

Senator Dick Durbin
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Written Questions for Alexander Coker Van Hook
Nominee to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana
October 29, 2025

1. According to your Senate Judiciary Questionnaire, you gave a presentation in June 2025 on DOJ's practices and priorities. Immigration was at the top of the priorities list, and your presentation included a summary of the Fast Track Program, which involves an expedited removal process for defendants who waive indictments and plead guilty. Meanwhile, *Reuters* reported last month that federal drug prosecutions have fallen to the lowest level in decades since the Trump Administration has mandated law enforcement to focus on its mass deportation agenda.

- a. **Which types of cases in the Western District of Louisiana have seen a reduction in resources or attention as a result in this shift of priorities to immigration enforcement?**

Response: I retired from the Department of Justice on September 30, 2025, and no longer have access to the case data to accurately answer this question.

When I was serving as Acting United States Attorney, I was directed by leadership in the Department of Justice to focus on making our communities safer by reducing violent crime. We used various tools including immigration, firearms, and drug prosecutions to accomplish this goal. I do not believe that the focus on immigration cases impaired the ability to address firearms or drug cases. In fact, the Fast Track program referenced in the question was implemented so that non-violent offenders with multiple deportations could be prosecuted and deported without impacting the ability to address other matters.

- b. **Has there been a reduction in drug prosecutions in the Western District of Louisiana in the last 10 months as compared to prior years?**

Response: Please see my response to question 1(a).

2. During your hearing, I asked you whether you thought there was a need for the National Guard to come to Shreveport, Louisiana to address high crime rates. You said, "I don't think we need them, but I think they would be welcome."

Putting aside your belief that they would be welcome, please elaborate on why you believe the National Guard is not needed to address crime in Shreveport.

Response: As I mentioned during the hearing, local, state, and federal law enforcement have always worked well together in the Western District of Louisiana. In recent months, federal law enforcement agencies have been working

with the Governor and the Louisiana State Police to bring additional resources to the Shreveport area and to develop special joint operations to tackle violent crime. Some of those initiatives were organized when I was Acting United States Attorney and were due to go into effect shortly after my retirement. The violent crime rate Shreveport is on the decline and I believe these initiatives will help.

With that said, I mentioned that the National Guard would be welcome because I believe the Shreveport Police Department has over one hundred officer vacancies. Therefore, any additional resources allowing police officers to respond to more serious matters could help.

3. In an *NPR* article regarding the investigation into the death of Ronald Greene, you stated that it “wouldn’t go over very well with us” if then-Governor John Bel Edwards had attempted to influence the investigation by the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

Why did you think it would have been inappropriate for the governor to attempt to interfere with or influence an investigation conducted by prosecutors in a U.S. Attorney’s Office?

Response: While I am not familiar with the NPR article you are referring to, I do remember an Associated Press reporter asking me in a brief telephone call about communications between the Governor’s Office and the United States Attorney’s Office. To my knowledge, then-Governor Edwards never attempted to influence our investigation. I noted that any such attempt would not go over well because the Department of Justice conducts investigations without influence from state officials.

4. **Did President Trump lose the 2020 election?**

Response: Congress certified Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 election and he served as the 46th President of the United States.

5. **Where were you on January 6, 2021**

Response: I was working at the United States Attorney’s Office in Shreveport, Louisiana.

6. **Do you denounce the January 6 insurrection?**

Response: The question’s characterization of the events that took place at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, and my response to it would require me to express an opinion on political matters or potential future cases. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

7. **Do you believe that January 6 rioters who were convicted of violent assaults on police officers should have been given full and unconditional pardons?**

Response: Except in cases of impeachment, Article II of the Constitution gives to the President exclusively the “Power to grant Reprieves and Pardon for Offenses against the United States” Accordingly, the question asks me to express an opinion on a political matter that may be the subject of future litigation. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

8. The Justice Department is currently defending the Trump Administration in a number of lawsuits challenging executive actions taken by the Administration. Federal judges—both Republican and Democratic appointees—have enjoined some of these actions, holding that they are illegal or unconstitutional. Alarming, President Trump, his allies, and even some nominees before the Senate Judiciary Committee have responded by questioning whether the executive branch must follow court orders.

a. What options do litigants—including the executive branch—have if they disagree with a court order?

Response: Litigants who disagree with a court order should ask for reconsideration, seek a stay, or appeal.

b. Do you believe a litigant can ever lawfully defy an order from a lower federal court? If yes, in what circumstances?

Response: Ordinarily, in the absence of a stay, all parties in a case must obey court orders. Some limited exceptions have been recognized such as when a court lacks subject matter jurisdiction or it is impossible to comply with the order. The Supreme Court has also recognized very limited situations where it is necessary to defy a court order regarding disclosure to appeal a contempt finding. *See Mohawk Industries, Inc. v. Carpenter*, 558 U.S. 100, 111 (2009).

c. Under the separation of powers, which branch of the federal government is responsible for determining whether a federal court order is lawful?

Response: Generally, this authority is given to the Judicial Branch under Article III of the Constitution.

9. District judges have occasionally issued non-party injunctions, which may include “nationwide injunctions” and “universal injunctions.”

a. Are non-party injunctions constitutional?

Response: In *Trump v. CASA*, 145 S.Ct.2540 (2025), the Supreme Court held that universal injunctions may exceed the equitable authority that Congress has given to federal courts and that ordinarily equitable power only extends to grant complete relief to the parties before the court. If confirmed as a district judge, I

would apply all relevant precedent when considering injunctive relief. As a judicial nominee, the canons of judicial conduct prohibit me from elaborating further as this is an issue that could come before me as a district judge. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

b. Are non-party injunctions a legitimate exercise of judicial power?

Response: Please see my response to question 9(a).

c. Is it ever appropriate for a district judge to issue a non-party injunction? If so, under what circumstances is it appropriate?

Response: Please see my response to question 9(a). Additionally, an injunction might be appropriate in a properly certified class action.

d. As a litigator, have you ever sought a non-party injunction as a form of relief? If so, please list each matter in which you have sought such relief.

Response: No.

10. At any point during your selection process, did you have any discussions with anyone—including individuals at the White House, the Justice Department, or any outside groups—about loyalty to President Trump? If so, please provide details.

Response: No.

11. Does the U.S. Constitution permit a president to serve three terms?

Response: The 22nd Amendment provides that “[n]o person shall be elected to the office of President more than twice”

12. On May 26, 2025, in a Truth Social post, President Trump referred to some judges whose decisions he disagrees with, as “USA HATING JUDGES” and “MONSTERS”, who “...SUFFER FROM AN IDEOLOGY THAT IS SICK, AND VERY DANGEROUS FOR OUR COUNTRY...”¹

a. Do you agree that these federal judges are “USA HATING” and “MONSTERS” who “...SUFFER FROM AN IDEOLOGY THAT IS SICK, AND VERY DANGEROUS FOR OUR COUNTRY...”?

Response: This question asks me to express an opinion on a political statement regarding ongoing litigation. I cannot provide an answer consistent with my

¹ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TRUTH SOCIAL (May 26, 2025, 7:22 AM), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114573871728757682>.

ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

b. Do you believe this rhetoric endangers the lives of judges and their families?

Response: Please see my response to question 12(a).

13. In addition to the President’s own attacks on judges, his adviser Stephen Miller took to social media to call a federal trade court’s ruling against President Trump’s tariffs a “judicial coup”² and later reposted the images of the three judges who decided the case and wrote, “we are living under a judicial tyranny.”³

a. Do you agree that these judges are engaged in a “judicial coup” and that “we are living under a judicial tyranny”?

Response: This question asks me to express an opinion on a political statement regarding ongoing litigation. I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

b. Do you believe this rhetoric endangers the lives of judges and their families?

