



# United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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## NEWS RELEASE

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## **Senate Confirms Micah W. J. Smith for Federal Judgeship in District of Hawaii**

SAN FRANCISCO – The United States Senate today voted 57-41 to confirm President Joseph R. Biden Jr.’s nomination of Assistant U.S. Attorney Micah W. J. Smith to serve as a U.S. district judge for the District of Hawaii.

“The President, in consultation with our two Senators, could not have selected anyone more qualified — and humble — than Micah Smith. We look forward to working with him for years to come,” said Chief U.S. District Judge Derrick K. Watson.

Smith was nominated for the judgeship by President Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Sept. 11, 2023, and had his hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on October 4. His nomination was placed on the Senate Executive Calendar on October 26. Following his oath, he will fill a judgeship that will be vacant when U.S. District Judge J. Michael Seabright assumes senior status on Jan. 30, 2024. Smith will maintain chambers in Honolulu.

Smith has served since 2018 as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Criminal Division in the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Hawaii, where he currently is the chief of appeals and legal strategy since 2022, the criminal civil rights coordinator since 2021 and the deputy chief of criminal division since 2019. He served as the project safe neighborhoods coordinator in 2019 and was co-chief of Violent Crime and Drug Section in the office from 2018 to 2019. Before joining the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the District of Hawaii, he served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, where he was co-chief of the Violent and Organized Crime Unit, 2017-2018; a member of the Department of Justice Human Resource Review Committee, 2017-2018; a DNA liaison, 2017-2018; the deputy chief of Violent and Organized Crime Unit, 2016-2017; and the acting deputy chief of appeals, 2016-2017. Previously, Smith lectured at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, William S. Richardson School of Law, in fall 2020 and at Columbia Law School in fall 2017. He engaged in private practice as an associate then as counsel for O’Melveny & Myers LLP in Washington, D.C., from 2008 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2012, respectively.

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Born in Mill Hall, Pennsylvania, Smith received his Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude, from Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania in 2003 and his Juris Doctor in 2006, magna cum laude, from Harvard Law School, where he was the notes editor of the Harvard Law Review. He studied for a semester abroad at Universidad Nacional in Costa Rica in 2002. Following law school he clerked for the Honorable Guido Calabresi of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit from 2006 to 2007 then clerked for the Honorable David H. Souter of the U.S. Supreme Court from 2007 to 2008.

Smith has been a board member of the Hawaii Justice Foundation since 2019 and a board member since 2022 of the African American Lawyers Association of Hawaii, where he served as vice president from 2021 to 2022.

Smith was recognized for his outstanding service and received awards, including the Director's Award, Outstanding Investigation, in 2022 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces; the Distinguished Service Award, U.S. Attorney General, in 2019; the David Margolis Award for Exceptional Service, U.S. Attorney General, in 2017; and the Federal Prosecutor Award, Federal Law Enforcement Foundation, in 2017.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii had 659 new case filings in fiscal year 2023. The court is authorized four judgeships, which includes a temporary judgeship and currently has one future vacancy.

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

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