

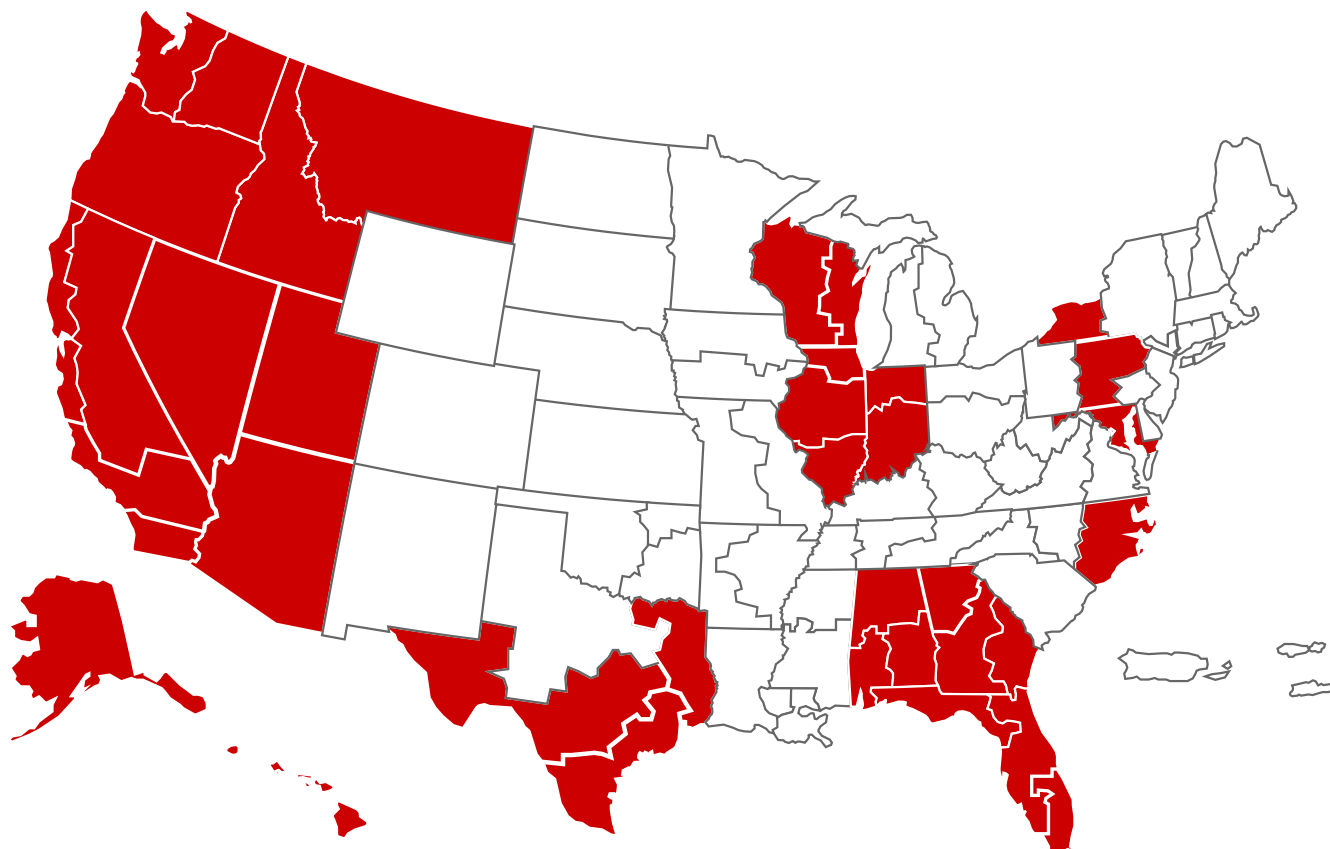


# Federal Judicial Emergencies

Andrew Blotky and April Carson January 3, 2012

More than one-third of the nation's population—132 million Americans—today are living in a jurisdiction that has been declared a judicial emergency\* meaning that in courtrooms across the country there aren't enough judges to hear the cases that are piling up. The map below depicts the areas of the country where there are federal district courts and circuit courts of appeal with judicial emergencies. In practical terms, it shows where judges are overworked and where justice is being significantly delayed for the American public. The nation's federal courts—where Social Security appeals are heard, employment cases decided, immigration issues settled, and where Americans vindicate their constitutional rights—are in a crisis because there simply aren't enough judges on the bench.

