

Nusrat Choudhury Becomes First Muslim Female Federal Judge Confirmed by U.S. Senate



Nusrat Choudhury, a prominent civil rights lawyer, has made history as the first Bangladeshi-American and female Muslim federal judge in the United States. The U.S. Senate narrowly confirmed her nomination to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York on Thursday, with a vote of 50-49. Choudhury, who currently serves as the legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Illinois, brings a wealth of experience in racial justice and national security issues to her new role on the federal bench.

Choudhury's confirmation marks a significant milestone for diversity and representation in the judiciary system. Born to Bangladeshi parents, she is breaking barriers and paving the way for others from similar backgrounds to pursue careers in the legal field. Her appointment showcases the commitment of the U.S. government to fostering inclusivity and ensuring that the judiciary reflects the nation's rich diversity.

Before joining the ACLU of Illinois, Choudhury dedicated a significant portion of her professional career to the national ACLU. She focused on advocating for racial justice and addressing national security concerns during her tenure there. From 2018 to 2020, she served as the deputy director of the organization's racial justice program, contributing to its efforts in advancing equality and combating discrimination.

President Joe Biden nominated Choudhury for the federal bench in January 2022, recognizing her exceptional legal acumen and commitment to upholding justice. As a civil rights litigator, she has demonstrated her ability to approach legal issues with integrity, professionalism, and a deep respect for the rule of law. In a statement, top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer expressed confidence in Choudhury, emphasizing her readiness to administer justice fairly and impartially.

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However, Choudhury's confirmation process was not without challenges. Some Senate Republicans expressed concerns after she gave inconsistent answers regarding comments she may have made at a 2015 event at Princeton University. These comments allegedly addressed the issue of police killings of unarmed Black men. Choudhury later clarified her position in a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee, stating that the reported statement was inconsistent with her profound respect for law enforcement.

Choudhury's professional background also includes clerkships with esteemed judges. She served as a clerk for a judge on the Southern District of New York trial court, gaining valuable insight into the workings of the federal judiciary. Additionally, she clerked for the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals, which handles cases from federal courts in New York, Connecticut, and Vermont.

President Biden's appointment of Choudhury follows his historic nomination of U.S. District Judge Zahid Quraishi, who became the first Muslim judge in U.S. history. Quraishi's confirmation to the New Jersey federal trial court took place in 2021, marking another step toward increased diversity and representation within the judiciary system.

Nusrat Choudhury's confirmation as the first Bangladeshi-American and female Muslim federal judge in the United States is a momentous occasion. Her extensive experience in civil rights advocacy and her commitment to justice and equality make her a valuable addition to the federal bench. Choudhury's appointment underscores the importance of diverse perspectives in shaping legal decisions and reinforces the principles of fairness and inclusivity within the U.S. justice system. As she embarks on this historic role, Choudhury is poised to leave a lasting impact on the legal profession and inspire future generations of aspiring lawyers from underrepresented communities.