDGES Act into law.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Appropriations for the Judiciary

The current Continuing Resolution (CR) expires on Dec. 20, 2024. We expect Congress to pass another CR on or before Dec. 20, extending the time for appropriations negotiations until March 2025.

As a reminder, these negotiations relate to the spending bills for Fiscal Year 2025, which began Oct. 1, 2024 and runs through Sept. 30, 2025. The spending levels provided for FY 2024 will remain in place until FY 2025 bills are enacted. Also, we note that Continuing Resolutions typically do not provide for spending on new programs, and while the current CR unfortunately does not authorize initial implementation of the Daniel Anderl Judicial Security Act program for state and local government grants, we expect the final version of the FY25 appropriations legislation in the Spring will include the \$10 million contained in the House and Senate versions.

Independent Immigration Court

There are no developments to report at this time regarding the Real Courts, Rule of Law Act ([H.R. 7724](#)).

Foundation Charter Amendments Act

There are no positive developments to report at this time regarding the Foundation of the Federal Bar Association Charter Amendments Act ([S. 2694](#)). There was an informal "hold" placed by a Republican Senator and the bill could not receive full Senate consideration. We will work to get it reintroduced by Senators Kennedy and Whitehouse in the new year.

JUDICIARY UPDATE

[Thirty-six](#) of 890 active federal judicial positions, including the United States Court of Federal Claims and the United States territorial courts, are currently vacant. Eleven more judicial vacancies are [expected](#) through October 2025, with three nominees named in advance.

Current Judicial Vacancies as of Dec. 15, 2024 [According to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts](#)

	Vacancies	Nominees Pending
Supreme Court	0	0
Courts of Appeal	2	2
District Courts	34	4
US Court of Federal Claims	0	0
US Court of International Trade	0	0
Total	36	6

There are [twenty-two judicial vacancy emergencies](#), based on caseload and/or the length of the vacancy, according to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

Judicial Confirmations: The Senate has [confirmed](#) 18 nominees since Nov. 15, 2024.

Nominee	Judicial District/Circuit	Confirmation Date
Embry J. Kidd	Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals	Nov. 18, 2024
Sarah French Russell	District of Connecticut	Nov. 19, 2024
Mustafa Taher Kasubhai	District of Oregon	Nov. 19, 2024
Rebecca L. Pennell	Eastern District of Washington	Nov. 20, 2024
Amir H. Ali	District of DC	Nov. 20, 2024
Sharad Harshad Desai	District of Arizona	Nov. 21, 2024
Brian Edward Murphy	District of Massachusetts	Dec. 2, 2024
Anne Hwang	Central District of California	Dec. 2, 2024
Catherine Henry	Eastern District of Pennsylvania	Dec. 3, 2024
Sparkle K. Sooknanan	District of DC	Dec. 3, 2024
Gail A. Weilheimer	Eastern District of Pennsylvania	Dec. 3, 2024
Anthony J. Brindisi	Northern District of New York	Dec. 4, 2024
Elizabeth C. Coombe	Northern District of New York	Dec. 4, 2024
Sarah Morgan Davenport	District of New Mexico	Dec. 5, 2024
Tiffany Rene Johnson	Northern District of Georgia	Dec. 9, 2024
Cynthia Valenzuela Dixon	Central District of California	Dec. 10, 2024
Keli Marie Neary	Middle District of Pennsylvania	Dec. 10, 2024
Noel Wise	Northern District of California	Dec. 11, 2024

Judicial Nominations: Since Nov. 15, 2024, President Biden has [nominated](#) 0 candidates for judicial vacancies.