## U.S. district and circuit courts currently facing judicial emergencies



\* The nonpartisan Administrative Office of the United States Courts defines a judicial emergency as: a circuit court vacancy and adjusted case filings greater than 700, or an 18-month vacancy and filings between 500 and 700; or a district court vacancy with filings greater than 600, an 18-month vacancy where weighted filings are between 430 and 600, or any court with more than one judgeship and only one active judge.

---

## Seven judicial emergencies at the federal circuit court level:

As of January 3, 2012, there are seven judicial emergencies in the following circuit courts:

- (1) Seventh Circuit — Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin
- (4) Ninth Circuit — Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii
- (2) Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals — Alabama, Georgia, Florida

---

## Twenty-five judicial emergencies at the district court level:

As of January 3, 2012, there are 25 judicial emergencies in the following district courts:

- Western District of New York
- (2) Middle District of Pennsylvania
- District of Maryland
- Eastern District of North Carolina
- Eastern District of Texas
- (2) Southern District of Texas
- (2) Western District of Texas
- (2) Northern District of Illinois
- Western District of Wisconsin
- (2) District of Arizona
- (2) Central District of California
- Southern District of California
- (2) District of Nevada
- District of Utah
- Southern District of Florida
- Middle District of Florida
- (2) Northern District of Georgia

---

## What does this mean for average Americans?

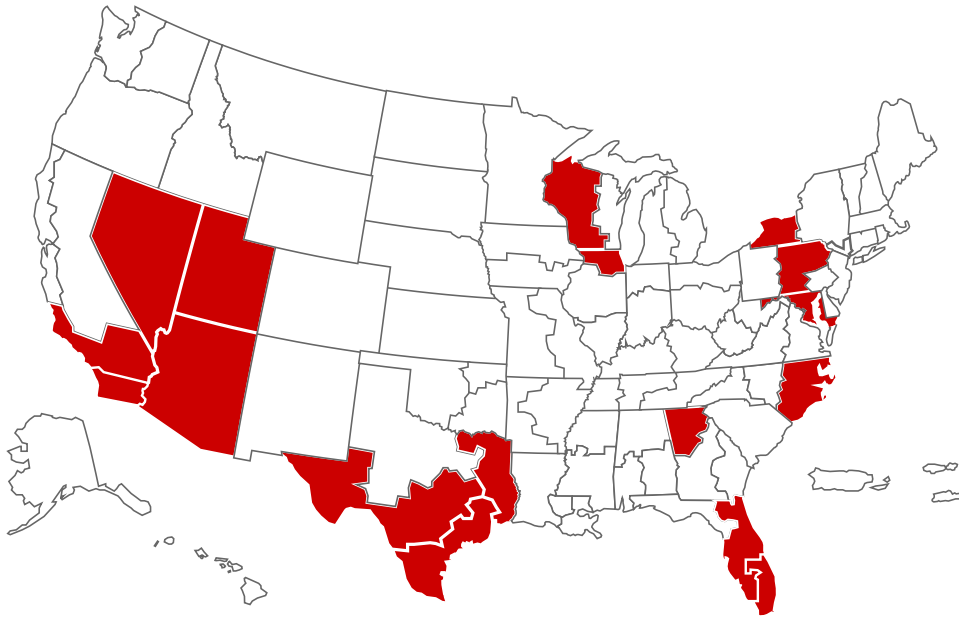
In Arizona, the federal district court's felony caseload has nearly doubled in just two years from 3,023 in 2008 to 5,219 in 2010—setting the court on an unsustainable path that will drown out other litigant's ability to seek justice. Arizona's district court, declared a judicial emergency in January 2011, enacted a yearlong suspension of federally mandated speedy trial limitations because of the court's vacancy crisis. In south Texas, a federal trial judge's criminal caseload can be nearly six times the normal caseload. As Texas federal Judge W. Royal Furgeson explains, this means that judges are often only able to devote as much time to major trials as judges in "night traffic court" have time to devote to small fines for minor driving offenses. As a result, employers and workers can wait years to remove the cloud of uncertainty a legal complaint imposes upon their businesses or to vindicate their rights.

For more information on judicial vacancies and nominations, go to [www.judicialnominations.org](http://www.judicialnominations.org).

---

## Federal judicial emergencies

### District court emergencies



### Circuit court emergencies