Response: Please see my response to question 13(a).

c. Would you feel comfortable with any politician or their adviser sharing a picture of you on social media if you issue a decision they disagree with?

Response: Please see my response to question 13(a).

14. When, if ever, may a lower court depart from Supreme Court precedent?

Response: It is never appropriate for a district court judge to depart from controlling Supreme Court precedent.

15. When, in your opinion, would it be appropriate for a circuit court to overturn its own precedent?

Response: If fortunate enough to be confirmed as a district judge, my opinion of when it would be appropriate for the Fifth Circuit to overturn its own precedent would be irrelevant. If confirmed, I will faithfully apply and follow Fifth Circuit precedent.

² Stephen Miller (@StephenM), X, (May 28, 2025, 7:48 PM), <https://x.com/StephenM/status/1927874604531409314>.

³ Stephen Miller (@StephenM), X, (May 29, 2025, 8:25 AM), <https://x.com/StephenM/status/1928065122657845516>.

16. When, in your opinion, would it be appropriate for the Supreme Court to overrule its own precedent?

Response: If fortunate enough to be confirmed as a district judge, my opinion of when it would be appropriate for the Supreme Court to overturn its own precedent would be irrelevant. If confirmed, I will faithfully apply and follow all controlling Supreme Court precedent. In *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, 597 U.S. 215 (2022), the Court addressed the circumstances in which it will overturn its own precedent.

17. Please answer yes or no as to whether the following cases were correctly decided by the Supreme Court:

a. *Brown v. Board of Education*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is generally inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. Like numerous nominees before me, however, I will make an exception and state unequivocally that *Brown* was correctly decided as it rightly rejected de jure discrimination based on race.

b. *Plyler v. Doe*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Plyler* and all Supreme Court precedent.

c. *Loving v. Virginia*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is generally inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. Like numerous nominees before me, however, I will make an exception and state unequivocally that *Loving* was correctly decided as it rightly rejected de jure discrimination based on race.

d. *Griswold v. Connecticut*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Griswold* and all Supreme Court precedent.

e. *Trump v. United States*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Trump* and all Supreme Court precedent.

f. *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Dobbs* and all Supreme Court precedent.

g. *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Bruen* and all Supreme Court precedent.

h. *Obergefell v. Hodges*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Obergefell* and all Supreme Court precedent.

i. *Bostock v. Clayton County*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Bostock* and all Supreme Court precedent.

j. *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Masterpiece Cakeshop* and all Supreme Court precedent.

k. *303 Creative LLC v. Elenis*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *303 Creative LLC* and all Supreme Court precedent.

l. *United States v. Rahimi*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Rahimi* and all Supreme Court precedent.

m. *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. If confirmed as a district judge, I commit to follow *Loper Bright Enterprises* and all Supreme Court precedent.

18. With respect to constitutional interpretation, do you believe judges should rely on the “original meaning” of the Constitution?

Response: If confirmed as a district judge, I would first use controlling Supreme Court or Fifth Circuit precedent to interpret the Constitution. In the absence of controlling precedent, the unambiguous meaning of the words in the Constitution would control. If it is necessary to determine the meaning of words, I believe that judges should look to the meaning of words as understood by the public at the time of the Constitution’s adoption.

19. How do you decide when the Constitution’s “original meaning” should be controlling?

Response: Please see my response to question 18.

20. Does the “original meaning” of the Constitution support a constitutional right to same-sex marriage?

Response: This issue has been decided by *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644 (2015), and its holding is controlling Supreme Court precedent. As a judicial nominee, it would be inappropriate for me to question the method of analysis used by the Supreme Court. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply all Supreme Court precedent.

21. Does the “original meaning” of the Constitution support the constitutional right to marry persons of a different race?

Response: This issue has been decided by *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967), and its holding is controlling Supreme Court precedent. As a judicial nominee, it would be inappropriate for me to question the method of analysis used by the Supreme Court. If confirmed, I would faithfully apply all Supreme Court precedent.

22. What is your understanding of the Equal Protection and Due Process clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment?

Response: The Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, among other things, applies the Bill of Rights to the states. The Equal Protection Clause ensures that states not “deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Courts have used these provisions to evaluate the legitimacy of state actions using different levels of scrutiny depending on the classification of persons or the right involved.

23. How do these clauses apply to individuals that the Framers of the amendment likely did not have in mind, such as women? Or LGBTQ+ individuals?

Response: The Supreme Court has applied these provisions to discrimination based on sex and sexual orientation, and I would faithfully apply those decisions if confirmed. To the extent that the question asks for further elaboration on these provisions, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

24. Do you believe that judges should be “originalist” and adhere to the original public meaning of constitutional provisions when applying those provisions today?

Response: Please see my response to question 18.

25. If so, do you believe that courts should adhere to the original public meaning of the Foreign Emoluments Clause when interpreting and applying the Clause today?

Response: Please see my response to question 18. To the extent that this question asks me to express an opinion regarding ongoing litigation, I cannot do so consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

26. Under the U.S. Constitution, who is entitled to First Amendment protections?

Response: The First Amendment Provides that, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” The Supreme Court has held that these protections apply to the people and associations of individuals. *See Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010).

27. How would you determine whether a law that regulates speech is “content-based” or “content-neutral”? What are some of the key questions that would inform your analysis?

Response: I would apply all binding Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent.

28. What is the standard for determining whether a statement is protected speech under the true threats doctrine?

Response: To determine whether speech was a true threat not protected by the First Amendment, I would apply the analysis set forth by the Supreme Court in *Counterman v. Colorado*, 600 U.S. 66 (2023). In that case, the Court found that true threats of violence are historically unprotected speech. *Id.* at 74.

29. Is every individual within the United States entitled to due process?

Response: Yes. Everyone within the United States is entitled to due process. The amount of process that is due, however, is case specific and varies based on individual circumstances.

30. Can U.S. citizens be transported to other countries for the purpose of being detained, incarcerated, or otherwise penalized?

Response: This question asks me to express an opinion regarding potential litigation. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

31. The Fourteenth Amendment states: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”

a. Is every person born in the United States a citizen under the Fourteenth Amendment?

Response: The Fourteenth Amendment provides that a person born in the United States is a citizen of the United States if they are “subject to the jurisdiction thereof. . . .” Determining whether a person is subject to the jurisdiction of the United States would require me to express an opinion regarding ongoing litigation that could appear before me if I am confirmed as a district judge. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

b. Is the citizenship or immigration status of the parents of an individual born in the United States relevant for determining whether the individual is a citizen under the Fourteenth Amendment?

Response: This question asks me to express an opinion on an issue regarding ongoing litigation. I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

32. Do you believe that demographic and professional diversity on the federal bench is important? Please explain your views.

Response: Yes. No one should be excluded from the opportunity to serve as a district judge based on race, ethnicity, religion, sex, or any other protected characteristic. I believe that selecting highly qualified people from all backgrounds helps promote respect for the judiciary and the rule of law.

33. The bipartisan *First Step Act of 2018*, which was signed into law by President Trump, is one of the most important pieces of criminal justice legislation to be enacted during my

time in Congress. At its core, the Act was based on a few key, evidence-based principles. First, incarcerated people can and should have meaningful access to rehabilitative programming and support in order to reduce recidivism and help our communities prosper. Second, overincarceration through the use of draconian mandatory minimum sentences does not serve the purposes of sentencing and ultimately causes greater, unnecessary harm to our communities. With these rehabilitative principles in mind, one thing Congress sought to achieve through this Act was giving greater discretion to judges—both before and after sentencing—to ensure that the criminal justice system effectively and efficiently fosters public safety for the benefit of all Americans.

a. How do you view the role of federal judges in implementing the *First Step Act*?

