Justice Update: Monday, September 12

1. This week the House and Senate are back in session. They have a lot to accomplish before recess to campaign for the midterms. The House is working on a bill to ban lawmakers from owning and trading stocks. The Senate is working on the Respect for Marriage Act which would protect same-sex marriage at the federal level.

2. Government funding ends on Sept. 30th and the Senate is working on a funding bill The current plan is for the House to consider the stopgap bill next week, leaving plenty of time, in theory, to get it through the Senate and to the President's desk.

3. **Respect for Marriage Act:** Senators are still working on a compromise to the already tepid "Respect for Marriage Act" which, if passed, would protect already existing same-sex marriages at the federal level and also repeal DOMA. Negotiators believe they will work out a compromise to protect the views of religious groups that don't recognize same-sex marriage, which would then attract more Republican support for the legislation.

4. **Israel**: For the first time the Israel Defense Forces have admitted that there is a "high possibility" Palestinian-American Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was shot and killed by Israeli fire while covering an Israeli military operation in Jenin in May. No charges will be brought against the soldiers.

5. **Ukraine**: Russian forces in the Kharkiv region are retreating after a weekend push by Ukraine to reclaim the territory. The war resulting from the Russian attack on Ukraine has been going on for more than 200 days. To date, the U.S. has sent over $10 billion to Ukraine in the past six months.

6. **Healthcare**: The President is launching a "cancer moonshot" this week to cut cancer deaths in half in the next 25 years. It is a continuation of this same effort he had when he was Vice President.

7. **Poverty**: A new report shows a promising drop in child poverty by 59 percent since 1993," with need receding on nearly every front. Child poverty has fallen in every state, and it has fallen by about the same degree among children who are white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian, living with one parent or two, and in native or immigrant households. Deep poverty, a form of especially severe deprivation, has fallen nearly as much."

8. **Abortion**: Michigan, Montana, and Kentucky have ballot measures this fall to restrict abortion and California and Vermont on cementing abortion access. It is anticipated that more states will have abortion referendums in a post-Dobbs climate.

9. **Labor**: This Friday the threat of a major rail worker strike has still not been averted. A strike could bring nearly 30% of the nation's freight to a grinding halt. The strike is centered around staffing levels and scheduling rules and so far negotiations have not come to a satisfactory conclusion for the union workers. A recent poll showed that 71% of Americans support unions. The House is holding a hearing this week on union organizing and it's expected a Starbucks union organizer, Ms. Michelle Eisen will testify.

10. **Taiwan**: This week the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will mark up a controversial bill that would strengthen Taiwan economically and militarily.

11. **Refugees**: Early reports say the Biden administration is looking to set the refugee admission cap at 125,000 for FY 2023.