

Lifetime Judges Confirmed During the Biden Administration Through 2023

During the first three years of the Biden administration, the Senate has confirmed **166 lifetime judges**. President Biden's appointees have been historically diverse — both personally and professionally — and have included brilliant jurists like [Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson](#), who the Senate confirmed last year as the first Black woman and first former public defender to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Justice Jackson's historic confirmation matters tremendously for the future of equal justice in America. But President Biden's appointees to federal circuit and district courts — including Justice Jackson's previous confirmation to the D.C. Circuit — also deserve recognition for the underrepresented legal backgrounds and lived experiences they bring to our federal judiciary.

We celebrate this long overdue and important [progress](#), and we thank President Biden, Senate Majority Leader Schumer, and Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Durbin for their leadership. These lifetime judges will decide important issues — from voting rights to equal pay to health care access. Still, there remains so much at stake, and we urge President Biden and all senators to fill the remaining judicial vacancies with diverse nominees committed to civil and human rights.

Highlights

- The Senate has confirmed **one Supreme Court justice, 39 circuit court judges, and 126 district court judges**. Every confirmed judge who was supported by The Leadership Conference, including more information about their backgrounds, is available [here](#).
- **Professional diversity**: Nearly half ([80](#)) of the confirmations have been individuals who were public defenders or civil rights lawyers (or both) or who otherwise dedicated a significant portion of their careers to protecting people's civil and human rights.
- **108 confirmations of women**, or nearly two-thirds of all lifetime confirmations.
- **70 confirmations of women of color**, including Native American and Native Hawaiian women (more than 40 percent of all lifetime confirmations).
- **110 confirmations of people of color**, including Native Americans (nearly two-thirds of all lifetime confirmations).



Overall

- **Black judges:** President Biden has appointed 53 Black lifetime judges, including 33 Black women.
- **Native American judges:** President Biden has appointed four Native American lifetime judges, including the first Native American lifetime judges in Maryland, Washington state, and California, and the first Native American woman to serve as a lifetime judge in Oklahoma. Half of all Native American judges in our nation's history have been appointed by President Biden. To date, a Native American judge has never served on a federal appellate court.
- **Latino/a judges:** President Biden has appointed 32 Latino/a lifetime judges (more than one-third of the 88 active Latino/a lifetime judges).
- **Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) judges:** President Biden has appointed 29 AANHPI judges, including 20 AANHPI women. The Senate recently confirmed Judge Shanlyn Park, who became the first Native Hawaiian woman to ever serve as a lifetime federal judge.
- **Openly LGBTQ judges:** President Biden has appointed nine [openly LGBTQ lifetime judges](#) and is poised to surpass President Obama's record of 11 openly LGBTQ lifetime judges. Nicole Berner, nominated to the Fourth Circuit, would be the first openly LGBTQ judge to ever serve on that court.
- **Judges with disabilities:** President Biden has appointed at least two lifetime judges (Jamal Whitehead and Rita Lin) who are known to be living with a disability.

Circuit courts

- The Senate has confirmed **39 circuit court judges** during the Biden administration.
- **Women judges:** Three-fourths (29) of confirmed circuit court judges are women, and more than half of all confirmed circuit court judges (21) are women of color.
- **Judges of color:** Nearly 70 percent (27) of confirmed circuit court judges are people of color.
- **Black judges:** 14 confirmed circuit court judges are Black, including 13 Black women. Before President Biden, only eight Black women had ever served at this level of our federal judiciary.
- **Latino/a judges:** Seven confirmed circuit court judges are Latino/a.
- **AANHPI judges:** Six confirmed circuit court judges are AANHPI.
- **Openly LGBTQ judges:** Two confirmed circuit court judges are openly LGBTQ. President Biden appointed the first openly LGBTQ woman to serve on any federal appellate court — Judge Beth Robinson (Second Circuit). He later appointed Judge Alison Nathan, who is also openly LGBTQ, to the same court. Nicole Berner’s nomination to the Fourth Circuit is pending; she would be the first openly LGBTQ judge on this court.
- **Professional diversity:** Nearly three-fourths (29) of confirmed circuit court judges bring important legal backgrounds either as former public defenders or civil rights lawyers (or both), or have otherwise dedicated a significant portion of their careers to protecting people’s civil and human rights.