Response: If confirmed as a district judge, I would apply the provisions of the First Step Act faithfully, fairly and impartially as I would any other enacted law of the United States.

b. Will you commit to fully and fairly considering the individualized circumstances of each defendant who comes before you when imposing sentences to ensure that they are properly tailored to promote the goals of sentencing and avoid terms of imprisonment in excess of what is necessary?

Response: Yes.

34. The Federalist Society seeks to “reorder[] priorities within the legal system to place a premium on individual liberty, traditional values, and the rule of law.”

a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with the Federalist Society, including Leonard Leo or Steven G. Calabresi? If so, please provide details of those discussions.

Response: No. Not to my knowledge.

b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to the Federalist Society, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?

Response: No.

c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by the Federalist Society? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?

Response: No.

35. The Teneo Network states that its purpose is to “Recruit, Connect, and Deploy talented conservatives who lead opinion and shape the industries that shape society.”

- a. **During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with the Teneo Network, including Leonard Leo? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: No. Not to my knowledge.

- b. **Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to the Teneo Network, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. **Have you ever been paid honoraria by the Teneo Network? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

36. The Heritage Foundation states that its mission is to “formulate and promote public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense.” Heritage Action, which is affiliated with the Heritage Foundation, seeks to “fight for conservative policies in Washington, D.C. and in state capitals across the country.”

- a. **During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with the Heritage Foundation or Heritage Action, including Kevin D. Roberts? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: No. Not to my knowledge.

- b. **Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to the Heritage Foundation or Heritage Action, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. **Were you ever involved in or asked to contribute to Project 2025 in any way?**

Response: No.

- d. **Have you ever been paid honoraria by the Heritage Foundation or Heritage Action? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

37. The America First Policy Institute (AFPI) states that its “guiding principles are liberty, free enterprise, national greatness, American military superiority, foreign-policy

engagement in the American interest, and the primacy of American workers, families, and communities in all we do.”

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with AFPI? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: No. Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to AFPI, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by AFPI? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

- 38.** The America First Legal Institute (AFLI) states that it seeks to “oppose the radical left’s anti-jobs, anti-freedom, anti-faith, anti-borders, anti-police, and anti-American crusade.”

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with AFLI, including Stephen Miller, Gene Hamilton, or Daniel Epstein? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: No. Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to AFLI, including but not limited to research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by AFLI? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

- 39.** The Article III Project is an organization which claims that, “The left is weaponizing the power of the judiciary against ordinary citizens.”

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with the Article III Project, including Mike Davis, Will Chamberlain, or Josh Hammer? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: No. Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to the Article III Project, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by the Article III Project? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

- 40.** The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) states that it is “the world’s largest legal organization committed to protecting religious freedom, free speech, the sanctity of life, marriage and family, and parental rights.”

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with ADF? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: No. Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to ADF, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by ADF? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

- 41.** The Concord Fund, also known as the Judicial Crisis Network, states that it is committed “to the Constitution and the Founders’ vision of a nation of limited government; dedicated to the rule of law; with a fair and impartial judiciary.” It is affiliated with the 85 Fund, also known as the Honest Elections Project and the Judicial Education Project.

- a. During your selection process, have you spoken to or corresponded with any individuals associated with these organizations, including Leonard Leo or Carrie Severino? If so, please provide details of those discussions.**

Response: No. Not to my knowledge.

- b. Have you ever been asked to and/or provided services to these organizations, including research, analysis, advice, speeches, or appearing at events?**

Response: No.

- c. Have you ever been paid honoraria by these organizations? If so, how much were you paid, and for what services?**

Response: No.

- d. Do you have any concerns about outside groups or special interests making undisclosed donations to front organizations like the Concord Fund or 85 Fund in support of your nomination? Note that I am not asking whether you have solicited any such donations, I am asking whether you would find such donations to be problematic.**

Response: I am not familiar with these organizations nor am I aware of any organization supporting my nomination. To the extent that the question asks about policy or legal conclusions about whether these donations should be disclosed, under the Code of Conduct for United States Judges, it would be inappropriate for me to answer.

- e. If you learn of any such donations, will you commit to call for the undisclosed donors to make their donations public so that if you are confirmed you can have this information when you make decisions about recusal in cases that these donors may have an interest in?**

Response: I am not aware of any such donation. If confirmed as a district judge, I will follow the disqualification rules set forth in Title 28, United States Code, Section 455 and the Code of Conduct for United States Judges. I would recuse myself in any proceeding in which my impartiality might reasonably be questioned.

- f. Will you condemn any attempt to make undisclosed donations to the Concord Fund or 85 Fund on behalf of your nomination?**

Response: Please see my response to question 41(d).

**Nomination of Alexander Van Hook to the
United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana
Questions for the Record
Submitted October 23, 2025**

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR COONS

1. At any point during the process that led to your nomination, did you make any representations or commitments to anyone—including but not limited to individuals at the White House, at the Justice Department, or at outside groups—as to how you would handle a particular case, investigation, or matter, if confirmed? If so, explain fully.

Response: No.

- a. At any point during the process that led to your nomination, were you asked about your opinion on any cases that involve President Trump or the Trump administration?

Response: No.

2. How would you describe your judicial philosophy?

Response: If confirmed as a district judge, I will do my best to fairly and impartially apply the law in every case and will treat every person who comes before the court with dignity and respect. I will also work hard to ensure that cases and controversies before the court are resolved in a timely manner.

3. With respect to substantive due process, what factors do you look to when a case requires you to determine whether a right is fundamental and protected under the Fourteenth Amendment?

Response: If confirmed, I would follow controlling Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent to determine whether a right is fundamental and protected under the Fourteenth Amendment.

- a. Would you consider whether the right is expressly enumerated in the Constitution?

Response: Yes, although the Ninth Amendment makes clear that, “The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.”

- b. Would you consider whether the right is deeply rooted in this nation’s history and tradition? If so, what types of sources would you consult to determine whether a right is deeply rooted in this nation’s history and tradition?

Response: Yes. The Supreme Court has noted that whether a right is deeply rooted in this nation's history and tradition is an important consideration. *See Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. 702 (1997). To determine whether a right was deeply rooted in history and tradition, I would first consult Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent. As a district judge, I would only consider other historical cases and resources in the absence of controlling authority.

- c. Would you consider whether the right has previously been recognized by Supreme Court or circuit precedent? What about the precedent of another court of appeals?

Response: Yes. Please see my response to question 3(b). Additionally, I would consider the precedent of another circuit court of appeals as persuasive authority.

- d. Would you consider whether a *similar* right has previously been recognized by Supreme Court or circuit precedent?

Response: Yes.

- e. What other factors would you consider?

Response: Please see my responses to questions 3(b) and (c).

- 4. In your view, is it ever appropriate for a judge to ignore, disregard, refuse to implement, or issue an order that is contrary to an order from a higher court? Please explain.

Response: It would not be appropriate for a district judge in the Western District of Louisiana to ignore or disregard Supreme Court or Fifth Circuit precedent or orders.

- 5. Under 28 U.S.C. § 455, “[a]ny justice, judge, or magistrate judge of the United States shall disqualify [themselves] in any proceeding in which [their] impartiality might reasonably be questioned.” Would you recuse yourself from cases involving former clients?

Response: As my entire legal career has been with the government, my only client has been the United States. I do not believe it is necessary to recuse myself from cases where the United States is a party. If confirmed, I will, however, carefully review and address any real or potential conflicts by reference to 28 U.S.C. § 455, Canon 3 of the Code of Conduct for United States Judges, and any other laws, rules, and practices governing such circumstances. In situations that present actual conflicts of interest based on my current or prior positions at the Department of Justice, I would recuse myself from any cases in which I was personally involved as a prosecutor or supervisor.

