



Federal Bar Association

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

The Latest on Public Policy and Advocacy Developments

JANUARY 2026

ADVOCACY UPDATE

As the current Continuing Resolution (CR) approaches its January 30, 2026, expiration date, FBA members have been contacting their elected representatives urging Congress to prioritize finalizing FY 2026 appropriations legislation for the federal judiciary and to provide robust funding for the Anderl Act grant program, and their efforts have borne significant fruit.

On January 5, 2026, Congressional appropriations leaders released the negotiated (or “conferenced”) text of a three-bill “minibus” ([H.R. 6938](#)), which includes agreed funding amounts for the Department of Justice. We are pleased to report that the bill would provide \$7.5 million for the Department of Justice Anderl Act grant program. This is 50% more than the President’s Budget Request amount and splits the difference between the Senate’s bill, which would have provided \$10 million, and the House bill, which would have provided \$5 million. The House voted 397-28 to approve H.R. 6938 on January 8, and the Senate voted 82-15 in favor of the bill on January 15. FBA is optimistic that President Trump will sign the bill before the CR expires.

Additionally, on January 11, appropriations leaders released conferenced text for a two-bill minibuss ([H.R. 7006](#)) that includes funding for the federal judiciary. The bipartisan, bicameral agreement would provide the judiciary with total discretionary funding of \$9.2 billion, which is \$556 million more than the FY 2025 enacted amount, though \$244 million less than requested. The bill also provides \$485 million for mandatory expenditures.

The discretionary amount of \$9.2 billion includes \$135 million for the Supreme Court, \$1.76 billion for defender services, and \$892 million for court security, expressly including purposes authorized by the Anderl Act. The bill would provide the full amounts requested by the judiciary for defender services and court security, two priorities FBA members emphasized strongly in communications with Members of Congress. On January 14, the House voted 341-79 in favor of H.R. 7006, and the Senate is expected to consider it as expeditiously as possible. However, we note that the Senate will be in recess the week of January 19, leaving just one week to pass the bill before the CR expires.

FBA members are encouraged to continue their outreach to Members of the Senate urging enactment of H.R. 7006 before January 30.

Capitol Hill Day registration is open! We hope many of you will make plans to join us in D.C. on March 26 for a fun-filled, action-packed day of advocacy.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Federal Judgeships Legislation

FBA has received information that negotiations are underway in an effort to enable a reintroduction of Senate legislation to add new judgeships, perhaps in the first quarter of 2026.

JUDICIARY UPDATE

[Forty](#) of 890 active federal judicial positions, including the United States Court of Federal Claims, the US Court of International Trade, and the United States territorial courts, are currently vacant. Eight more judicial vacancies are [expected](#) through October 5, 2026, with one nominee named in advance.

Current Judicial Vacancies as of January 15, 2026 [According to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts](#)

	Vacancies	Nominees Pending
Supreme Court	0	0
Courts of Appeal	0	0
District Courts	39	5
US Court of Federal Claims	0	0
US Court of International Trade	1	0
Total	40	5

There are [17 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](#) one nominee since December 15:

Nominee	Jurisdiction	Nomination Date
Alexander C. Van Hook	Western District of Louisiana	January 8, 2026

Judicial Nominations: Since December 15, President Trump has [submitted](#) five nominations for judicial vacancies:

Nominee	Jurisdiction	Nomination Date
David Clay Fowlkes	Western District of Arkansas	January 5, 2026
Aaron Christian Peterson	District of Alaska	January 5, 2026
Nicholas Jon Ganjei	Southern District of Texas	January 5, 2026
Justin R. Olson	Southern District of Indiana	January 5, 2026
Brian Charles Lea	Western District of Tennessee	January 5, 2026