District courts

- The Senate has confirmed **126 district court judges** during the Biden administration.
- **Women judges:** 78 confirmed district court judges are women (more than 60 percent of confirmed district court judges). This includes 48 women of color, including Native American and Native Hawaiian women.
- **Judges of color:** 82 confirmed district court judges are people of color, including Native Americans (nearly two-thirds).
- **Black judges:** 38 confirmed district court judges are Black (about 30 percent), including 19 Black women.
- **Latino/a judges:** 25 confirmed district court judges are Latino/a (nearly 20 percent), including 15 Latina judges.
- **AANHPI judges:** 23 confirmed district court judges are AANHPI, including 15 AANHPI women.
- **Native American judges:** Four confirmed district court judges are Native American, and they are all women.
- **Openly LGBTQ judges:** Seven confirmed district court judges are openly LGBTQ people.
- **Professional diversity:** Nearly 40 percent of confirmed district court judges bring important legal backgrounds either as former public defenders or civil rights lawyers (or both), or have otherwise dedicated a significant portion of their careers to protecting people’s civil and human rights.

Progress on professional diversity

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and its Fair Courts Task Force have long advocated for the White House and the Senate to prioritize professional diversity and to set the expectation that all judicial nominees possess a demonstrated commitment to civil and human rights. At the start of the Biden administration, the White House Counsel's office [joined this effort](#), requesting that senators recommend diverse nominees with experience as public defenders and civil rights lawyers.

To date, nearly half (80) of lifetime confirmations during the Biden administration have been of [professionally diverse individuals](#) — people who served as public defenders, worked as civil rights lawyers, or otherwise dedicated a significant portion of their careers to protecting civil and human rights. Former public defenders — including Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first former public defender to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court — account for 37 of the 166 lifetime confirmations.

Few federal judges in history have been appointed to the federal bench directly from our nation's civil rights organizations. During this administration, we've seen the nomination and confirmation of incredible civil rights lawyers like **Nancy Abudu** (Southern Poverty Law Center), **Nusrat Choudhury** and **Dale Ho** (ACLU), **Natasha Merle** (NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund), **Myrna Pérez** (Brennan Center for Justice), **Araceli Martínez-Olguín** (National Immigration Law Center), **Julie Rikelman** (Center for Reproductive Rights), **Mónica Ramírez Almadani** (Public Counsel), **Sarah Geraghty** (Southern Center for Human Rights), **Nina Morrison** (Innocence Project), and many other tremendous civil rights lawyers who are deeply committed to equal justice for all.

Former public defenders confirmed to lifetime judgeships (in order of confirmation)

- **Ketanji Brown Jackson** (D.C. Circuit; Supreme Court)
- **Deborah Boardman** (District of Maryland)
- **Candace Jackson-Akiwumi** (7th Circuit, Illinois)
- **Eunice Lee** (2nd Circuit, New York)
- **Angel Kelley** (District of Massachusetts)
- **Veronica Rossman** (10th Circuit, Colorado)
- **Margaret Strickland** (District of New Mexico)
- **Sarah Merriam** (District of Connecticut; 2nd Circuit, Connecticut)
- **Gustavo Gelpí** (1st Circuit, Puerto Rico)
- **Tana Lin** (Western District of Washington)
- **Jia Cobb** (District of D.C.)
- **Michael Nachmanoff** (Eastern District of Virginia)
- **Omar Williams** (District of Connecticut)
- **Linda Lopez** (Southern District of California)
- **Katherine Menendez** (District of Minnesota)
- **Charles Fleming** (Northern District of Ohio)
- **Victoria Calvert** (Northern District of Georgia)
- **Anne Traum** (District of Nevada)
- **Sarah Geraghty** (Northern District of Georgia)
- **Trina Thompson** (Northern District of California)
- **Elizabeth Hanes** (Eastern District of Virginia)
- **Lara Montecalvo** (1st Circuit, Rhode Island)
- **Arianna Freeman** (3rd Circuit, Pennsylvania)
- **Doris Pryor** (7th Circuit, Indiana)
- **Kelley Hodge** (Eastern District of Pennsylvania)
- **Mia Perez** (Eastern District of Pennsylvania)
- **Kai Scott** (Eastern District of Pennsylvania)
- **Adrienne Nelson** (District of Oregon)
- **Margaret Guzman** (District of Massachusetts)
- **Maria Araújo Kahn** (2nd Circuit, Connecticut)
- **Natasha Merle** (Eastern District of New York)
- **Brendan Hurson** (District of Maryland)
- **Kenly Kato** (Central District of California)
- **Shanlyn Park** (District of Hawaii)
- **Richard Federico** (10th Circuit, Kansas)

Progress on Native American representation on the federal bench

Since 2021, President Biden has appointed four Native American lifetime federal judges.

