

“Judge Timothy Burgess announced his retirement from the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska in October, 2021, and his seat has been vacant since the end of 2021. I agree with Senator Sullivan that we can improve our federal judiciary selection process, but those conversations should have started a long time ago, not after we’ve spent almost two years working to fill the seat. For decades, the selection process for judges has included the Alaska Bar Association soliciting the names of interested candidates, and members of the Alaska bar providing their input. This ‘bar poll’ – to fill the open seat – was initiated in March, at my request, and concluded in May. A number of very qualified Alaskans put their names forward to be considered for the seat, and I interviewed many of them. Recently, the Board of Governors for the Alaska Bar Association sent me and Senator Sullivan a letter sharing their concerns ‘about the length of the vacancy and its impacts on Alaska at large and the administration of justice more broadly.’ I couldn’t agree more. My process is now complete. Alaskans have waited long enough for the district court to operate at full capacity, and I look forward to the vacancy being filled without further delay.”