- 6. In *United States v. Virginia*, 518 U.S. 515, 536 (1996), the Court explained that in 1839, when the Virginia Military Institute was established, “[h]igher education at the time was considered dangerous for women,” a view widely rejected today. In *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644, 668 (2015), the Court reasoned, “As all parties agree, many same-

sex couples provide loving and nurturing homes to their children, whether biological or adopted. And hundreds of thousands of children are presently being raised by such couples. . . . Excluding same-sex couples from marriage thus conflicts with a central premise of the right to marry. Without the recognition, stability, and predictability marriage offers, their children suffer the stigma of knowing their families are somehow lesser.” This conclusion rejects arguments made by campaigns to prohibit same-sex marriage based on the purported negative impact of such marriages on children.

- a. When is it appropriate for a court to consider evidence that sheds light on our changing understanding of society?

Response: If confirmed, I would faithfully follow Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent in considering such evidence.

- b. What is the role of sociology, scientific evidence, and data in judicial analysis?

Response: Generally, this sort of evidence is evaluated and admitted pursuant to Rule 702 of the Federal Rules of Evidence, to the extent that such specialized knowledge could aid the trier of fact. I would faithfully follow Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent in considering such evidence.

7. I have been proud to co-lead the bipartisan *Safer Supervision Act*, a bill to reform our federal supervised release system that has received substantial conservative and law enforcement support. The premise of the bill is that our federal supervision system has strayed far from how Congress designed it, as courts impose it mechanically in essentially every case, which means that probation officers do not have time to properly supervise those who most need it. The bill reinforces courts’ existing obligations under 18 U.S.C. §§ 3553 and 3583 to impose supervision as warranted by the individual facts of the case and encourages more robust use of early termination when warranted to provide positive incentives encouraging rehabilitation. At the encouragement of a bipartisan group of members of Congress, the U.S. Sentencing Commission recently finalized an amendment to supervision guidelines implementing certain parts of the bill; this amendment will go in effect in November.

- a. As a sentencing judge, would you endeavor to impose supervision thoughtfully and on the basis of the individual facts of the case consistent with 18 U.S.C. § 3553 and 18 U.S.C. § 3583?

Response: Yes.

- b. Would you agree that the availability of early termination under 18 U.S.C. § 3583(e)(1) can provide individuals positive incentives to rehabilitate?

Response: Yes, I believe that early termination could be beneficial in some cases. As an Assistant United States Attorney, however, I have also observed firsthand

how much supervised release can benefit a defendant's reentry into society. Prolonged work requirements, substance abuse counseling, and drug testing often provide the critical support that is needed by some people to finally break free from a life of criminal activity.

- c. Will you commit if confirmed to reviewing the *Safer Supervision Act* and the recent Sentencing Commission amendment and considering them as you develop your approach to sentencing of supervised release?

Response: Yes.

- 8. What is the remedy if the President violates his constitutional duty to faithfully execute the laws?

Response: As a district court judicial nominee it would be inappropriate for me to try to formulate a remedy to a hypothetical question.

- 9. Is President Trump eligible to be elected President for a third term in 2028?

Response: The 22nd Amendment provides that "[n]o person shall be elected to the office of President more than twice"

- 10. Who won the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election?

Response: Congress certified President Trump as the winner of the 2016 election, and he served as the 45th President of the United States.

- 11. Who won the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election?

Response: Congress certified Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 election, and he served as the 46th President of the United States.

- 12. Who won the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election?

Response: Congress certified President Trump as the winner of the 2024 election, and he is serving as the 47th President of the United States.

- 13. Would it be constitutional for the President of the United States to punish a private person for a viewpoint that person expresses in a newspaper op-ed?

Response: This question asks me to address a hypothetical regarding potential litigation. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. See Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

14. Do you agree with me that the attack at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, was an insurrection? Why or why not?

Response: The question's characterization of the events that took place at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, and my response to it would require me to express an opinion on political matters or potential future cases. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

15. Would it be constitutional for the President of the United States to terminate government contracts with a private person specifically because that person donated to members of the opposite political party?

Response: This question asks me to address a hypothetical regarding potential litigation. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

16. Would it ever be appropriate for the President of the United States to punish a law firm for taking on a client that the President did not like?

Response: This question asks me to address a hypothetical regarding potential litigation. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

17. Do you agree that there is a constitutional right to privacy that protects a woman's right to use contraceptives? If you do not agree, please explain whether this right is protected or not and which constitutional rights or provisions encompass it.

Response: This issue has been decided by *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965), and *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, 405 U.S. 438 (1972). These holdings remain binding Supreme Court precedent, and I will faithfully apply them if confirmed as a district judge.

18. Do you agree that the constitutional right to travel across state lines is fundamental and well established?

Response: Yes.

- a. Do you think it is constitutional for a state to restrict the interstate travel of its citizens?

Response: This question asks me to address a hypothetical regarding potential litigation or legislation. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

19. Do you believe that the Constitution protects a fundamental right to privacy?

Response: Although the Constitution does not specifically enumerate a right to privacy, cases such as *Griswold* have acknowledged a right to privacy in certain circumstances. I would follow binding Supreme Court precedent in this and all cases.

a. Does that right extend to information about your health care and medical history?

Response: This question asks me to express an opinion regarding ongoing or impending litigation. I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

b. Do you agree that it is a violation of that right for states to surveil people's health care and medical history?

Response: This question asks me to express an opinion regarding ongoing or impending litigation. I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

20. Do you agree that there is a constitutional right to privacy that protects the right to in vitro fertilization (IVF)? If you do not agree, please explain whether this right is protected or not and which constitutional rights or provisions encompass it.

Response: This question asks me to express an opinion regarding ongoing or impending litigation or legislation. I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

21. Do you believe that immigrants, regardless of legal status, are entitled to due process and fair adjudication of their claims?

Response: Every person within the United States is entitled to due process. The amount of process that is due, however, is case specific and varies based on individual circumstances.

22. Does the public's original understanding of the scope of a constitutional provision constrain its application decades later?

Response: If confirmed as a district court judge, I would first look to binding Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent when interpreting the Constitution. In the absence of controlling precedent, the unambiguous meaning of the words in the Constitution would control. If it is necessary to determine the meaning of words, I believe that judges should look to the meaning of words as understood by the public at the time of the Constitution's adoption.

23. What sources would you employ to discern the contours of a constitutional provision?

Response: Please see my response to question 22.

24. What role does morality play in determining whether a challenged law or regulation is unconstitutional or otherwise illegal?

Response: District judges should not decide cases based on their own moral code. If confirmed as a district judge, I will do my best to fairly and impartially apply the law in every case and will treat every person who comes before the court with dignity and respect.

25. What role, if any, should the practical consequences of a particular ruling play in a judge's rendering of a decision?

Response: In some circumstances, practical consequences could play a role in fashioning a remedy. However, district judges are bound to impartially apply the law to the facts and follow binding precedent.

26. What role, if any, should empathy play in a judge's decision-making process?

Response: District judges should decide cases by impartially applying the law to the facts. With that said, district judges should always treat people who come before them with dignity and respect.

27. What role, if any, should a judge's personal life experience play in his or her decision-making process?

Response: Personal life experiences can help equip a judge with traits needed to do the job, such as wisdom and patience.

28. Should you be confirmed, would you ever inform parties before you that they do not need to comply with your orders?

Response: No.

- a. Under what circumstances would you tell a party they could decide not to comply with your orders?

Response: I cannot envision a circumstance where a district judge would tell a party not to comply with court orders. Defying a court order would be a litigation decision made by a party without my input. Ordinarily, in the absence of a stay, all parties in a case must obey court orders. Some limited exceptions have been recognized such as when a court lacks subject matter jurisdiction or it is impossible to comply with the order. The Supreme Court has also recognized very limited situations where it is necessary to defy a court order regarding disclosure

to be in a position to appeal a contempt finding. *See Mohawk Industries, Inc. v. Carpenter*, 558 U.S. 100, 111 (2009).