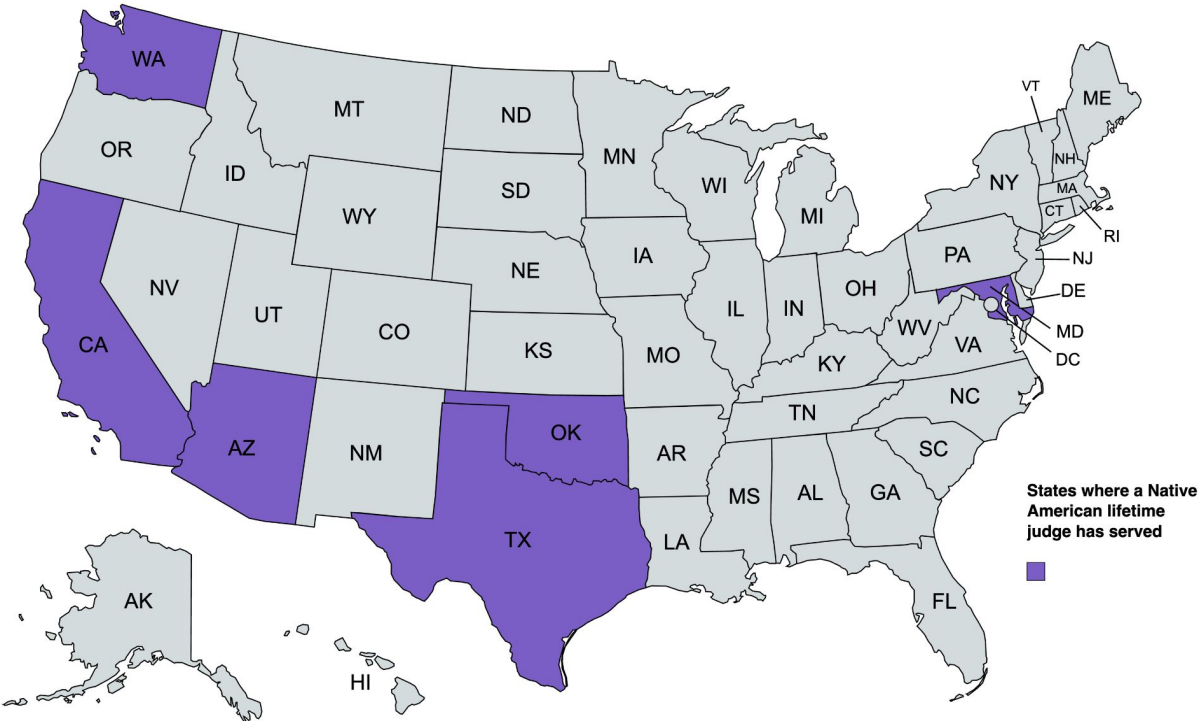
- **Lydia Kay Griggsby**, U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland
- **Lauren King**, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington
- **Sunshine Sykes**, U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- **Sara Hill**, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma

Judges Griggsby, King, and Sykes became the first Native American lifetime judges in Maryland, Washington state, and California, respectively. Hill, who is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, is now the first Native American woman to serve as a lifetime judge in Oklahoma.

Additionally, King is the first Muscogee Creek Nation citizen to serve as a lifetime judge, and Sykes is the first Navajo Nation citizen appointed to a lifetime federal judgeship.

Half of all Native American lifetime judges in our nation’s history — just eight total — have now been appointed by President Biden.

It is critically important that we see additional Native nominees and nominees with experience in Indian law. Native judges are woefully underrepresented on the federal bench, and they are necessary to ensure that our federal courts and judges understand issues facing the communities they serve.



Progress on LGBTQ representation on the federal bench

During the Biden administration, the Senate has confirmed nine openly LGBTQ judges to lifetime seats on the federal bench. These confirmations have been important and historic, but more progress is needed to ensure that our federal courts both reflect and represent the vast and rich diversity of our nation.

One pending nominee — Nicole Berner, nominated to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (Maryland) — will be the first openly LGBTQ judge on that court and the third openly LGBTQ woman to serve on a federal appellate court following President Biden’s appointment of Judge Beth Robinson and Judge Alison Nathan to the Second Circuit.

President Obama appointed 11 openly LGBTQ people to our federal courts during his eight years in office, making him the president who has added the most LGBTQ lifetime judges to the federal bench. President Biden is poised to surpass that record.

