



Veronica S. Rossman

Nominee for the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit

On May 12, 2021, President Joe Biden nominated Veronica S. Rossman to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Over the course of her career Ms. Rossman has worked as a civil litigator, a professor, and has spent 12 years working as a public defender, representing over 250 indigent clients. If confirmed, Ms. Rossman would be the only active judge on the Tenth Circuit who has served as a public defender.

Biography

Ms. Rossman was born in Moscow in 1972, and her family came to the United States as political and religious refugees fleeing antisemitic persecution when she was a young child. She attended Columbia University and University of California, Hastings College of Law, from which she obtained her J.D. in 1997. While at Hastings, she was editor-in-chief of the Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly. After law school, she clerked for Chief Justice A. William Maupin on the Supreme Court of Nevada.

Legal Experience

Ms. Rossman has spent the majority of her career representing indigent defendants as a federal public defender in the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Districts of Colorado and Wyoming, representing defendants at both the trial and appellate level. These representations included several individuals sentenced to lengthy prison terms for non-violent offenses, despite having no prior criminal history, and in multiple instances Ms. Rossman succeeded in having these individuals' sentences vacated or reduced. In total, Ms. Rossman has represented over 250 indigent clients at the trial and appellate level, including cases arising out of every judicial district in the Tenth Circuit.

Starting in 2015, Ms. Rossman was elevated to a supervisory role in the Defender's office, and she currently manages her office's Motions Unit, a group of appellate attorneys who work with trial attorneys to coordinate legal strategy and preserve issues for later stages of litigation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she has written extensively about health conditions in federal detention centers. She has also advised fellow attorneys how to best make use of compassionate release and home confinement in light of the pandemic and the recently passed First Step Act, which expanded access to compassionate release by allowing inmates to directly petition District Courts. Illustratively, Rossman represented a medically vulnerable 63-year-old man who had been sentenced to over 10 years' imprisonment for a non-violent drug offense, and who sought compassionate release after he contracted COVID-19 in prison.

Ms. Rossman also has experience in civil litigation. After her clerkship she worked as a litigation associate for Morrison & Foerster, LLP, focusing on antitrust and intellectual property law. While in this role, she worked on one of the largest international patent cases in history conducting depositions, working with witnesses, and assisting at trial. She also worked at Mastbaum & Moffat, a Denver law firm. While at Mastbaum, Rossman represented an employee in a lawsuit against a large consulting company for improperly using the former employee's name and professional reputation to benefit their business.

In addition to her direct legal advocacy, Ms. Rossman also developed extensive appellate experience during her previous work for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit as a Staff Attorney. In this role, she reviewed cases on appeal and provided recommendations to Circuit Judge screening panels set to hear the cases.

Professional and Academic Activities

Ms. Rossman served as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law from 2008-2010, where she taught courses on civil procedure, conflict of laws, and legal research and writing. She has also done extensive volunteer work in her community, including with the ACLU of Colorado, the Colorado Bar Association's Hate Crimes Education Program, and the Faculty of Federal Advocates, which provides legal education, mentoring, and pro bono opportunities to lawyers in Colorado.