

## Biden's Judicial Nominees Subramanian, Schopler, and Ballou Confirmed by Senate Amidst Momentum Slowdown



The United States Senate has confirmed three more of President Joe Biden's judicial nominees, even as the push to reshape the federal judiciary has shown signs of slowing. This comes after the confirmation of more than 100 judges, a top priority for Senate Democrats, looking to surpass the 234 justices and judges confirmed during former Republican President Donald Trump's four years in office.

The latest nominee to win approval was Arun Subramanian, a litigator at Susman Godfrey law firm, with a 59-37 vote. Subramanian is set to become the first South Asian judge to serve on Manhattan's federal court. Hours before the confirmation of Subramanian, the Senate voted to confirm two federal magistrate judges, Andrew Schopler in San Diego and Robert Ballou in Roanoke, Virginia, to positions as life-tenured district court judges.

Schopler, confirmed with a 56-39 vote, was previously a public defender like several of Biden's other nominees. Ballou, confirmed with a 59-37 vote, was a partner at the law firm Johnson, Ayers & Matthews before joining the bench.

Since the beginning of 2021, the Senate has confirmed 114 of Biden's judicial picks. Most of these nominees have been women or people of color, such as Subramanian, a former clerk to now-deceased Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Biden currently has 37 more judicial nominees awaiting Senate consideration.

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The Senate Judiciary Committee has yet to schedule any hearings in March to consider nominees. Only one hearing will likely be held as only four nominees for lifetime judicial positions have yet to go before the panel. The process of nominating and confirming judges appears to be slowing, with Senate absences sometimes complicating the process.

Progressive advocates have argued that the Senate's "blue slip" custom, which requires district court nominees to have the support of their home state senators, has impaired Biden's ability to nominate judges in states with two Republican senators and should be abandoned to speed up confirmations.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York championed Subramanian's nomination, calling the son of Indian immigrants "the epitome of the American dream and a history maker." He also noted that Subramanian is an expert in consumer protection with years of experience defending those injured by unfair, illegal practices.

It is important to note that the confirmation of judges is a crucial part of the political process, as they are appointed to life-long positions and have the power to shape the country's laws for decades. Biden's push to diversify the judiciary is seen by many as an essential step in ensuring that the law reflects the diversity of the American population.

Overall, confirming three more of President Biden's judicial nominees is a significant development, even as the process of nominating and confirming judges appears to be slowing. With 37 more nominees awaiting consideration, it remains to be seen how many more will be confirmed in the coming months. However, the push to reshape the federal judiciary will likely remain a key priority for Senate Democrats.