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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **White House Announces Nominees for Judicial Vacancies in Central California, Hawaii**

**SAN FRANCISCO** – President Obama has nominated a state court judge and a federal prosecutor to fill vacant federal judgeships in California and Hawaii.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Beverly Reid O’Connell was nominated to serve as a district judge of the United States District Court for the Central District of California. If confirmed by the Senate, she would fill a judgeship vacant since March 1, 2012, when District Judge Valerie Baker Fairbank assumed senior status.

Derrick Kahala Watson, a federal prosecutor in Honolulu, was nominated to serve as a judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii. If confirmed by the Senate, Mr. Watson would fill a judgeship vacant since June 27, 2012, when District Judge David A. Ezra took senior status.

The White House announced the nominations Wednesday, November 14, 2012.

Judge O’Connell was appointed to the state bench in 2005. She has served as an assistant supervising judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court’s North Valley District. She has also sat by designation on the California Court of Appeals for the Second District, Division 8. Prior to coming onto the bench, Judge O’Connell had served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Central District of California from 1995 to 2005, and as an associate with the law firm of Morrison & Foerster from 1990 to 1995.

Judge O’Connell received her B.A. from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1986 and her J.D. in 1990 from Pepperdine University, School of Law, where she graduated *magna cum laude* and served as managing editor of the Pepperdine Law Review.

The U.S. District Court for the Central District of California is among the nation's busiest federal trial courts with 16,438 new case filings in calendar year 2011. The court is authorized 28 judgeships, including one temporary judgeship, and currently has three vacancies.

Mr. Watson has been an assistant U.S. attorney for the District of Hawaii since 2007 and has served as chief of the office's Civil Division since 2009. He also was as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Northern District of California from 1995 to 2000, serving as deputy chief of the Civil Division. In between his stints in government service, he worked at Farella Braun & Martel LLP, joining the San Francisco law firm in 2000 and becoming a partner in 2003. He began his legal career at the law firm of Landels, Ripley & Diamond LLP in San Francisco, where he was an associate from 1991 to 1995.

Mr. Watson received his A.B. from Harvard College in 1988 and his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1991. A Hawaiian native, he is a 1984 graduate of the Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii had 1,697 new case filings in calendar year 2011. The court is authorized four judgeships and currently has one vacancy.

Federal district court judges, appointed under Article III of the Constitution, are nominated by the president, confirmed by the Senate and serve lifetime appointments upon good behavior. Their current annual salary is \$174,000.

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