



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

Office of the Circuit Executive · 95 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 · (415) 355-8800 · mediarelease@ce9.uscourts.gov

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Katherine Rodriguez
mediarelease@ce9.uscourts.gov

Ninth Circuit Reappoints Bankruptcy Judge Mark D. Houle in Central District of California

SAN FRANCISCO — Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit have reappointed U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Mark D. Houle of the Central District of California to a second 14-year term effective Feb. 16, 2026.

Judge Houle was appointed a bankruptcy judge to the Central District bankruptcy bench in 2012. Before joining the bench, Judge Houle was an associate and of counsel from 2000 to 2012 with the law firm of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman, LLP, where he maintained office in Costa Mesa and Los Angeles and practiced exclusively in the areas of bankruptcy and insolvency in the firm's Insolvency and Restructuring Practice Section. From 1998 to 2000, he was an associate with the law firm of Winthrop Couchot, PC, where he represented corporate Chapter 11 debtors, creditors' committees and Chapter 7 trustees.

Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, Judge Houle received his Bachelor of Science in economics in 1993 from Salem State College, where he graduated summa cum laude. He earned his Juris Doctor in 1996 from Boston College Law School, where he was a member of the Jessup International Moot Court Team from 1995 to 1996. Following law school, he clerked from 1996 to 1998 for the Santa Ana Bankruptcy Court. Judge Houle is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and Massachusetts Air National Guard.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California is the largest bankruptcy court in the nation, serving a seven-county region comprised of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties. The court reported 28,485 new bankruptcy filings in fiscal year 2025 ending September 30.

Bankruptcy judges serve a 14-year renewable term and handle all bankruptcy-related matters under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit have statutory responsibility for selecting and appointing bankruptcy judges in the nine western states that comprise the Ninth Circuit. The court uses a comprehensive merit selection process for the initial appointment. For reappointments, the court conducts a performance review and considers public comment evaluations.

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