- b. What would you do if a party refuses to comply with one of your orders?

Response: District judges have the power to impose certain sanctions including holding parties in civil or criminal contempt.

29. When it comes to conducting yourself ethically, who in the legal profession do you see as a role model?

Response: Judge Tom Stagg, who was my mentor, friend, and former employer.

30. Discuss your proposed hiring process for law clerks.

Response: If confirmed, I would endeavor to hire highly qualified men and women to serve as my law clerks. Before hiring, I would consult with other judges to see what processes they recommend for hiring. In order to identify the best candidates, I would cast a wide net to find qualified candidates by reaching out to the local legal community and law schools.

- a. Do you think law clerks should be protected by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act?

Response: As a district court judicial nominee, I do not think it is appropriate for me to provide an opinion whether or not Title VII of the Civil Rights act should apply to court staff.

31. In the past year, multiple studies have revealed ongoing problems with workplace conduct policies and outcomes in the federal judiciary. In a national climate survey, hundreds of judiciary employees reported that they experienced sexual harassment, discrimination, or other forms of misconduct on the job. A study by the Federal Judicial Center and the National Academy of Public Administration found the branch has failed to set up trusted reporting systems for employees who experience misconduct or ensure those handling complaints are adequately trained.

- a. If confirmed, what proactive steps would you take to ensure that the clerks and judicial assistants who work in your chambers are treated with respect and are not subject to misconduct?

Response: If confirmed as a district judge, my chambers staff would likely be limited to three people. As I have throughout my career, I would treat all employees with dignity and respect and require others to do so as a condition of employment.

- b. What proactive steps would you take to ensure that any workplace-related concerns that your clerks and judicial assistants may have are fully addressed?

Response: I would consult with the Clerk of Court and the Executive Office of United States Courts to determine what resources were available to clerks and judicial assistants.

- c. If you are confirmed and you later hear from a colleague or your chambers staff that another judge is acting inappropriately, what steps would you take to help ensure the problem is addressed?

Response: I would raise the issue with the offending judge and the Chief Judge in consultation with the Executive Office of United States Courts.

32. Some district court judges have issued standing orders indicating that the court will favor holding an oral argument when there is a representation that the argument would be handled by a junior lawyer. Such efforts are intended to provide more speaking opportunities in court for junior lawyers. Would you consider issuing a standing order that would encourage more junior lawyers to handle oral arguments? Why or why not?

Response: Yes. I would consider any proposal to provide practical opportunities for junior lawyers to gain experience.

- a. How else would you support the skills development of junior lawyers appearing before you?

Response: I would encourage junior lawyers to consider signing up for the Criminal Justice Act Panel.

33. Do you think the individuals convicted of assaulting law enforcement officers at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, deserved to be pardoned?

Response: Except in cases of impeachment, Article II of the Constitution gives to the President exclusively the “Power to grant Reprieves and Pardon for Offenses against the United States” Accordingly, the question asks me to express an opinion on a political matter that may be the subject of future litigation. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

34. If you were the President on January 20, 2025, would you have pardoned the individuals convicted of assaulting law enforcement officers at the Capitol on January 6, 2021?

Response: Please see my response to question 33.

35. At your Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing, Ranking Member Durbin asked you whether you think the National Guard is needed to fight crime in Shreveport,

Louisiana, which has a higher murder rate than Chicago, Illinois. You replied, “I don’t think we need them, but I think they would be welcome.”

- a. Why would National Guard troops be welcomed to Shreveport if they are not needed?

Response: I mentioned that the National Guard would be welcome because I believe the Shreveport Police Department has over one hundred officer vacancies. Therefore, any additional resources allowing police officers to respond to more serious matters would help.

- b. You added, “I think that whatever resources could be brought to bear to reduce crime in Shreveport would be helpful.” Would you support President Trump deploying National Guard troops to Shreveport?

Response: As a district court judicial nominee, it would be inappropriate to take a position on any action the President might take.

- c. Why do you think the National Guard has been deployed to Chicago but not to Shreveport?

Response: Please see my response to question 35(b).

Questions for the Record for Alexander Van Hook
Submitted by Senator Richard Blumenthal
October 29, 2025

1. On September 15, 2025, Attorney General Pam Bondi tried to distinguish between “free speech” and “hate speech,” claiming that the Department of Justice would prosecute the latter.

Attorney General Bondi received criticism for her assertion from across the political spectrum. While hate speech is odious, it is not exempt from First Amendment protections unless it is harassment, a true threat, or an incitement to violence.

- a. Do you believe that there is a legal distinction between “free speech” and “hate speech”?

Response: The First Amendment to the Constitution provides: “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech.” This constitutional guarantee applies to all speech, other than threats, to include speech that is distasteful. *See Metal v. Tam*, 582 U.S. 218 (2017). To determine whether speech was a true threat not protected by the First Amendment, I would apply the analysis set forth by the Supreme Court in *Counterman v. Colorado*, 600 U.S. 66 (2023). In that case, the court found that true threats of violence are historically unprotected speech. *Id.* at 74.

- b. Can the Department of Justice prosecute hate speech absent threats, harassment, or incitement of violence?

Response: Please see my response to question 1(a).

2. If confirmed, will you recuse yourself from any case where a reasonable person, knowing all the relevant facts, might question your impartiality, even if you personally believe you can be fair?

Response: Yes. If confirmed as a district judge, I will follow the disqualification rules set forth in Title 28, United States Code, Section 455 and the Code of Conduct for United States Judges. I would recuse myself in any proceeding in which my impartiality might reasonably be questioned.

- a. If confirmed, will you recuse yourself from cases involving individuals, organizations, or entities to which you or your family members have made political contributions or provided political support?

Response: Please see my response to question 2.

- b. If confirmed, will you recuse yourself from cases involving former clients, former law firms, or organizations with which you have had significant professional relationships?

Response: As my entire legal career has been with the government, my only client has been the United States. I do not believe it is necessary to recuse from cases where the United States is a party. I will, however, recuse myself from cases that were open in the United States Attorney's Office while I worked there.

- c. If confirmed, will you recuse yourself from cases involving personal friends, social acquaintances, or individuals with whom you have ongoing personal relationships?

Response: Please see my response to question 2.

- 3. If confirmed, will you commit to avoiding all *ex parte* communications about pending cases, including informal discussions at social events or professional gatherings?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I will follow the Code of Conduct for United States Judges, Canon 3(A)(4) regarding *ex parte* communications.

- d. If confirmed, will you avoid discussing pending cases or judicial business with elected officials, political appointees, or political operatives?

Response: Yes. I am very aware of the role that a fair and impartial judiciary plays in promoting respect for the rule of law. If confirmed, I will remain fair and impartial and will follow the Code of Conduct for United States Judges and any other governing rules under these circumstances.

- e. If confirmed, will you commit to declining meetings or communications with lobbyists, advocacy groups, or special interests seeking to influence your judicial decisions?

Response: Please see my response to question 3(d).

- f. If confirmed, will you refrain from making public statements about legal or political issues that could reasonably be expected to come before your court?

Response: Please see my response to question 3(d).

- 4. If confirmed, will you commit to filing complete and accurate financial disclosure reports that include all required information about your financial interests and activities?

Response: Yes.

- g. If confirmed, will you decline all gifts from parties who might appear before your court or who have interests that could be affected by your judicial decisions?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I will follow the Code of Conduct for United States Judges and any other governing rules related to gifts.

- h. If confirmed, will you decline privately funded travel, hospitality, or entertainment that could create an appearance of impropriety or special access?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I will follow the Code of Conduct for United States Judges and any other governing rules related to privately funded travel, hospitality, or entertainment.

- i. If confirmed, will you ensure that any teaching, speaking, or writing activities comply with judicial ethics requirements and do not create conflicts with your judicial duties?

