

# Timothy Ford And Jason Rittie Quoted In Law360 Article, "NJ's Judicial Vacancies To Collide With COVID-19 Crisis"

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By Bill Wichert

The ongoing ban on New Jersey state jury trials due to the [COVID-19](#) pandemic could make a bad situation even worse for courts already facing judge shortages as they struggle to get through the cases piling up during the crisis, leading to further gridlock in Garden State litigation.

When the trials ultimately resume — a conundrum facing attorneys and court officials — state judges may have less time to spend on other civil matters or they might be reassigned to handle criminal trials, experts said. Those concerns loom as state Superior Court vacancies recently reached more than 10%.

[Timothy J. Ford](#) of [Einhorn Barbarito Frost & Botwinick PC](#) sees the anticipated trial backlog as a "perfect storm" on the horizon.

"Between the shortage of judges, the pandemic and cases are getting delayed, the potential that some judges may be reassigned to criminal to handle the backlog ... that's what could lend itself to substantial delays and inabilities for people to get reasonable trial dates, which have already been extended," Ford said.

[Jason R. Rittie](#) of [Einhorn Barbarito](#) noted that some state courts had been facing a trial backlog before the pandemic due to the judicial vacancies.

"Some of those courts were already struggling trying to manage their jury trials because they just didn't have enough judges available, which is still an issue for some courts," Rittie said. "I think this pandemic's going to make it even worse because you have less judges still."

"Now you're going to have a backlog of cases that were already on some other backlogged cases before that," he added.

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