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Status of Article III Judgeships - Judicial Business 2015

On September 30, 2015, a total of 9 vacancies existed among the 179 judgeships authorized for the U.S. courts of appeals. Six of these vacancies had been unfilled for more than 18 months. One year earlier, the appeals courts had 10 vacancies, 2 of them for more than 18 months.

On September 30, 2015, a total of 58 vacancies existed among the 677 positions authorized in the U.S. district courts, 8 more than reported at the end of 2014. Thirteen of the vacancies had existed for more than 18 months, the same number as one year earlier. The majority of the vacancies arose when judges took senior status.

Thirty-one judicial emergencies were identified in the courts of appeals and district courts on September 30, 2015—12 more than one year earlier. For the courts of appeals, which had 5 judicial emergencies, a judicial emergency is defined as any vacancy where adjusted filings (i.e., filings excluding reinstated cases and weighting pro se appeals as one-third of a case) per panel are in excess of 700, or any vacancy in existence more than 18 months where adjusted filings are between 500 to 700 per panel. For the district courts, which had 26 judicial emergencies, a judicial emergency is defined as a vacancy of any duration where weighted filings per judgeship are in excess of 600 or any vacancy longer than 18 months in a district court with weighted filings between 430 and 600 per judgeship, or any vacancy in a district court with more than one authorized judgeship and only one active judge.

In addition to active judges, 84 senior circuit judges with staff participating in appeals decisions were serving the Judiciary at the end of the fiscal year, 5 fewer than in 2014. The U.S. district courts reported 396 senior judges with staff, 10 more than had been serving one year earlier.

For information on the status of judgeship positions since 2011, see [Table 11](#).

TABLE 11
STATUS OF ARTICLE III JUDGESHIP POSITIONS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2011 - 2015

Year	U.S. Courts of Appeals			U.S. District Courts		
	Authorized Judgeships	Vacancies	Senior Judges ¹	Authorized Judgeships	Vacancies	Senior Judges ²

2011	179	17	84	677 ³	67	341
2012	179	17	86	677	66	354
2013	179	17	89	677	75	346
2014	179	10	89	677	50	386
2015	179	9	84	677	58	396

¹ Senior judges who participated in appeals dispositions and were authorized for staff.

² Senior judges authorized for staff.

³ In 2011, the total number of authorized judgeships in the U.S. district courts decreased by one position when a temporary judgeship in the Northern District of Ohio lapsed after a judge there was elevated to the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

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