

United States District Court
for the District of Columbia
Washington, DC 20001

Chambers of
Chief Judge
Royce C. Lamberth
United States District Judge

November 4, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Judicial Vacancies - United States District Court for the District of Columbia

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

On behalf of the judges of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, I request that the Senate act soon to fill the vacancies that exist at our Court.

Of our 15 authorized judgeships, we currently have four vacancies¹. One has been vacant since January 2007. With the additional vacancy that will result from Judge Ricardo M. Urbina's assumption of senior status, effective January 31, 2011, this Court faces the prospect of having only 10 of its 15 authorized judgeships filled. The severe impact of this situation already is being felt and will only increase over time. The challenging caseload that our Court regularly handles includes many involving national security issues, as well as other issues of national significance. A large number of these complex, high-profile cases demand significant time and attention from each of our judges.

¹ Judge Gladys Kessler assumed senior status January 22, 2007; Judge Thomas F. Hogan assumed senior status May 1, 2008; Judge Paul L. Friedman assumed senior status December 31, 2009; and Judge James Robertson retired June 6, 2010.

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Without a complement of new judges, it is difficult to foresee how our remaining active judges will be able to keep up with the heavy volume of cases that faces us. A 33 percent vacancy ratio is quite extraordinary.

Two nominees (Beryl Howell and Robert Wilkins) have been reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and await floor votes; two nominees (James Boasberg and Amy Jackson) have had their hearings and hopefully will soon be reported out of Committee.

We hope the Senate will act quickly to fill this Court's vacancies so the citizens of the District of Columbia and the Federal Government and other litigants who appear before us continue to enjoy the high quality of justice they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Royce C. Lamberth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Royce C. Lamberth
Chief Judge

cc: Senator Patrick J. Leahy
Senator Jeff Sessions
Attorney General Eric Holder
White House Counsel Robert Bauer
Director James Duff