



Nominations

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Nominations

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Noteworthy

Executive Nominations

Judicial Nominations and Confirmations

Judicial Nominations

For information about the Supreme Court, click here.

Nominations Hearings

Judicial nominations for all Article III courts that are sent to the Senate for consideration by the President are referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. These include nominations for the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Courts of Appeals, U.S. District Courts, and the Court of International Trade.

Pursuant to the Constitution, nominations for the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeals and District Courts are made by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Potential nominees are sometimes identified and recommended by members of Congress. Nominees confirmed by the Senate are appointed for lifetime terms. After a nomination is received by the Senate and referred to the Judiciary Committee, the Committee typically conducts a confirmation hearing for each nominee. Before a hearing can be scheduled in the Committee, however, nominees are expected to complete a comprehensive questionnaire. Senators from the nominee's home state are also invited to participate in the process. They are provided a "blue slip" by the Committee, by which they can signal their support for, or opposition to, a Committee hearing to learn more about the nominee's background and experience. It is important to note, however, that the return of a positive "blue slip" is not a commitment by either home state Senator to support or oppose, a pending nomination. The American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary also provides an evaluation of the professional qualifications of a judicial nominee. These ratings provide an evaluation of a nominee's integrity, professional competence and judicial temperament. They are not an evaluation of a nominee's philosophy or ideology.

During a hearing, judicial nominees engage in a question and answer session with members of the Judiciary Committee. After the hearing, Committee members may send written follow-up questions to the nominee. After the completion of any follow-up questions, a nomination can then be listed for Committee consideration during an Executive Business Meeting. Should the Committee order a nomination reported, the nomination is placed on the Senate's Executive Calendar where it would await consideration by the full Senate. If a majority of the Senate votes in favor of a nomination, the President is notified of the Senate's action, and the nomination is confirmed.

There are a total of 875 Article III judgeships nationwide. New judgeships are established through legislation proposed, approved and enacted by Congress. There are 13 judicial circuits in the United States, each with a U.S. Court of Appeals. Within the 13 judicial circuits there are 89 districts. Pending cases in federal court originate first in the district courts. Following a ruling by the district courts, a defendant or plaintiff may appeal the ruling to the Appellate Court. In a limited number of cases, the Supreme Court decides to consider a case following a decision by the Appellate Court. The Supreme Court begins its term on the first Monday in October, and typically adjourns in June.

For more information about judicial nominations, judicial vacancies, and the confirmation process, visit the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

- 112th Congress: Confirmations
- 111th Congress: Confirmations
- 110th Congress: Confirmations
- 109th Congress: Confirmations
- 108th Congress: Confirmations
- 107th Congress: Confirmations
- 112th Congress: Nomination Materials
- 111th Congress: Nomination Materials

Did You Know? Seven members of the Senate Judiciary Committee have also served as Attorney General of the United States: John MacPherson Berrien (1829-1931), Felix Grundy (1838-1839), John Jordan Crittenden (1841, 1850-1855), Augustus Hill Garland (1885-1889), Philander Chase Knox (1901-1904), James Howard McGrath (1949-1952), and John Ashcroft (2001-2005).

Webcasts

03/03/2011 10:00 AM
Executive Business Meeting

03/02/2011 02:45 PM
TIME CHANGE--Judicial Nominations

03/02/2011 10:00 AM
Helping Law Enforcement Find Missing Children

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