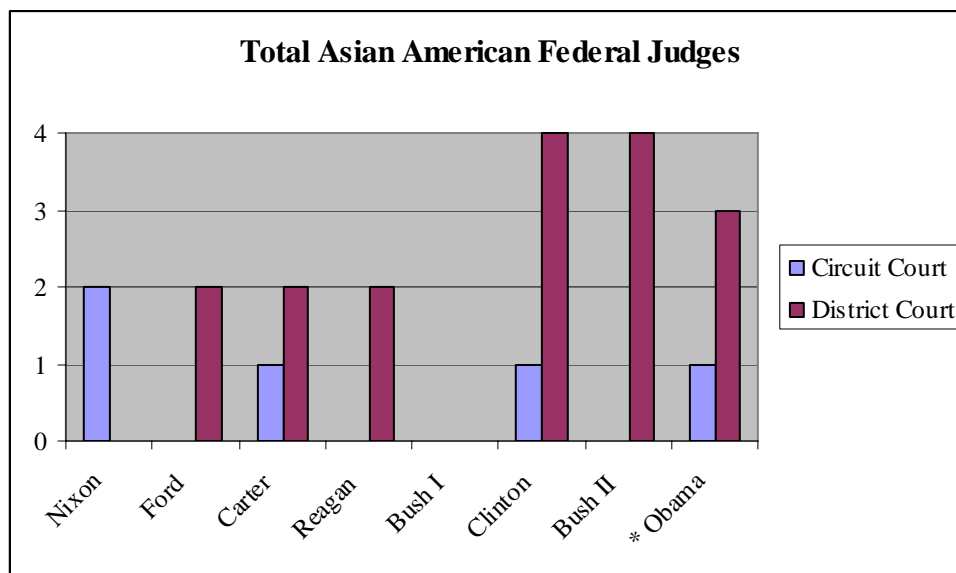




Asian American Federal Judges



* Nominees only. Senator Schumer (D-NY) announced that Judge Denny Chin is the likely nominee to the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Context

In American history, there have been only four Asian American federal circuit court judges and 14 Asian American federal district court judges. Asian Americans are still significantly underrepresented on the federal bench. There are 854 federal judgeships, divided into 179 circuit court seats and 675 district court seats. Currently, there are zero Asian American circuit court judges and eight Asian American district court judges in active service.¹ Of those eight judges, all but one serve in the Ninth Circuit.

Current Nominees

Edward M. Chen: Nominated to the Northern District of California. Judge Chen has served as a federal magistrate judge since 2001. Prior to becoming a magistrate judge, he worked in both private practice and public interest law. Judge Chen is Chinese-American. Nominated August 6, 2009. Hearing scheduled for September 23, 2009.

Dolly M. Gee: Nominated to the Central District of California. Ms. Gee has worked as an arbitrator and mediator for more than 15 years; she is also active with bar associations and pro bono work. Ms. Gee is Chinese-American. Nominated August 6, 2009. Hearing scheduled for September 23, 2009.

Jacqueline H. Nguyen: Nominated to the Central District of California. Judge Nguyen worked in private practice and then with the Criminal Division of the United States Attorney's Office before becoming a California superior court judge in 2002. Judge Nguyen is Vietnamese-American. Nominated July 31, 2009. Hearing scheduled for September 23, 2009.

Conclusion

Nominating judges to the federal bench is one of a president's most important duties and longest-lasting legacies. Achieving greater diversity on the bench is critical if we aim to achieve a judiciary that's representative of our larger society. So far, President Obama has gotten off to a strong start in nominating Asian Americans to the federal bench.

ⁱ An additional 1 Asian American federal circuit judge and 2 Asian American federal district court judges remain on the bench but have taken senior status. Once a federal judge has taken senior status, that judge's seat is considered vacant and the president is able to nominate someone else to the seat.