



Federal Bar Association

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

The Latest on Public Policy and Advocacy Developments

FEBRUARY 2025

ADVOCACY UPDATE

We look forward to seeing FBA members in D.C. for Capitol Hill Day (CHD) on March 27, 2025, and we are excited to announce that Senator Todd Young (R-IN), one of the lead sponsors of the JUDGES Act, is the guest speaker for our kickoff breakfast. It is not too late to register! A recording of our February 13 introductory webinar is available to CHD registrants who were unable to attend, and a second preparatory webinar is scheduled for 3 PM ET on March 24. While you're on the GRC webpage, don't miss the link to a terrific video from a past CHD participant – it's well worth watching.

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. The Trump Administration is pressing Congress to prioritize enacting major policy legislation on border security, energy, taxes, and budget cuts via the budget reconciliation process, but Congressional leaders have yet to agree on the contours of that legislation. In addition, some members of the Republican majority oppose combining multiple spending bills into minibus or omnibus legislation, even though doing so reduces the amount of time required for consideration and passage. Meanwhile, the new Administration must prepare its Fiscal Year 2026 President's Budget Request (PB), which should be presented to Congress in March or early April. We will review and report the requests for the Judiciary as soon as the PB is made public. The President and Republican Congressional leadership have announced their intention to make significant cuts in federal spending, so FBA advocacy in support of the Judiciary's budgets for both FY 2025 and 2026 will be extremely important in the coming weeks and months.

Federal Judgeships Legislation

The Judicial Conference's biennial report on caseloads should be released in March of this year, providing updated information about which federal district courts are facing the heaviest workloads and making recommendations for new judgeships. We are confirming that the sponsors of the JUDGES Act are interested in re-introducing judgeships legislation this Congress and will work with them to incorporate any changed recommendations into a new bill, once 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

Senator John Kennedy's staff has committed to re-introducing the Charter Amendments bill, and we will continue working with them to address the concerns which led Senator Cotton to place a hold on the Kennedy-Whitehouse Charter Amendments bill late in the last Congressional session.

JUDICIARY UPDATE

[Forty-three](#) of 890 active federal judicial positions, including the United States Court of Federal Claims and the United States territorial courts, are currently vacant. Ten more judicial vacancies are [expected](#) through February 1, 2026, with zero nominees named in advance.

Current Judicial Vacancies as of Feb. 16, 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	40	0
US Court of Federal Claims	0	0
US Court of International Trade	0	0
Total	43	0

There are [twenty 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 current Congress has confirmed no nominees.

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