

U.S. District Court Nominees Confirmed During the 117th Congress (2021-2022)

January 5, 2023

This Insight provides information and analysis related to [U.S. district court](#) nominees confirmed during the 117th Congress (which also corresponds, approximately, to President Biden's first two calendar years in office).

For some of the information presented below for the 117th Congress, comparative data is also provided for the 115th Congress (2017-2018), 111th Congress (2009-2010), and 107th Congress (2001-2002). These three Congresses correspond approximately to the first two calendar years, respectively, of the Trump, Obama, and George W. Bush presidencies. The data provided below do not include appointees confirmed to [territorial district courts](#).

Another Insight provides similar information about U.S. circuit court nominees.

Number and Percentage of Nominees Who Were Confirmed

During the 117th Congress, President Biden nominated 104 individuals to U.S. district court judgeships. Of the 104 individuals, 68 (65%) were confirmed. In the past, individuals not confirmed during a particular Congress were often renominated and confirmed during a subsequent Congress.

During the 115th Congress, President Trump nominated 112 individuals to district court judgeships, of which 53 (47%) were confirmed.

During the 111th Congress, President Obama nominated 78 individuals to district court judgeships, of which 44 (56%) were confirmed.

During the 107th Congress, President George W. Bush nominated 98 individuals, of which 83 (85%) were confirmed.

Gender of Confirmed Nominees

As shown by **Figure 1**, 51 (75%) of the 68 district court nominees confirmed during the 117th Congress were women and 17 (25%) were men.

Congressional Research Service

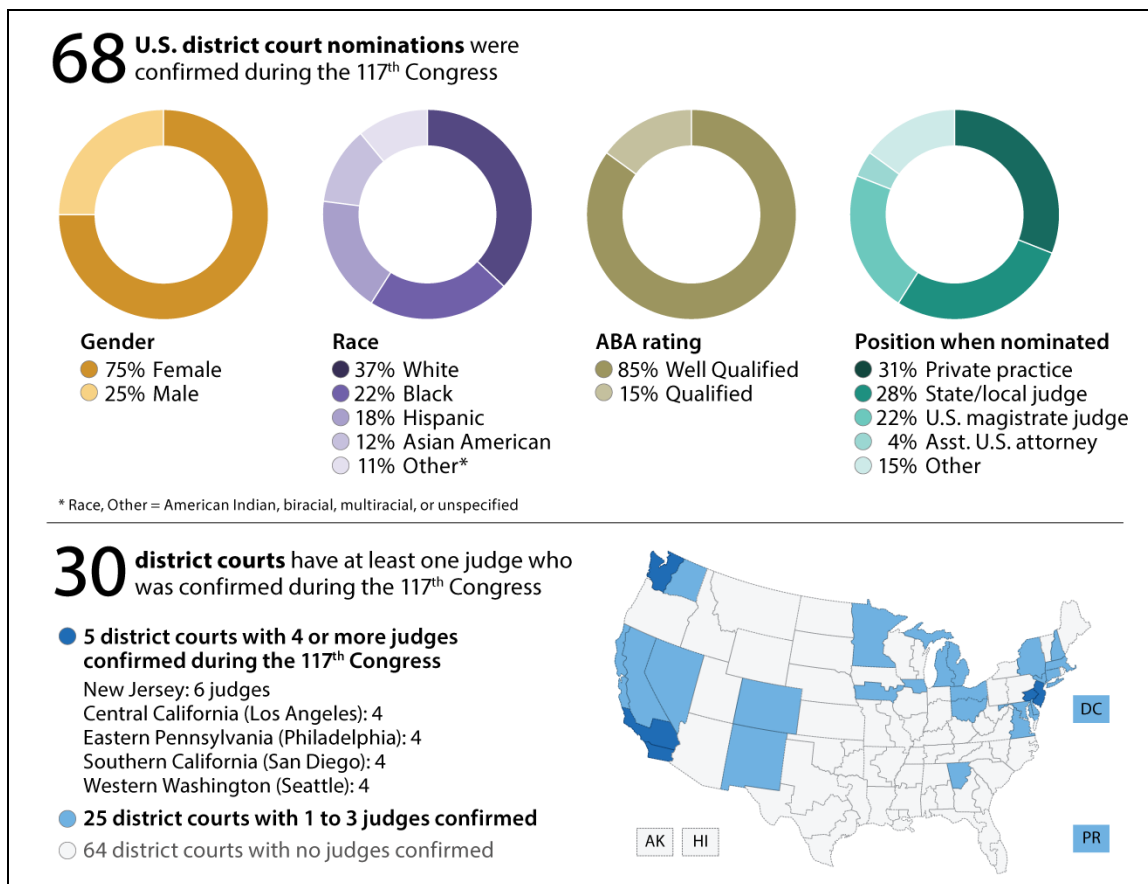
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During the 115th Congress, 14 (26%) of 53 district court nominees confirmed were women and 39 (74%) were men. During the 111th Congress, 24 (55%) of 44 district court nominees confirmed were women and 20 (45%) were men. During the 107th Congress, 17 (20%) of 83 district court nominees confirmed were women and 66 (80%) were men.

