



Federal Bar Association

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

The Latest on Public Policy and Advocacy Developments

JANUARY 2025

CAPITOL HILL DAY—MARCH 27, 2025

Capitol Hill Day (CHD) is the premier FBA advocacy event of the year. FBA members have the exclusive opportunity to serve as representatives for the FBA in communication with Congress. Equal parts inspiration and information, CHD is your chance to broaden the FBA's visibility and influence in Congress. Join FBA leaders from across the country for meetings with House and Senate offices to discuss important FBA legislative issues that impact the administration of justice and the federal courts. [View schedule and register here.](#)

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Appropriations for the Judiciary

The current Continuing Resolution expires on March 14, 2025, and passage of appropriations legislation by that deadline is far from certain, given the need for negotiation of top-line spending levels among the new Administration, the Republican majorities in the House and Senate, and Congressional Democrats. Also potentially complicating the negotiations are the need for Congress to enact debt ceiling legislation and possible new FEMA resources to cover costs of the Los Angeles fires. Meanwhile, we await seeing how the incoming Administration will handle its Fiscal Year 2026 President's Budget Request (PB), which should be presented to Congress in late March or early April after the new officials review the draft already prepared by the current Administration. We will review and report the requests for the Judiciary as soon as the PB is made public.

Federal Judgeships Legislation

President Biden vetoed the JUDGES Act, which would have relieved overburdened federal district courts by increasing the number of judgeships in a number of districts. The Judicial Conference's biennial report on caseloads should be released in March of this year, and, to the extent they are willing to reintroduce this legislation, we will work with the JUDGES Act's bipartisan sponsors to incorporate any changed recommendations into a new bill after the report is released.

Independent Immigration Court

Prospects for creating an Article I independent immigration court are dim this Congress, since the Administration and the Republican majorities in both the House and Senate have other priorities on immigration policy.

Foundation Charter Amendments Act

We will continue working to address Senator Cotton's concerns about the Charter Amendments bill. Senator John Kennedy's staff promised to work with the FBA Foundation to secure consideration of a reintroduced bill after Sen. Cotton placed a hold on the Kennedy-Whitehouse Charter Amendments bill late in the last Congressional session.

JUDICIARY UPDATE

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

Current Judicial Vacancies as of Jan. 15, 2025 [According to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts](#)

	Vacancies	Nominees Pending
Supreme Court	0	0
Courts of Appeal	3	0
District Courts	37	0
US Court of Federal Claims	0	0
US Court of International Trade	0	0
Total	40	0

There are [twenty-one 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 [confirmed](#) 14 nominees through December 2024. The current Congress has confirmed no nominees.

Nominee	Judicial District/Circuit	Confirmation Date
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
Benjamin J. Cheeks	Southern District of California	Dec. 20, 2024
Serena Raquel Murillo	Central District of California	Dec. 20, 2024

Judicial Nominations: President Biden has submitted no new nominations for judicial vacancies.