

Venus D. Johnson

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Areas of Focus

State Attorneys General

Government Controversies
and Public Policy Litigation

Congressional
Investigations

Investigations, Compliance,
and Defense

Appellate and Supreme
Court



Overview

A former Chief Deputy Attorney General and previous Associate Attorney General of California, Venus D. Johnson has extensive experience leading complex, high-stakes matters at the highest levels of state government that intersect law, policy, regulation, legislation and politics. As part of Jenner & Block's State Attorneys General Practice, she draws on this background to advise clients facing investigations, regulatory challenges, and enforcement actions.

As the second-ranking official at the California Department of Justice, Venus oversaw a department of approximately 5,000 employees, including more than 1,200 attorneys, and served as the principal liaison between the Attorney General's office, the Governor's office, and the state Legislature. Her work regularly required approving and overseeing nearly all major departmental matters, including high-profile matters involving privacy, technology, consumer protection, environmental protection, healthcare policy and transactions, housing and development, and civil rights.

Venus has significant experience navigating politically sensitive and complex matters across multiple stakeholder groups, including state and local officials, other state attorneys general, federal agencies, community organizations, and private sector entities. She has played a key role in multi-state litigation and Democratic AG coordination efforts and has deep knowledge of how state government interfaces with federal regulatory agencies, particularly during administration transitions.

Her experience includes overseeing environmental and energy litigation, addressing housing policy disputes involving cities and counties, overseeing civil rights investigations of law enforcement and education systems, and managing crisis situations involving in-custody deaths and juvenile justice oversight. She has extensive appellate experience, including matters before the California Supreme Court, and frequently engaged with legislative bodies to sponsor or support bills making their way through the legislative process.

Venus began her career as a Deputy District Attorney in Alameda County, where she prosecuted serious violent crimes including homicides and sexual assaults. She earned her JD with distinction from University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, where she graduated in the top 20% of her class, and her BA in Political Science from Loyola Marymount University.

Areas of Focus

- State Attorneys General
- Government Controversies and Public Policy Litigation
- Congressional Investigations
- Investigations, Compliance, and Defense
- Appellate and Supreme Court
- Critical and Emerging Technologies
- Energy
- ESG: Environmental, Social, and Governance
- Life Sciences
- Technology
- AI Task Force
- Reproductive Health Task Force

Credentials

Admissions

- California

Education

- University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, JD, 2005
- Loyola Marymount University, BA, 2001

Service / Recognition

Awards

- Kamala Harris Woman of Excellence Award, Charles Houston Bar Association, 2020
- Emerging Civic Leaders “40 under 40,” Empowerment Congress, 2016
- Asian American Prosecutors Association, Award of Distinction, 2015
- Hot List Honoree, Lawyers of Color, 2014
- California’s 50 Fast Track Lawyers, *The Recorder*, 2012
- Nations Best Advocates, 40 Lawyers Under 40, National Bar Association, 2010
- Rising Star Award, Minority Bar Coalition, 2009

Community

- McGeorge School of Law Advocacy Board of Advisors, Board Member, 2021
- Stanford-Harvard Project on Technology and Policing, Advisory Board Member, 2017–2018
- The State Bar of California Commission on Access to Justice, Commissioner, 2013–2018
- City of Oakland, Budget Advisory Committee, Commissioner, 2013–2014
- Truman National Security Project, Political Partner, 2013
- Emerge California, Graduate, 2013
- Holy Names High School, Board of Directors, 2012–2016
- Charles Houston Bar Association, Board of Directors, 2007–2014
- California Association of Black Lawyers, Judicial Committee, Board Member, 2012–2013