Yes. If confirmed, I will follow the Code of Conduct for United States Judges and any other governing rules related to teaching, speaking, and writing.

- 5. The House Republican-authored budget reconciliation bill had included a provision that would have limited federal judges' ability to hold government officials in contempt. While the Senate Parliamentarian ruled that the provision violated the Byrd Rule, and it was, therefore, removed, it would have prohibited federal courts from issuing contempt penalties against officials who disobey preliminary injunctions or Temporary Restraining Orders if the party seeking the order did not provide financial security to cover potential future damages for wrongful enjoining.

The contempt power was first codified in law in the Judiciary Act of 1789. In 1873, the Supreme Court described it as "inherent in all courts" and "essential to the preservation of order in judicial proceedings and to the enforcement of the judgements, orders, and writs of the courts, and consequently to the due administration of justice." Yet House Republicans are seeking to exempt government officials from this key tool for judicial enforcement.

- a. Do you believe the contempt power is "essential . . . to the due administration of justice[?]"

Response: The Supreme Court has said that the contempt power is essential to the due administration of justice.

- b. Do you believe that federal judges should be limited in their ability to hold government officials who defy court orders in contempt?

Response: The question is a political one involving potential legislation to change the contempt power of the courts. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee.

6. If confirmed, you, like all other members of the federal bench, would have the ability to issue orders. On February 9, 2025, Vice President Vance posted on X that “[j]udges aren’t allowed to control the executive’s legitimate power.” This raises an extremely concerning specter of Executive Branch defiance of court orders.

- a. If confirmed, would you have the ability to issue orders?

Response: If confirmed as a district judge, I will have the authority to issue orders as appropriate in cases assigned to me.

- i. Would you have the ability to enforce those orders?

Response: Yes.

- ii. What powers would you have to enforce those orders?

Response: District judges have the power to impose certain sanctions to include holding parties in civil or criminal contempt.

- b. Does there exist a legal basis for federal Executive Branch officials to defy federal court orders? If so, what basis and in which circumstances?

Response: Ordinarily, in the absence of a stay, all parties in a case must obey court orders. Some limited exceptions have been recognized such as when a court lacks subject matter jurisdiction or it is impossible to comply with the order. The Supreme Court has also recognized very limited situations where it is necessary to defy a court order regarding disclosure to be in a position to appeal a contempt finding. *See Mohawk Industries, Inc. v. Carpenter*, 558 U.S. 100, 111 (2009).

- c. Does there exist a legal basis for state officials to defy federal court orders? If so, what basis and in which circumstances?

Response: Please see my response to question 6(b).

- d. What would make a court order unlawful?

Response: A court order would be unlawful if the court lacked subject matter jurisdiction.

- i. What is the process a party should follow if it believes a court order to be unlawful?

Response: If a party believes a court order is unlawful, the party can ask the court to reconsider or request a stay. If the order is final, the party can appeal to the circuit court.

- ii. Is it ever acceptable to not follow this process? When and why?

Response: Please see my response to question 6(b).

- 7. Were you in Washington, D.C. on January 6, 2021?

Response: No.

- a. Were you inside the U.S. Capitol or on the U.S. Capitol grounds on January 6, 2021?

Response: No.

Nomination of Alexander C. Van Hook
United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana
Questions for the Record
Submitted October 29, 2025

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BOOKER

1. You oversaw the civil rights investigation into the death of Ronald Greene, an unarmed Black man who was pulled over and beaten by Louisiana state troopers.¹

- a. Describe your role in this case, your oversight responsibilities, and your personal experience prosecuting the case?

Response: My role in this case changed over time as my role in the office changed. This case was opened during the first Trump Administration and was overseen by the Civil Rights Division. During that time, I served as First Assistant United States Attorney and Acting United States Attorney. My oversight of the case was most active during this time. I made sure that the case was appropriately staffed in the United States Attorney's Office and encouraged the FBI and the Civil Rights Division to move forward with their investigation despite difficulties related to travel created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The case was declined and closed by the Civil Rights Division and the United States Attorney at the end of the Biden Administration. During most of the Biden Administration, I served as Special Counsel to the United States Attorney and in that position had no oversight role in the case.

I had no personal experience prosecuting the case.

- b. How would you describe your approach to ensuring the fair and impartial enforcement of civil rights laws, particularly in cases involving police misconduct?

Response: The United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Louisiana has a proven track record of fairly and impartially enforcing the nation's civil rights laws. During my time with the Department of Justice, we routinely investigated and prosecuted civil rights violations. Additionally, we investigated and declined cases where law enforcement officers properly used force within the scope of their duties.

¹ *Governor knew the circumstances around a deadly arrest, but kept quiet, records show*, NPR (Jan. 28, 2022) <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/28/1076587208/governor-knew-the-circumstances-around-a-deadly-arrest-but-kept-quiet-records-sh>.

2. The American Bar Association (ABA) Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary has conducted extensive peer evaluations of the professional qualifications of a president's nominees to become federal judges for seven decades. This practice has endured through 18 presidential administrations, under Republican and Democratic presidents.

On May 29, 2025, Attorney General Pam Bondi ended this longstanding practice when she informed the ABA that, "[T]he Office of Legal Policy will no longer direct nominees to provide waivers allowing the ABA access to nonpublic information, including bar records. Nominees will also not respond to questionnaires prepared by the ABA and will not sit for interviews with the ABA."²

- a. Do you agree with AG Bondi that "the ABA no longer functions as a fair arbiter of nominees' qualifications and its ratings invariably and demonstrably favor nominees put forth by Democratic administrations"?

Response: As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on statements and decisions made by Attorney General Bondi.

3. How would you characterize your judicial philosophy?

Response: If confirmed as a district judge, I will do my best to fairly and impartially apply the law in every case and will treat every person who comes before the court with dignity and respect. I will also work hard to ensure that cases and controversies before the court are resolved in a timely manner.

4. Please provide an example of a federal judge, or judges, whose jurisprudence you most agree with. Why?

Response: I think that providing examples of judges whose jurisprudence I most agree with would be similar to me taking a position on which cases are rightly or wrongly decided. As a district court judicial nominee, I think it would be inappropriate for me to do so. If confirmed as a district judge, I will faithfully apply all binding Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent.

5. What do you understand originalism to mean?

Response: Originalism embraces the idea that the meaning of the Constitution was fixed at its adoption and should be interpreted according to its original public meaning.

6. Do you consider yourself an originalist?

Response: If confirmed as a district court judge, I would first look to binding Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent when interpreting the Constitution. In the absence of controlling precedent, the unambiguous meaning of the words in the Constitution would control. If it is

² Letter from Attorney General Pam Bondi to William R. Bay, President, American Bar Association (May 29, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1402156/dl?inline>.

necessary to determine the meaning of words, I believe that judges should look to the meaning of words as understood by the public at the time of the Constitution's adoption.

7. What do you understand textualism to mean?

Response: Textualism requires that judges interpret the text in a statute as written based on the meaning of the words when the statute was enacted. I also believe that textualism requires the text to be read in context as part of the overall statutory scheme.

8. Do you consider yourself a textualist?

Response: If confirmed as a district court judge, I would first look to binding Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent when interpreting the text of statutes. In the absence of controlling precedent, the unambiguous meaning of the words in the text would control.

9. What is your view of stare decisis?

Response: Stare decisis guides courts to stand by decisions and rulings previously decided. It is routinely applied by federal courts.

10. Legislative history refers to the record Congress produces during the process of passing a bill into law, such as detailed reports by congressional committees about a pending bill or statements by key congressional leaders while a law was being drafted. Some federal judges consider legislative history when analyzing the meaning of a statute.

- a. If you are confirmed to serve on the federal bench, would you consult and cite legislative history to analyze or interpret a federal statute?

