



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Senate Confirms Lauren J. King for Federal Judgeship in Western District of Washington

SAN FRANCISCO – The United States Senate today voted 55-44 to confirm President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.’s, nomination of Lauren J. King to serve as a U.S. district judge for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington. Upon taking her oath, King will be the first Native American federal judge in Washington state’s history, the second in the United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit, and only the fourth active Native American federal judge in the entire United States. King is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, which is located in Oklahoma.

King was nominated for the judgeship on May 12, 2021, and had her hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on June 9, 2021. The Senate Judiciary Committee reported her nomination to the Senate Floor on July 15, 2021. She fills a judgeship vacant since Jan. 27, 2016, when District Judge Robert S. Lasnik assumed senior status. King will maintain chambers in Seattle.

“We are honored and excited to have such a qualified and respected lawyer as Ms. King joining our bench,” said Chief Judge Ricardo S. Martinez of the Western District of Washington. This historic appointment by President Biden acknowledges that Washington state has 29 federally recognized Native American tribes that look to our court to protect their rights and resolve disputes. Her confirmation by the Senate not only serves to increase public confidence in the impartiality and inclusiveness of the federal courts but also enhances the administration of justice in our community,” Chief Judge Martinez added.

King is a partner at Foster Garvey, P.C. (formerly Foster Pepper PLLC) in Seattle, where she has practiced since 2012. She chairs the firm’s Native American practice group. King served on the firm’s Executive Committee in 2017 and 2019 and on the Compensation Committee from 2018 to 2019. She also has served as a pro tem appellate judge for the Northwest Intertribal Court System since 2013. Previously, King was an associate at Byrnes Keller Cromwell LLP and K&L Gates LLP (formerly Preston Gates & Ellis LLP) in Seattle.

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Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, King received her Juris Doctor in 2008 from the University of Virginia School of Law, where she was editor-in-chief of the Virginia Journal of Law and Technology. She received her Bachelor of Arts, with distinction, from the University of Washington in 2004.

King has devoted substantial time to serving her community. She has served on the board of the Northwest Tribal Court Judges Association since 2015. King has been a member of the Mvskoke Reservation Protection Commission since 2020 and served as a board member of the Seattle Indian Health Board from 2017 to 2019. In 2020, Governor Jay Inslee appointed her as commissioner on the Washington State Gambling Commission. King also taught Federal Indian Law at Seattle University School of Law as an adjunct professor.

The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington had 3,626 new case filings in calendar year 2020 ending December 31. The court is authorized seven judgeships, three of which are currently vacant.

Appointed under Article III of the U.S. Constitution, federal district court judges are nominated by the president, confirmed by the Senate and serve lifetime appointments upon good behavior.

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