

Opening Statement [as prepared]
Ranking Member Rob Portman

*Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing:
Nominations of Errol Rajesh Arthur, Kendra Davis Briggs, and
Carl Ezekiel Ross to be Associate Judges on the D.C. Superior Court
Tuesday, July 12, 2022*

Thank you, Chairman Peters.

I want to thank the three nominees for being here today as the committee considers their nominations to be Associate Judges on the D.C. Superior Court. Each of them has spent part of their careers in public service, and I appreciate their willingness to serve as judges for the D.C. community.

There are important issues facing D.C. right now. Like many other large cities, our Nation's Capital is experiencing a crime surge. There have been over 200 more armed robberies this year than there were at this time last year. There have also been more homicides this year than there were at the same time last year.

What this all means is that the D.C. courts have a serious case backlog.

At least at the beginning of this year, there were more than 10,000 criminal cases pending. That's more than double the number from 2020. Part of this backlog is due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I appreciate that the court system was trying to help reduce infections during that time. However, I understand it has now resumed most in-person proceedings, which will alleviate the backlog. But this is still an important issue to address. If confirmed to be judges on the D.C. Superior Court, you will be responsible for ensuring timely justice for all parties, both defendants and victims, to improve public safety.

Rising crime in DC and the case backlog are just two of the important reasons why we need impartial and qualified judges on the D.C. Superior Court. I look forward to discussing these issues with the nominees. Thank you.