POSITION DESCRIPTION

**solicitor general, Department of justice**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Judiciary |
| Agency Mission | To enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law, ensure public safety against foreign and domestic threats, provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime, seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior and ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans. |
| Position Overview | The solicitor general supervises and conducts all of the litigation of the federal government before the Supreme Court of the United States. The United States is involved in about two-thirds of all of the cases that the Supreme Court decides on the merits each year. |
| Compensation | Level III $165,300 (5 U.S.C. § 5314)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | The Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | In 2015, DOJ had 112,100 full-time equivalents and an annual budget of $33.136 billion. The solicitor general oversees four deputies, sixteen assistants, four recent law school graduates serving one-year fellowships and a support staff. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Represents the interests of the United States before the Supreme Court and is responsible to oversee appellate and certain other litigation on behalf of the United States in the lower federal and state courts.
* Conducting, or assigning and supervising all Supreme Court cases, including appeals, petitions for and in opposition to certiorari, briefs and arguments.
* Determining whether and to what extent, appeals will be taken by the government or whether the government will file a brief amicus curiae in any appellate court.
* Determining when and whether the United States should intervene in any court to defend the constitutionality of an Act of Congress and assist the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General and the Associate Attorney General, as requested, in the development of department programs and policy.
* Conducts the oral arguments before the Supreme Court. Those cases not argued by the Solicitor General personally are assigned either to an assistant to the Solicitor General or to another government attorney. The vast majority of government cases are argued by the Solicitor General or one of the office attorneys.
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Legal philosophy consistent the president-elect’s
* Extensive Supreme Court litigation experience
* Significant management experience in a legal setting
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| Competencies | * Exceptional skill as an oral advocate
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Ian Gershengorn (2016 to 2017) (Acting) - Principal Deputy Solicitor General; Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Division; Partner, Jenner and Block; Special Assistant and Counsel to Deputy Attorney General; Special Assistant to the Attorney General |
| Donald Verrilli (2011 to 2016) - Deputy Counsel to President Obama; Associate Deputy Attorney General; Partner, Jenner and Block, Co-Chair of the firm’s Supreme Court practice |
| Neal Katyal (2010 to 2011) (Acting) - Principal Deputy Solicitor General of the United States; National Security Advisor, Department of Justice; Clerk, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Stephen Breyer  |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)