If confirmed as a district court judge, I would first look to binding Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent when interpreting the text of statutes. In the absence of controlling precedent, the unambiguous meaning of the words in the text would control. Although legislative history can sometimes be consulted, it should be approached with caution as it has not undergone the rigors of bicameralism and presentment as required by the Constitution.

- b. Do you believe that congressional intent matters when interpreting a statute? Why or why not.

Response: Please see my response to question 10(a).

11. According to an academic study, Black men were 65 percent more likely than similarly-situated white men to be charged with federal offenses that carry harsh mandatory minimum sentences.³

³ Sonja B. Starr & M. Marit Rehavi, *Racial Disparity in Federal Criminal Sentences*, 122 J. POL. ECON. 1320, 1323 (2014).

- a. What do you attribute this to?

Response: I am not familiar with this study. If confirmed as a district judge, I pledge to treat every person fairly and impartially without regard to race or ethnicity.

12. A recent report by the United States Sentencing Commission observed demographic differences in sentences imposed during the five-year period studied, with Black men receiving federal prison sentences that were 13.4 percent longer than white men.⁴

- a. What do you attribute this to?

Response: If confirmed as a district judge, I would do my best to fairly and impartially apply the law in every case and consider the individual circumstances of every defendant.

13. What role do you think federal judges, who review difficult, complex criminal cases, can play in ensuring that a person's race did not factor into a prosecutor's decision or other instances where officials exercise discretion in our criminal justice system?

Response: If confirmed as a district judge, I would do my best to fairly and impartially apply the law in every case and consider the individual circumstances of every defendant.

14. Do you believe demographic diversity is an important goal in the executive branch? Why or why not.

Response: As a district court judicial nominee, I do not think it is appropriate for me to comment on the diversity goals of the executive branch.

15. Please indicate whether you have ever published written material or made any public statements relating to the following topics. If so, provide a description of the written or public statement, the date and place/publication where the statement was made or published, and a summary of its subject matter. Mere reference to the list of publications and statements provided in your Senate Judiciary Questionnaire is insufficient; provide specific responses.

If you have not disclosed a copy of the publication or a transcript of the statement to the Judiciary Committee, please attach a copy or link to the materials and please explain why you have not previously disclosed them.

- a. Abortion
- b. Affirmative action
- c. Contraceptives or birth control
- d. Gender-affirming care
- e. Firearms
- f. Immigration

⁴ U.S. SENTENCING COMM'N, DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN SENTENCING 2 (Nov. 2023), https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2023/20231114_Demographic-Differences.pdf.

- g. Same-sex marriage
- h. Miscegenation
- i. Participation of transgender people in sports
- j. Service of transgender people in the U.S. military
- k. Racial discrimination
- l. Sex discrimination
- m. Religious discrimination
- n. Disability discrimination
- o. Climate change or environmental disasters
- p. “DEI” or Diversity Equity and Inclusion

Response: In my capacity as Acting/Interim United States Attorney on three occasions, I have issued press releases and made public statements in my official capacity on cases and initiatives involving illegal possession of firearms, immigration enforcement, and civil rights enforcement. It is my belief that those press releases and statements were referenced in my Senate Judiciary Questionnaire. Other than the statements made in my official capacity as a Department of Justice employee, I do not recall publishing any articles or making public statements on these topics.

16. Under what circumstances would it be acceptable for an executive branch official to ignore or defy a federal court order?

Response: Ordinarily, in the absence of a stay, all parties in a case must obey court orders. Some limited exceptions have been recognized such as when a court lacks subject matter jurisdiction or it is impossible to comply with the order. The Supreme Court has also recognized very limited situations where it is necessary to defy a court order regarding disclosure to be in a position to appeal a contempt finding. *See Mohawk Industries, Inc. v. Carpenter*, 558 U.S. 100, 111 (2009).

- a. If an executive branch official ignores or defies a federal court order, what legal analysis would you employ to determine whether that official should be held in contempt?

Response: If any party defied a court order, I would consult the Federal Rules of Criminal and Civil Procedure as well as binding precedent from the Supreme Court and the Fifth Circuit. I do not believe that further elaboration on the analysis that I would use would be appropriate as this matter could come before me if I am confirmed as a district judge.

- b. Is there any legal basis that would allow an executive branch official to ignore or defy temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions issued by federal district court judges? Please provide each one and the justification.

Response: Please see my response to question 16.

17. Does the president have the power to ignore or nullify laws passed by Congress?

Response: This question asks me to express an opinion on an issue regarding ongoing or potential litigation. Therefore, I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

18. Does the president have the power to withhold funds appropriated by Congress?

Response: Please see my response to question 17.

19. Does the president have the power to discriminate by withholding funds against state or local jurisdictions based on the political party of a jurisdiction's elected officials?

Response: Please see my response to question 17.

20. Does the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution establish that federal laws supersede conflicting state laws?

Response: Yes, if the enforcement of both is not possible.

21. Does the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution apply to non-citizens present in the United States?

Response: Yes. The Fifth Amendment applies to all persons.

22. Is it constitutional for Congress to delegate to federal agencies the power to implement statutes through rulemaking?

Response: The major questions doctrine provides that such delegations should be limited and specific. *See West Virginia v. Environmental Protection Agency*, 597 U.S. 692 (2022). Further elaboration on this topic would require me to express an opinion on an issue regarding ongoing or potential litigation. I cannot provide an answer consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

23. Was *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), correctly decided?

Response: As a district court nominee, it is generally inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not a specific Supreme Court case was correctly decided. Like numerous nominees before me, however, I will make an exception and state unequivocally that *Brown* was correctly decided as it rightly rejected de jure discrimination based on race.

24. Is *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965), binding precedent? Please describe the facts and holding of this case.

Response: *Griswold* is binding precedent. The Supreme Court held that a state law criminalizing the use of contraceptives by a married couple violated the right to marital privacy.

25. Is *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003), binding precedent? Please describe the facts and holding of this case.

Response: *Lawrence* is binding precedent. The Supreme Court held that a state law criminalizing sexual conduct between two consenting adult males was unconstitutional.

26. Is *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644 (2015), binding precedent? Please describe the facts and holding of this case.

Response: *Obergefell* is binding precedent. The Supreme Court held that the Fourteenth Amendment requires a state to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples on the same terms as opposite sex couples.

27. Do you believe that President Biden won the 2020 election? Note that this question is not asking who was certified as president in the 2020 election.

Response: Congress certified Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 election, and he served as the 46th President of the United States.

- a. Did Biden win a majority of the electoral vote in the 2020 election?

Response: Please see my response to question 27.

- b. Do you believe that the results of the 2020 election, meaning the vote count, were accurate? If not, please provide why not and examples.

Response: There was litigation regarding the outcome of the 2020 election. As a judicial nominee, it is inappropriate to provide a personal view on the outcome of a political election.

28. The 22nd Amendment says that “no person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice.”⁵

- a. Do you agree that President Trump was elected to the office of the President in the 2016 election?

Response: Congress certified President Trump as the winner of the 2016 election, and he served as the 45th President of the United States.

- b. Did Trump win a majority of the electoral vote in the 2016 election?

⁵ U.S. CONST. amend. XXII.

Response: Please see my response to question 28(a).

- c. Do you agree that President Trump was elected to the office of the President in the 2024 election?

Response: Congress certified President Trump as the winner of the 2024 election, and he is serving as the 47th President of the United States.

- d. Did Trump win a majority of the electoral vote in the 2024 election?

Response: Please see my response to question 28(c).

- e. Do you agree that the 22nd Amendment, absent a constitutional amendment, prevents President Trump from running for a third presidential term?