Currently, there are [21 openly LGBTQ lifetime judges](#) on our federal courts — but there are 870 authorized Article III federal judgeships. While [about 7 percent](#) of adults in the United States identify as LGBTQ, only 2.4 percent of our country’s lifetime federal judgeships are held by openly LGBTQ people.

Our country needs more openly LGBTQ judges who understand the real consequences that their decisions carry. This administration has made progress, but LGBTQ judges remain vastly underrepresented on our nation’s federal courts.

Openly LGBTQ Biden judicial appointees

- [Daniel Calabretta](#), **U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California**: First openly LGBTQ person to serve as a lifetime judge on this court
- [Gina Méndez-Miró](#), **U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico**: First openly LGBTQ person to serve as a lifetime judge on this court and anywhere within the First Circuit
- [Nina Morrison](#), **U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York**: Second openly LGBTQ person to serve as a lifetime judge on this court
- [Alison Nathan](#), **U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit** (New York): Second openly LGBTQ woman to serve on any federal appellate court in the nation
- [Casey Pitts](#), **U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California**: First openly LGBTQ person (at the time of confirmation) to serve as a lifetime judge on this court
- [Ana Reyes](#), **U.S. District Court for the District of D.C.**: First openly LGBTQ person and first Latina to serve as a lifetime judge on this court
- [Beth Robinson](#), **U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit** (Vermont): First openly LGBTQ woman to serve on any federal appellate court in the nation
- [Charlotte Sweeney](#), **U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado**: First openly LGBTQ woman to serve on any federal district court west of the Mississippi River, including any court within the Tenth Circuit
- [Jamar Walker](#), **U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia**: First openly LGBTQ person to serve as a lifetime judge in Virginia and anywhere within the Fourth Circuit

Progress on AANHPI representation on the federal bench

President Biden has appointed 29 AANHPI lifetime judges, including 20 AANHPI women. This has included brilliant civil rights lawyers like Jennifer Sung (Ninth Circuit), Roopali Desai (Ninth Circuit), Cindy Chung (Third Circuit), Dale Ho (Southern District of New York), and Tana Lin (Western District of Washington), in addition to former public defenders like Myong Joun (District of Massachusetts), Mia Perez (Eastern District of Pennsylvania), and Kenly Kato (Central District of California).

These confirmations also included our nation's first Muslim lifetime judges. In 2021, Zahid Quraishi, the child of Pakistani immigrants, was confirmed to the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey to become the first Article III Muslim judge. In 2023, civil rights lawyer Nusrat Choudhury was confirmed to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York — becoming the first Muslim woman and first Bangladeshi American to serve as a lifetime judge. Two additional Muslim nominees — Adeel Mangi for the Third Circuit and Mustafa Kasubhai for the District of Oregon — are pending before the Senate. Importantly, Mangi will be the first Muslim American confirmed to our federal appellate courts.

In November 2023, the Senate also confirmed Judge Shanlyn Park to the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii, making her the first Native Hawaiian woman — and fifth Native Hawaiian person — to ever serve as a lifetime judge.

We urge the White House and our senators to continue building on this critical progress.



Progress on Black representation on the federal bench

President Biden has appointed 53 Black judges — including 33 Black women — who are now serving lifetime appointments on the federal bench. This includes the confirmation of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, first to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit followed by her historic ascension to the U.S. Supreme Court.

During this administration, the Senate has confirmed 14 Black judges to federal appellate courts, including 13 Black women. Before President Biden, only eight Black women had ever served at this level of our federal judiciary. These 13 appellate court confirmations include:

Nancy Abudu, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. Judge Abudu is the first Black woman and first Black judge from Georgia to serve on this court.

DeAndrea Benjamin, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Judge Benjamin is the second woman of color to serve on this court.

J. Michelle Childs, U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Judge Childs is the fourth Black woman to serve on this court.

Tiffany Cunningham, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Judge Cunningham is the first Black judge to serve on this court.

Stephanie Dawkins Davis, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Judge Davis is the first Black woman from Michigan to serve on this court.

Dana Douglas, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Judge Douglas is the first woman of color to serve on this court.

Arianna Freeman, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Judge Freeman is the first woman of color to serve on this court.

Ketanji Brown Jackson, U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Before her elevation to the Supreme Court, Justice Jackson was the third Black woman to serve on this court.

Candace Jackson-Akiwumi, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Judge Jackson-Akiwumi is the second judge of color to serve on this court.

Eunice Lee, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Judge Lee is the second Black woman to serve on this court.

Tamika Montgomery-Reeves, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Judge Montgomery-Reeves is the first woman of color from Delaware to serve on this court.

