



Obama Nominates Assistant District Attorney Caitlin Halligan to D.C. Circuit

By Leesa Okeke, NY County Courts Examiner
September 30th, 2010 11:02 pm ET

President Barack Obama nominated Assistant District Attorney Caitlin Halligan to a vacancy on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Ms. Halligan has been the General Counsel for the Manhattan District Attorney's office since January 1, 2010.

District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr. said: "Caitlin Halligan is an extraordinary attorney who brings strong legal expertise, exceptional intellect, and common sense judgment to all aspects of our work within the DA's Office and with other government agencies. I commend her on this nomination."

Ms. Halligan is a graduate of Princeton University and Georgetown University Law Center. She began her career as a law clerk for Judge Patricia M. Wald of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. Shortly thereafter she worked as First Deputy Solicitor General and as the first Chief of the New York Attorney General's Internet Bureau. She also served as Solicitor General of New York State which allowed her to argue cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and the New York Court of Appeals. Prior to her tenure as General Counsel for the New York District Attorney's Office, Ms. Halligan worked at Weil, Gotshal, and Manges LLP. She was also on the adjunct faculty of Columbia Law School.

Her appointment to the D.C. Circuit is an important one because it has long been considered a training ground for our nation's highest court. Four of the current Supreme Court Justices also served there—Chief Justice John Roberts, Justice Antonin Scalia, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Justice Clarence Thomas. The D.C. Circuit currently has two vacancies.

Whether Ms. Halligan will be confirmed is another matter entirely. Congress will examine the cases she argued before the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals and other federal and state appellate courts. For more than five years she served as Solicitor General of New York State so it is only natural that her confirmation hearing will delve into the positions that she took on key issues.

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