



THE BENCHLINE

Judicial Nominees

Last Tuesday, the Senate voted 51-45 (on a party-line basis) to confirm **Anna St. John for a lifetime appointment** to the federal bench for the Eastern District of Louisiana. The Senate has now confirmed 34 lifetime judges during President Trump's second term.

More than **two dozen organizations**, including the Alliance for Justice and advocacy groups across multiple issue areas, opposed St. John's nomination. Former **Fox News journalist Gretchen Carlson** also highlighted St. John's testimony opposing now-enacted legislation to end forced arbitration in cases involving sexual harassment and sexual assault. St. John spent much of her legal career leading the far-right Hamilton Lincoln Law Institute (HLLI), where she supported efforts to shield corporations from accountability for misconduct and to allow businesses to discriminate against LGBTQ+ individuals under the guise of religious freedom.

KATIE LANE	 <p>EXPERIENCE ONLY 9 YEARS</p> <p>DISCIPLINARY RECORD SANCTIONED BY JUDGE</p>
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KARA WESTERCAMP	 <p>EXPERIENCE TRUMP TRADE ADVISOR</p> <p>DISCIPLINARY RECORD ELECTION DENIER & JANUARY 6 DEFENDER</p>
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**LIFETIME
APPOINTMENTS.
LIFETIME
CONSEQUENCES.**

As of this writing, cloture hasn't yet been filed to proceed with Senate floor votes on the judicial nominations of Andrew Davis (Western District of Texas), John Shepherd (Western District of Arkansas), and Brian Lea (Western District of Tennessee). The Senate is currently too busy trying to pass the SAVE Act, which would further cut off access to the polls for already disenfranchised communities.

On Wednesday, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing featuring Trump's 10th slate of judicial nominees. In his opening **statement**, Ranking Member Richard Durbin (D-IL) noted, "After losing before the Supreme Court, he [Trump] wants to stack the courts, including the CIT [Court of International Trade], with MAGA loyalists who will rule in his favor." This slate includes **Kara Westercamp (Court of International Trade)**, **Katie Lane (District of Montana)**, and **Sheria Clarke (District of South Carolina)**. Lane has only practiced law for nine years, and during the hearing, questioning from Senators Coons (D-RI) and Schiff (D-CA) confirmed that Lane's direct trial experience consists of only one bench trial, one cross-examination, and one deposition.

Westercamp currently advises the Trump White House on tariffs and trade policy and has been nominated for a seat on the Court of International Trade, which hears civil cases involving U.S. trade and customs laws. Her political biases are well documented through **numerous tweets**, and retweets praising Trump, questioning the 2020 election results, and sympathizing with January 6 insurrectionists.

HOLDING

THE BENCHLINE

Last Monday, Judge Brian Murphy of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts dealt a crushing blow to Health Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr.'s plan to overhaul U.S. vaccine policy. Murphy held that Kennedy's efforts to entirely reconfigure the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) were unlawful under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Last June, Kennedy fired all 17 previous members of ACIP and replaced them with 13 loyalists, including several prominent anti-vaxxers with little to no vaccine expertise. Since ACIP's charter requires that its members have "expertise in the use of vaccines and vaccine research," Murphy reasoned that Kennedy's revamp made ACIP illegally unbalanced.

Murphy ruled that all ACIP's actions and votes since last June were **invalid**, including its recommendation that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention drastically cut the number of routinely recommended childhood vaccinations. His order also prevented ACIP from meeting this week to discuss COVID-19 vaccine **safety**. This decision represents a crucial victory for the medical community, temporarily halting some of the most dangerous aspects of Kennedy's assault on U.S. vaccine guidelines.



A BIDEN-APPOINTED JUDGE **HELD THE LINE**.
PUBLIC HEALTH IS PROTECTED — **FOR NOW**.

After an extended **confrontation** with the Trump administration, the federal judges on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey appointed a new U.S. Attorney. This resolution comes after months of unclear leadership and direction from the Department of Justice (DOJ), which **delayed numerous criminal cases**. The disruption began with Trump's illegal attempt to keep his former **personal lawyer**, Alina Habba, as U.S. Attorney beyond the allowed 120-day interim period.

After a federal judge removed Habba, the DOJ unprecedentedly attempted to assign its New Jersey office's leadership to **"a triumvirate"** of Trump cronies, a move also struck down as **unlawful**.

The conflict escalated **last Monday**, when Judge Zahid Quraishi **removed** federal prosecutor Mark Coyne from his courtroom and demanded that the triumvirate explain who was in charge. Quraishi criticized the DOJ's **handling of prosecutions**, stating it had "lost the confidence and the trust of this court . . . the New Jersey legal community, and . . . the public." With the court's rare decision to appoint a U.S. Attorney, some order may be restored.

IT ONLY TAKES

3.5%

OF A COUNTRY'S POPULATION
PROTESTING NON-VIOLENTLY TO
TOPPLE AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME.

Federal courts' increased willingness to push back against the Trump administration is encouraging, but the judiciary alone cannot prevent the country from moving closer to tyranny. Continued public advocacy is essential, and this weekend's **No Kings** protests offer an opportunity to do so. After all, it only takes **3.5%** of a population protesting nonviolently to topple an authoritarian government.

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