Response: The 22nd Amendment provides that “[n]o person shall be elected to the office of President more than twice”

29. Has any official from the White House or the Department of Justice, or anyone else involved in your nomination or confirmation process, instructed or suggested that you not opine on whether any past Supreme Court decisions were correctly decided?

Response: In preparation for the confirmation hearing, I watched numerous past hearings and observed a pattern of nominees noting that it was generally inappropriate for a judicial nominee to express an opinion about whether a Supreme Court case was properly decided. In further preparation for the confirmation hearing, I also received general guidance from the Department of Justice Office of Legal Policy. Based on this preparation and my review of the Canons, I concluded that it was inappropriate for a district court nominee to express an opinion on whether decisions by the Supreme Court were correctly decided.

30. Have you spoken or corresponded with Elon Musk since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

31. Have you spoken or corresponded with any member of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) since November 2024? If yes, identify the member(s) and provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

32. Have you spoken or corresponded with Stephen Miller since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

33. Have you spoken or corresponded with Chad Mizelle since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

34. Have you spoken or corresponded with Pam Bondi since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: I spoke to Attorney General Bondi on September 3, 2025. The Attorney General was attending an event hosted by Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry honoring law enforcement in the Western District of Louisiana. I was serving as the Acting United States Attorney at the time and met with the Attorney General in that capacity.

35. Have you spoken or corresponded with Todd Blanche since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: In my capacity as Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana, I have participated in group video conference calls with Deputy Attorney General Blanche. I do not recall speaking to the Deputy Attorney General during those calls.

36. Have you spoken or corresponded with Emil Bove since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: In my capacity as Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana, I have participated in group video conference calls with Emil Bove when he was employed by the Department of Justice. I do not recall speaking to Mr. Bove during those calls.

37. Have you spoken or corresponded with Leonard Leo since November 2024? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

38. Have you—personally or through any of your affiliated companies or organizations, agents, or employees—provided financial support or other resources to any members of the Proud Boys or of the Oath Keepers for their legal fees or for other purposes? If yes, state the amount of financial support provided, dates provided, and for what purposes.

Response: No.

39. Have you ever spoken or corresponded with any of the following individuals? If yes, provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

- a. Enrique Tarrio
- b. Stewart Rhodes
- c. Kelly Meggs
- d. Kenneth Harrelson
- e. Thomas Caldwell

- f. Jessica Watkins
- g. Roberto Minuta
- h. Edward Vallejo
- i. David Moerschel
- j. Joseph Hackett
- k. Ethan Nordean
- l. Joseph Biggs
- m. Zachary Rehl
- n. Dominic Pezzola
- o. Jeremy Bertino
- p. Julian Khater

Response: No.

40. Have you ever spoken or corresponded with any individuals convicted and later pardoned of offenses related to the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol? If yes, identify the individual(s) and provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

41. Have you ever been demoted, terminated, or experienced any other adverse employment action?

Response: No.

- a. If yes, please describe the events that led to the adverse employment action.
- b. If no, please affirm that, since becoming a legal adult, you have left each place of employment voluntarily and not subject to the request or suggestion of any employer.

Response: I affirm that I have left each place of employment voluntarily and not at the request or suggestion of an employer.

42. Federal judges must file annual financial disclosure reports and periodic transaction reports. If you are confirmed to the federal bench, do you commit to filing these disclosures and to doing so on time?

Response: Yes.

43. Article III Project (A3P) “defends constitutionalist judges and the rule of law.” According to Mike Davis, Founder & President of A3P, “I started the Article III Project in 2019 after I helped Trump win the Gorsuch and Kavanaugh fights. We saw then how relentless—and evil—too many of today’s Democrats have become. They’re Marxists who hate America. They believe in censorship. They have politicized and weaponized our justice systems.”⁶

⁶ <https://www.article3project.org/about>

- a. Do you agree with the above statement?

Response: I have no familiarity with this organization or this statement. As a district court nominee, it is inappropriate for me to comment on the political statements of others.

- b. Have you discussed any aspect of your nomination to the federal bench with any officials from or anyone directly associated with A3P, or did anyone do so on your behalf? If yes, identify the individual(s) and provide the dates, mode, and content of those discussions and communications.

Response: No.

- c. Are you currently in contact with anyone associated with A3P? If so, who?

Response: No.

- d. Have you ever been in contact with anyone associated with A3P? If so, who?

Response: No.

44. Since you were first approached about the possibility of being nominated, did anyone associated with the Trump Administration or Senate Republicans provide you guidance or advice about which cases to list on your Senate Judiciary Questionnaire (SJQ)?

Response: No.

- a. If so, who? What advice did they give?
- b. Did anyone suggest that you omit or include any particular case or type of case in your SJQ?

Response: No one suggested that I include or omit any particular case.

45. During your selection process did you talk with any officials from or anyone directly associated with the Article III Project, or did anyone do so on your behalf? If so, what was the nature of those discussions?

Response: No.

46. During your selection process did you talk with any officials from or anyone directly associated with the Federalist Society, or did anyone do so on your behalf? If so, what was the nature of those discussions?

Response: No.

47. Please explain, with particularity, the process whereby you answered these written questions, including whether you personally drafted initial responses and whether anyone helped draft, review, or edit the answers.

Response: Similar to my preparation for the confirmation hearing, I reviewed responses of numerous prior nominees before answering these questions. I personally drafted the initial responses myself. I asked others to proofread the responses for clarity and typographical errors. Attorneys at the Department of Justice Office of Legal Policy also reviewed my responses.

Questions for the Record

Alexander C. Van Hook – nominee to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana
Sen. Adam Schiff (CA)

1. When interpreting an ambiguous statute, what will you first look to in order to resolve the ambiguity?

Response: If confirmed as a district court judge, I would first look to binding Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit precedent when interpreting the text of statutes. In the absence of controlling precedent, I would interpret the text of a statute based on the meaning of the words when the statute was enacted. Ambiguities can sometimes be resolved by considering the text in context with other provisions in the overall statutory scheme.

2. Do you believe evidence of legislative intent beyond the words of the text, such as the history behind the passage of a bill, is ever relevant? If so, what kinds of evidence are acceptable to you, or which are the most and least probative?

Response: Considering the problem that Congress was trying to address can be instructive. Although legislative history can be considered consulted, it should be approached with caution as it has not undergone the rigors of bicameralism and presentment as required by the Constitution.

3. What is the role of a federal district judge in our tripartite system of government?

Response: Article III of the Constitution provides that, “The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.” The district court is an inferior court established by Congress and its primary role is to serve as the trial court for the judicial branch.

4. How can a federal district judge operate as a check on the legislative branch?

Response: Assuming that there is a case or controversy properly before the court, a district judge can operate as a check on the legislative branch by ensuring that legislation passed by Congress is constitutional.

Will you commit to exercising full and complete impartiality in all cases, even those in which the President or his associates have a vested interest?

Response: Yes.

5. What is your interpretation of Article 2, Section 1, “The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America”?

Response: The President of the United States is the head of the executive branch and Commander in Chief of the armed forces. The Constitution gives him the power, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to appoint leadership in each executive department. To the extent that this question asks me to comment on the constitutional limits of executive power, I cannot do so consistent with my ethical obligations as a district court judicial nominee. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

6. What is your interpretation of the unitary executive theory? Do you subscribe to that theory?

Response: My understanding of the unitary executive theory is that the President of the United States is the sole head of the executive branch and has the discretion to run it as he sees fit, to include the removal of executive officials. In the past, the Supreme Court has placed some limits on this power. *See Humphrey’s Executor v. United States*, 295 U.S. 602 (1935). Further elaboration on my part, as a judicial nominee, would be inappropriate as there are numerous cases in the courts considering the limits of executive authority. *See* Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, Canon 3(A)(6).

- a. What would be the role of an independent judiciary in a government with a unitary executive?

Response: Please see my response to question 6.