

# **REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES**

**March 11, 2025**

The Judicial Conference of the United States convened on March 11, 2025, pursuant to the call of the Chief Justice of the United States issued under 28 U.S.C. § 331. The Chief Justice presided, and the following members of the Conference were present:

First Circuit:

Chief Judge David Jeremiah Barron  
Judge William E. Smith,  
District of Rhode Island

Second Circuit:

Chief Judge Debra Ann Livingston  
Chief Judge Margo K. Brodie,  
Eastern District of New York

Third Circuit:

Chief Judge Michael A. Chagares  
Chief Judge Mitchell S. Goldberg,  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Fourth Circuit:

Chief Judge Albert Diaz  
Judge John Bailey,  
Northern District of West Virginia

Fifth Circuit:

Chief Judge Jennifer Walker Elrod  
Chief Judge Debra M. Brown,  
Northern District of Mississippi

Sixth Circuit:

Chief Judge Jeffrey S. Sutton  
Judge S. Thomas Anderson,  
Western District of Tennessee

Seventh Circuit:

Chief Judge Diane S. Sykes  
Chief Judge Virginia M. Kendall,  
Northern District of Illinois

Eighth Circuit:

Chief Judge Steven M. Colloton  
Chief Judge Roberto A. Lange,  
District of South Dakota

Ninth Circuit:

Chief Judge Mary H. Murguia  
Judge Leslie E. Kobayashi,  
District of Hawaii

Tenth Circuit:

Chief Judge Jerome A. Holmes  
Judge William Paul Johnson,  
District of New Mexico

Eleventh Circuit:

Chief Judge William H. Pryor, Jr.  
Judge Lisa Wood,  
Southern District of Georgia

District of Columbia Circuit:

Chief Judge Srikanth Srinivasan  
Chief Judge James Emanuel Boasberg,  
District of Columbia

Federal Circuit:

Chief Judge Kimberly A. Moore

Court of International Trade:

Chief Judge Mark Barnett

Also participating in this session of the Conference were the following current or incoming Judicial Conference committee chairs: Circuit Judges Nancy L. Moritz, Amy J. St. Eve, Michael Y. Scudder, Richard J. Sullivan, and William B. Traxler, Jr.; District Judges John D. Bates, Nancy Ellen Brasel, David G. Campbell, Edmond E-Min Chang, James C. Dever III, Jesse M. Furman, Nicholas G. Garaufis, Darrin P. Gayles, Robert James Jonker, William L. Osteen, Jr., Mary Elizabeth Phillips, Robin L. Rosenberg, Cathy Seibel, Rodney W. Sippel, Glenn T. Suddaby, and Gregory F. Van Tatenhove; and Bankruptcy Judges Rebecca Buehler Connelly and Julie Ann Manning. Attending as the bankruptcy judge and magistrate judge observers, respectively, were Bankruptcy Judge Alan S. Trust and Magistrate Judge Timothy Adam Baker. James N. Ishida of the Fourth Circuit represented the circuit executives.

Participating from the Administrative Office of the United States Courts were Judge Robert J. Conrad, Jr., Director; Lee Ann Bennett, Deputy Director; William S. Meyers, General Counsel; Joshua C. Lewis, Judicial Conference Secretariat Officer; Karen A. Schroeder, Deputy Judicial Conference Secretariat Officer; Peter B. Owen, Acting Legislative Affairs Officer; and Peter P. Kaplan, Public Affairs Officer. John S. Cooke, Director, and Clara J. Altman, Deputy Director, Federal Judicial Center, as well as Judge Carlton W. Reeves, Chair, and Kenneth P. Cohen, Staff Director, United States Sentencing Commission, also participated, as did Judge Robert M. Dow, Jr., Counselor to the Chief Justice and Ethan V. Torrey, Supreme Court Legal Counsel.

Senators Susan Collins, Richard Durbin, and Sheldon Whitehouse and Representatives Steny Hoyer, Darrell Issa, Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, and Jamie Raskin spoke on matters pending in Congress of interest to the Conference.

