



Federal Bar Association

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

The Latest on Public Policy and Advocacy Developments

JULY 2026

ADVOCACY UPDATE

FBA has been actively advocating at senior levels of the DOJ regarding the development and implementation of the state and local grant program authorized by the Daniel Aderl Act, to ensure that implementation adheres to the vision of FBA leaders and other stakeholders. In preparing its recommendations, FBA has consulted several sources, including Judge Esther Salas, the Administrative Office for US Courts, leaders of the Federal Judges Association, a county tax assessor in a large Southern state, and the Register of Deeds in a Southern county. We hope to see the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) announcement within a few weeks.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Federal Judiciary Funding

There have been no developments since May regarding appropriations for the federal judiciary. As a reminder, the judiciary requested \$9.7 billion in funding for FY 2027. On April 22, 2026, the full House Appropriations Committee approved a Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) bill that would provide a total of \$9.6 billion in discretionary funding for operations of the Judiciary, an increase of \$381 million above fiscal year 2026, but \$36 million below the request. FBA advocacy before and during Capitol Hill Day may have helped incrementally in the effort to secure funding levels so close to the Judiciary's request.

Of the total provided, the bill includes:

- Courts of Appeals, District Courts, and Other Judicial Services – \$6.4 billion, an increase of \$312 million above fiscal year 2026 and equal to the amount requested.
- Defender Services – \$1.8 billion, an increase of \$27 million above fiscal year 2026 and equal to the amount requested.
- Court Security – \$921 million, \$29 million above fiscal year 2026 and equal to the amount requested.

The Senate has not yet released draft FSGG legislative text.

The Senate Appropriations Committee also has not yet released the text of its FY 2027 Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) legislation, and the Committee has twice postponed a markup of the bill. The FBA tracks the CJS bill because it provides funding for the Department of Justice and its grant programs, including the Aderl Act grant program. FBA is urging Congress to provide \$10 million in FY 2027 for the second year of implementation of the program based on the fact that there is significant unmet need for state and local governments to remove federal judges' PII from their websites.

As a reminder, the House Appropriations Committee has approved a CJS bill that would provide \$7.5 million for the Aderl Act grant program in FY 2027 -- the same amount Congress provided for the current fiscal year.

Federal Judgeships Legislation

There are no developments to report regarding judgeships legislation.

Article I Immigration Courts Legislation

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) introduced a House version of the Real Courts, Rule of Law Act on March 5, 2026. As of the date of this report, the bill has 6 Democrat cosponsors. The bill is currently pending before both the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on the Budget.

FBA expects Senator Gillibrand (D-NY) to introduce a Senate version of this legislation before the next recess, which is scheduled to begin August 10.

JUDICIARY UPDATE

[Twenty-nine](#) of 890 active federal judicial positions, including the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, the U.S. Court of International Trade, and the United States territorial courts, are currently vacant. Eleven more judicial vacancies are [expected](#) through May 11, 2027, with three nominees named in advance.

Current Judicial Vacancies as of July 14, 2026 [According to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts](#)

	Vacancies	Nominees Pending
Supreme Court	0	0
Courts of Appeal	1	1
District Courts	27	7
US Court of Federal Claims	0	0
US Court of International Trade	1	1
Total	29	9

There are [13 judicial vacancy emergencies](#), based on caseload and/or the length of the vacancy, according to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Six emergency districts are in Texas.

Judicial Confirmations: The Senate has [confirmed](#) three nominees since June 14, 2026.

Nominee	Jurisdiction	Confirmation Date
Justin D. Smith	Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals	June 15, 2026
John George Edward Marck	Southern District of Texas	June 24, 2026
Michael J. Hendershot	Northern District of Ohio	June 24, 2026

Judicial Nominations: Since June 14, President Trump has [submitted](#) one nomination for judicial vacancies.

Nominee	Jurisdiction	Nomination Date
Matthew R. Byrne	Southern District of Ohio	June 15, 2026