

Opening Statement of Senator Mazie K. Hirono
Judicial Nominations Hearing
November 6, 2013

There are currently 92 district and circuit vacancies in the Federal Judiciary. More than 10% of lower federal courts are now or will soon be vacant.

Our federal district and appellate courts hear tens of thousands of cases per year ranging from criminal prosecutions to complex environmental and consumer protection litigation.

In order for Americans to receive swift access to justice, these vacancies must be filled.

Because federal judges are required to give priority to criminal cases over civil ones, and the number of criminal cases has increased 70% in the past decade, judges are forced to delay civil cases, often for years. This means long delays for American individuals and businesses seeking justice.

This hearing is an important step in the process of working to confirm judges in an expeditious manner and ensuring that the courts are able to do the work the American people require of them.

I look forward to the Senate's swift action on the President's nominations.