



OFFICE
OF THE
PRESIDENT

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SHARON R. LÓPEZ

October 6, 2017

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

A judicial emergency impacting the quality of justice and delaying the expeditious trial of civil and criminal cases currently exists in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Of the 10 judgeships authorized by law for the Western District of Pennsylvania, there are currently four vacancies. Three of these vacancies have existed since 2013 and the other since last year. In two of the court's three divisions, Erie and Johnstown have no active Article III District Judge in residence. In addition, three senior judges recently transferred to inactive or retired status and no longer hear cases.

This judicial crisis will worsen next month when an additional judge in the Western District assumes senior status, thereby creating a fifth vacancy.

As the state's largest voluntary association of lawyers, the Pennsylvania Bar Association is calling on U.S. Senators Bob Casey and Pat Toomey to take prompt action with you to have qualified individuals nominated and confirmed to fill these vacancies.

Senators Casey and Toomey have previously made recommendations from the list of potential nominees recommended to them by their bipartisan Judicial Selection Committee. The Committee for the Western District did make recommendations earlier this year to the Senators, but no nominations have been made.

If the Pennsylvania Bar Association can be of any assistance in the process to fill these vacancies, please reach out to us at the contact information included with this letter.

Thank you.

Most respectfully,

Sharon R. López
President

c: Senator Bob Casey
Senator Pat Toomey
Honorable Joy Flowers Conti
Honorable D. Brooks Smith
Hal D. Coffey, Esq., Allegheny County Bar Assn. President
Craig Murphey, Esq., Erie County Bar Assn. President
Leonard P. Vigna, Esq., Cambria County Bar Assn. President