



Senator Butler on the Judiciary and Confirming Qualified Judges

As a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Laphonza Butler has made it a priority to confirm qualified federal judges who reflect the diversity of the American people. She has voted to confirm 66 judges and worked to fill four vacancies in California, helping to surpass the achievements of previous administrations. This group of judges includes individuals with backgrounds in public defense, civil rights, and labor, bringing a breadth of experience that is essential for a judiciary tasked with addressing the complex legal challenges of today.

Diversity in the Judiciary

Under Senator Butler's leadership, **64% of the confirmed judges have been women, and 62% have been people of color.** These confirmations have significantly strengthened the judicial branch by bringing a broad range of perspectives and experiences to the bench. A diverse judiciary helps build trust in the legal system by showing that the courts are accessible to all individuals, regardless of race, gender, or background.

- On May 22, 2024, [Judge Dena Coggins](#) was Senator Butler's first judicial nominee [to be confirmed](#) to the federal bench. Judge Coggins previously served as the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court of the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, having served in that position since 2023 and as a Superior Court judge since 2021. **Judge Coggins is the first Black woman to ever serve on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District.**
- Senator Butler secured the confirmation of [Judge Michelle Court](#) for California's Central District. Judge Court's confirmation marked an important milestone as she became only the **third Black woman actively serving** as an Article III judge in California's Central District and the **fifth in the court's history.** Judge Court's extensive legal career, which includes her work in civil rights and public interest law, exemplifies the type of judicial expertise that Senator Butler has championed.

The following two nominees were reported favorably out of the Judiciary Committee and the Senate invoked cloture on their nominations the week of November 18, 2024.

- **Judge Anne Hwang**, Nominee for the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. Judge Hwang has been a judge on the Superior Court of California in Los Angeles County since 2019. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Hwang served as a Deputy Federal Public Defender in the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Central District of California from 2006 to 2018, becoming Chief Deputy Federal Public Defender in 2018. If confirmed, Judge Hwang would be the **first Korean American to serve as a federal district judge** for the Central District of California, home to more than 330,000 people of Korean heritage, the largest population in the country

- **Judge Noël Wise**, Nominee for the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. Judge Wise has been a judge on the Superior Court of California in Alameda County since 2014, and a supervising judge since 2019. Judge Wise has a particular expertise in environmental law, and she has written articles on a variety of topics, including importance of judicial diversity.

Addressing Judicial Understaffing

Recognizing the need to address case backlogs and improve the efficiency of the judiciary, Senator Butler cosponsored the **Judicial Understaffing Delays Getting Emergencies Solved Act of 2024 “JUDGES Act of 2024” (S. 4199)**. This bipartisan legislation, introduced by Senators Todd Young (R-IN) and Chris Coons (D-DE), would add **21 additional federal judgeships in California**, where judicial vacancies have resulted in delayed justice for many residents. On August 1, 2024, the Senate passed the JUDGES Act by unanimous consent, and the bill is awaiting consideration by the U.S. House of Representatives. By increasing the number of judges, this legislation aims to reduce case backlogs, ensuring that justice is delivered more efficiently and effectively across the country.