Doris Pryor, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Judge Pryor is the first Black judge from Indiana to serve on this court.

Holly Thomas, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Judge Thomas is the first Black woman from California to serve on this court.



Confirmed judges supported by The Leadership Conference

Supreme Court

- [Ketanji Brown Jackson](#), U.S. Supreme Court

Circuit Court

- [Nancy Abudu](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit (Georgia)
- [Rachel Bloomekatz](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (Ohio)
- [J. Michelle Childs](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit
- [Cindy Chung](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (Pennsylvania)
- [Stephanie Davis](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (Michigan)
- [Ana de Alba](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (California)
- [Roopali Desai](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Arizona)
- [Arianna Freeman](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (Pennsylvania)
- [Brad Garcia](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit
- [Gustavo Gelpí](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit (Puerto Rico)
- [Ketanji Brown Jackson](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit
- [Candace Jackson-Akiwumi](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (Illinois)
- [Lucy Koh](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (California)
- [Eunice Lee](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (New York)

- [John Lee](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (Illinois)
- [Salvador Mendoza](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Washington)
- [Sarah Merriam](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (Connecticut)
- [Lara Montecalvo](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit (Rhode Island)
- [Alison Nathan](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (New York)
- [Myrna Pérez](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (New York)
- [Julie Rikelman](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit (Massachusetts)
- [Beth Robinson](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (Vermont)
- [Veronica Rossman](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit (Colorado)
- [Jennifer Sung](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Oregon)
- [Holly Thomas](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (California)

District Court

- [Daniel Calabretta](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California
- [Tiffany Cartwright](#), U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington
- [Nusrat Choudhury](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York
- [Jessica Clarke](#), U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York
- [Jia Cobb](#), U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia
- [Jeffrey Cummings](#), U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
- [Susan DeClercq](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- [David Estudillo](#), U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington

- [Margaret Garnett](#), U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York
- [Sarah Geraghty](#), U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia
- [Margaret Guzman](#), U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts
- [Elizabeth Hanes](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
- [Sara Hill](#), U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma
- [Dale Ho](#), U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York
- [Kelley Hodge](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- [Myong Joun](#), U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts
- [Lauren King](#), U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington
- [Rita Lin](#), U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- [Tana Lin](#), U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington
- [Nancy Maldonado](#), U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
- [Araceli Martínez-Olguín](#), U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- [Natasha Merle](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York
- [Nina Morrison](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York
- [Michael Nachmanoff](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
- [Adrienne Nelson](#), U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon
- [Shanlyn Park](#), U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii
- [Mia Perez](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- [Casey Pitts](#), U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- [Mónica Ramírez Almadani](#), U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- [Kai Scott](#), U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- [Margaret Strickland](#), U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico
- [Charlotte Sweeney](#), U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado
- [David Urias](#), U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico
- [Hernán Vera](#), U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- [Jamal Whitehead](#), U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington



Pending nominees supported by The Leadership Conference

Circuit Court

- [Nicole Berner](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (Maryland)
- [Adeel Mangi](#), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (New Jersey)

District Court

- [Todd Edelman](#), U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia
- [Marion Gaston](#), U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California
- [Mustafa Kasubhai](#), U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon
- [Eumi Lee](#), U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- [Sarah Russell](#), U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut

Moving forward

In order to build a judiciary dedicated to equal justice, we must ensure that all federal judicial vacancies are filled with qualified nominees committed to civil and human rights. We expect and demand that the Senate will return in 2024 prepared to confirm the exceptional nominees who were awaiting votes in 2023.

And with nearly 100 judicial vacancies across the country, we also call on the Senate and the Biden administration to make diversity a continued priority and support additional diverse nominees, including more Latino and Latina nominees, Native American nominees, LGBTQ nominees, and nominees with disabilities. Additionally, we urge senators and the White House to select nominees who have significant experience in civil rights law, such as economic justice, reproductive rights, LGBTQ equality, disability rights, and voting rights.

We must also work to modernize our courts so that our federal judiciary can fairly and more effectively administer justice. Congress must pass legislation that modernizes and reforms our courts, including legislation on ethics reforms, such as extension of the Code of Conduct for United States Judges to apply to Supreme Court justices, and further transparency measures and court structure reforms such as expanding the number of authorized judgeships for circuit and district courts. With many courts burdened by exceptionally high caseloads, delays are compromising access to justice for people across the country. It is necessary for Congress to authorize new circuit court and district court judgeships to meet our current needs. In addition, we urge Congress to consider other structural reforms to the Supreme Court.