

## Biden's Nomination Spree Includes Historic First for Texas Trial Court Judgeship



President Joe Biden has announced his latest batch of judicial nominees after a pause of over two months, marking a significant step in his administration's efforts to fill federal court vacancies. Among the nominees is John Kazen, a U.S. magistrate judge based in the Southern District of Texas. This nomination holds particular significance as it represents Biden's first trial court nominee in Texas during his presidency.

John Kazen, a legal professional with a diverse background, previously established the law firm Kazen Meurer & Perez, specializing in real estate and litigation matters. With a substantial history in private practice and public service spanning three decades, Kazen's legal acumen and work ethic have been highlighted by supporters. His father had also served as a district court judge in the Southern District of Texas, adding a familial connection to the nomination.

Texas, a state with two Republican senators, presents a unique procedural requirement known as the "blue slip" custom. This custom mandates that a district court nominee from Texas must obtain approval from the state's senators, John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, for the nomination to proceed. Both senators have voiced their support for Kazen, citing his extensive experience and contributions to the legal field. Notably, Cornyn and Cruz had collaborated with the White House previously to facilitate the nomination of a Texas magistrate judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, an example of bipartisan cooperation.

The nomination of John Kazen comes at a crucial time as Texas is grappling with eight vacancies in its federal trial courts. This situation has led the federal judiciary's policymaking body to declare a "judicial emergency" in two districts due to the increased workload the existing judges face. The nomination of Kazen and others aims to address this pressing issue and ensure the smooth functioning of the federal court system in Texas.

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In addition to John Kazen, President Biden has nominated Colleen Holland for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York. Holland, who has been serving as special counsel to the chief judge of that court since 2021, brings her experience and legal insights to the nomination process. The list of nominees also includes Micah Smith, a federal prosecutor based in Hawaii, who has been selected for the U.S. District Court in the state. Another nominee, Ramona Manglona, has been renominated for a second 10-year term as chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory.

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The pace of judicial confirmations has been a focal point, with the Senate having confirmed a total of 140 federal judges nominated by President Biden. Notably, the 100th district court nominee was confirmed in June, showcasing the administration's commitment to fulfilling these roles. However, the pace has slightly slowed in recent months, partly due to the specific context of vacancies in states with two Republican senators.

President Biden's latest slate of judicial nominees demonstrates his administration's dedication to shaping the federal judiciary and ensuring its efficient operation. The nominations, including that of John Kazen, signify a step forward in addressing the vacancies and "judicial emergency" in Texas, while also emphasizing the importance of collaboration between the White House and senators from both parties in the nomination and confirmation process.

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