



Federal Bar Association

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

The Latest on Public Policy and Advocacy Developments

FEBRUARY 2026

ADVOCACY UPDATE

On Feb. 3, 2026, seven federal judges who are FBA members traveled to D.C. for a very successful day of educating members and staff regarding judiciary funding and judicial security. The judges met with several key members of Congress including: Rep. Steny Hoyer, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government Appropriations (FSGG); Rep. Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee; Rep. Hank Johnson, Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts; Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, Ranking Member, Federal Courts Subcommittee; Sen. Jack Reed, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government Appropriations, and Senate Judiciary and Appropriations Committee member Lindsey Graham. In addition, the judges met with staff for Speaker of the House Mike Johnson; House Majority Whip Tom Emmer; House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries; Rep. Dave Joyce, Chairman, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government Appropriations; Sen. Lindsey Graham; House Judiciary Committee Chair Jim Jordan; Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Chuck Grassley; and Senate FSGG Subcommittee Chair Bill Hagerty.

These meetings coincided with the actual final votes in the House on the five-bill appropriations “minibus” that included funding for the courts. While the judges were on the Hill, the House passed and the President signed the legislation, which provides \$9.2 billion in discretionary funding for the federal judiciary, including the full \$1.76 billion requested by the courts for Defender Services and the requested \$892 million for court security. Thus, the timing was perfect for the judges to personally thank the Members for the robust funding and for their general support for the judiciary. FBA CEO Stacy King used this opportunity to thank the members for the recent enactment of the Foundation of the FBA Charter Amendments Act and judges shared personal experiences and insights into the threats facing federal judges, their families, and courthouse staff.

The judges who participated included: FBA President Judge Karoline Mehalchick (MDPA), Judge Beth Bloom (SDFL), Judge Leo Gordon (CIT), Judge Iain Johnston (SDIL), Judge Michael Newman (SDOH), Judge John Tunheim (DMN), and Chief Judge Jennifer Zipps (DAZ).

We are looking forward to seeing many more FBA members on [Capitol Hill Day](#), which is scheduled for March 26, 2026. A virtual orientation session for registered participants is scheduled for 3 pm on Feb. 19, 2026, and a virtual preparatory briefing will take place at 3 pm on March 23, 2026.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Daniel Anderl Act Grant Program

FY 2026 Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations legislation was enacted on Jan. 23, 2026, and includes \$7.5 million in first-ever designated funding for the Department of Justice Daniel Anderl Act grant program. The grants will help state and local governments with the cost of scrubbing federal judges’ and their loved ones’ PII from their databases.

Next steps for the FBA include urging the Department of Justice to expedite development and implementation of the Anderl Act grant program. In addition, the FY 2027 appropriations cycle has begun, and the FBA will begin its annual efforts to support the judiciary’s funding request, as well as additional funding for Anderl Act grants, via letters to key Congressional appropriators and in-person advocacy on Capitol Hill Day.

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

[Thirty-seven](#) 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 Oct. 5, 2026, with one nominee named in advance.

Current Judicial Vacancies as of February 13, 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	36	3
US Court of Federal Claims	0	0
US Court of International Trade	1	0
Total	37	3

There are [15 judicial vacancy emergencies](#), based on caseload and/or the length of the vacancy, according to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Nine emergency districts are in Texas.

Judicial Confirmations: The current Congress has [confirmed](#) six nominees since January 15, 2026:

Nominee	Jurisdiction	Nomination Date
David Clay Fowlkes	Western District of Arkansas	February 3, 2026
Nicholas Jon Ganjei	Southern District of Texas	February 3, 2026
Megan Blair Benton	Western District of Missouri	February 4, 2026
Aaron Christian Peterson	District of Alaska	February 4, 2026
Justin R. Olson	Southern District of Indiana	February 5, 2026
Brian Charles Lea	Western District of Tennessee	February 5, 2026

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

Nominee	Jurisdiction	Nomination Date
Anna St. John	Eastern District of Louisiana	January 29, 2026
Christopher R. Wolfe	Western District of Texas	January 29, 2026
Andrew B. Davis	Western District of Texas	January 29, 2026