

# United States Solicitor General

## United States Solicitor General



Seal of the Department of Justice

[Department of Justice, Office of the Solicitor General](#)



**Incumbent**

**[Neal Katyal](#) (Acting)**

since 17 May 2010

### Formation

October 1870

Prior to this date, the [Attorney General](#) exercised most of the duties now performed by the Solicitor General.

### First holder

Benjamin H. Bristow

### Succession

Not Eligible

The **United States Solicitor General** is the person appointed to represent the [Federal government of the United States](#) before the [Supreme Court of the United States](#). The most recent Solicitor General, [Elena Kagan](#), was nominated to the Supreme Court and confirmed by the [Senate](#) in August 2010.<sup>[1]</sup> The Principal Deputy, [Neal Katyal](#), is currently serving as Acting Solicitor General.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Solicitor General determines the legal position that the United States will take in the Supreme Court. In addition to supervising and conducting cases in which the government is a party, the Solicitor General's office also files [amicus curiae](#) briefs in cases in which the federal government has a significant interest in the legal issue. The Solicitor General's office argues on behalf of the government in virtually every case in which the United States is a party, and also argues in most of the cases in which the government has filed an amicus brief. In the federal courts of appeal, the Office of the Solicitor General reviews cases decided against the United States and determines whether the government will seek review in the Supreme Court. The Solicitor General's office also reviews cases decided against the United States in the federal district courts and approves every case in which the government files an appeal.

## [] **Composition of the Office of the Solicitor General**

The Solicitor General is assisted by four **Deputy Solicitors General** and seventeen **Assistants to the Solicitor General**. Three of the deputies are career attorneys in the [Department of Justice](#). The remaining deputy is known as the "Principal Deputy," sometimes called the "political deputy" and, like the Solicitor General, typically leaves at the end of an administration. The Acting Principal Deputy currently is Leondra Kruger. The other deputies currently are Michael Dreeben, [Edwin Kneedler](#), and Malcolm Stewart.

The Solicitor General or one of the deputies typically argues the most important cases in the Supreme Court. Cases not argued by the Solicitor General may be argued by one of the assistants or another government attorney. Often, assistants mass more total cases than the Solicitor General.