Overall, as of January 1, 2023, less than 40% of *all* active U.S. district court judges were women. Specifically, 224 (37%) of 605 active district court judges were women and 381 (63%) were men.

Figure 1. Characteristics of U.S. District Court Nominees Confirmed During the 117th Congress (2021-2022)



Source: Congressional Research Service compilation of public data.

Race of Confirmed Nominees

Figure 1 also shows the racial background of the 68 district court nominees confirmed during the 117th Congress. The racial categories used in this report “generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and [are] not an attempt” by CRS “to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically.” Additionally, for the purpose of this Insight, the Hispanic category is treated as a distinct nonwhite category. However, individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

Of the nominees confirmed during the 117th Congress, a plurality were White—specifically, 25 (37%) of 68 nominees. Of the remaining nominees, 15 (22%) were Black; 12 (18%) were Hispanic; 8 (12%) were Asian American; 2 (3%) were American Indian; and 6 (9%) were biracial.

During the 115th Congress, 49 (92%) of 53 district court nominees confirmed were White; 1 (2%) was Black; 1 (2%) was Hispanic; and 2 (4%) were Asian American.

During the 111th Congress, 26 (59%) of 44 district court nominees confirmed were White; 11 (25%) were Black; 2 (5%) were Hispanic; and 5 (11%) were Asian American.

During the 107th Congress, 71 (86%) of 83 district court nominees confirmed were White; 6 (7%) were Black; and 6 (7%) were Hispanic.

Overall, as of January 1, 2023, less than one-third of *all* active U.S. district court judges were nonwhite. Specifically, 180 (30%) of 605 active district court judges were nonwhite and 425 (70%) were White.

American Bar Association Ratings of Confirmed Nominees

Of the 68 district court nominees confirmed during the 117th Congress, 58 (85%) received a rating of *Well Qualified by the American Bar Association* and 10 (15%) received a rating of *Qualified*.

Of the 53 district court nominees confirmed during the 115th Congress, 33 (62%) received a rating of *Well Qualified*, 18 (34%) received a rating of *Qualified*, and 2 (4%) received a rating of *Not Qualified*.

Of the 44 district court nominees confirmed during the 111th Congress, 33 (75%) received a rating of *Well Qualified* and 11 (25%) received a rating of *Qualified*.

Of the 83 district court nominees confirmed during the 107th Congress, 58 (70%) received a rating of *Well Qualified*, 24 (29%) received a rating of *Qualified*, and 1 (1%) received a rating of *Not Qualified*.

Office Held or Employment at Time of Nomination for Confirmed Nominees

Figure 1 shows the type of employment or the office held at the time of nomination for confirmed nominees during the 117th Congress. Of the 68 confirmed nominees, 21 (31%) were attorneys in private practice; 19 (28%) were state or local judges; 15 (22%) were *U.S. magistrate judges*; 3 (4%) were *assistant U.S. attorneys*; and 10 (15%) had a different type of employment. For example, *Julien X. Neals* served as county counsel and the acting county administrator for Bergen County, New Jersey, at the time of his nomination to the *U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey*.

Nominees Confirmed by United States Judicial District

The map included with **Figure 1** shows the specific *judicial districts* to which district court nominees were confirmed during the 117th Congress. Overall, nominees were confirmed to 30 different judicial districts—or 33% of the nation's 91 districts (excluding three territorial districts).

The five districts with the greatest number of confirmed district court nominees during the 117th Congress were the *District of New Jersey* (6 nominees); *Central District of California* (4 nominees); *Eastern District of Pennsylvania* (4 nominees); *Southern District of California* (4 nominees); and *Western District of Washington* (4 nominees). Altogether, the 22 nominees confirmed to these 5 districts represent nearly one-third of the 68 nominees confirmed during the 117th Congress.

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