## **REPORTS**

Judge Conrad reported to the Judicial Conference on the judicial business of the courts and on matters relating to the Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AO). Mr. Cooke spoke to the Conference about Federal Judicial Center programs, and

Judge Reeves reported on United States Sentencing Commission activities. Judge St. Eve presented a special report on the Strategic Budget Initiative and related matters, and Judge Sullivan presented a special report on matters relating to judicial security.

## **ELECTION**

The Judicial Conference elected to the Board of the Federal Judicial Center for a term of four years, Judge Michelle Harner, United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland, and Magistrate Judge Suzanne Mitchell, United States District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma, to succeed Chief Judge Mildred Cabán, United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Puerto Rico, and Magistrate Judge Anthony Porcelli, United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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### **MISCELLANEOUS ACTIONS**

The Executive Committee—

- Acting on behalf of the Judicial Conference on an expedited basis, requested that the Conference Secretary send a letter to originators of various public written allegations of willful errors or omissions in filers' financial disclosure reports that had been referred to the Committee on Financial Disclosure between 2023 and 2024, advising of the Conference's resolution of their referral requests.
- Determined to study the propriety of the Judicial Conference accepting future requests to consider whether to refer justices of the Supreme Court to the Attorney General for reasonable cause to believe a filer has made willful errors or omissions in a financial disclosure report under 5 U.S.C. § 13106(b).
- Requested that the Committee on Judicial Conduct and Disability consider giving guidance to circuit judicial councils about several specific practical issues that may arise prior to a judicial impeachment referral to the Judicial Conference.

- Approved an amendment to the fiscal year 2026 budget request to include additional funding related to cybersecurity and information technology (IT) modernization.
- Approved, on behalf of the Judicial Conference on an expedited basis, a recommendation of the Committee on the Administration of the Bankruptcy System to grant a request from the Tenth Circuit Judicial Council for the multidistrict designation of a bankruptcy judge in the Eastern District of Oklahoma to serve in the Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma for five years, *Guide to Judiciary Policy (Guide)*, Vol. 3, Ch. 14.
- Agreed with the determination of the Committee on the Judicial Branch that inflationary adjustments to judges' maximum daily travel subsistence allowance and maximum reimbursement for the actual cost of meals should be allowed to go into effect, *Guide*, Vol. 19, Ch. 2, § 250.20.20(b)(1) and § 250.20.30.
- Approved costs related to the 2026 Ninth Circuit judicial conference, pursuant to § 230(a)(2) of the Judicial Conference regulations on meeting planning and administration, *Guide*, Vol. 24, Ch. 2.
- Reviewed the determinations of Conference committees as to whether outstanding Conference-approved legislative proposals within their respective jurisdictions may warrant modification or rescission.

## **COMMITTEE ON AUDITS AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE ACCOUNTABILITY**

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### **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on Audits and AO Accountability reported that it was updated on the status and results of various audits and engagements, including audits of chapter 7 and chapter 13 debtors in bankruptcy administrator districts, audits of Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) and the Central Violations Bureau (CVB), the judiciary's retirement funds, and the judiciary's appropriations and cyclical financial audits of court units and federal public defender organizations. The Committee was briefed on the AO's progress in response to recommendations from completed audits. The Committee also was updated on the planning and timeline for a major upgrade to the Judiciary Integrated Financial Management System (JIFMS), the

judiciary’s accounting system of record, and the subsequent implementation of changes to the judiciary’s financial reporting model. The Committee was briefed on the status of the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Working Group, which held its first meeting in October 2024.

## **COMMITTEE ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BANKRUPTCY SYSTEM**

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### **BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS**

The Judicial Conference conducts a biennial assessment to evaluate requests for additional bankruptcy judgeships and conversion to permanent status or extension of existing temporary judgeships, and transmits its recommendations to Congress, which establishes the number of bankruptcy judgeships in each judicial district (28 U.S.C. § 152(b)(2)). Based on the results of the 2024 biennial assessment of additional judgeship needs, the Committee on the Administration of the Bankruptcy System recommended that the Judicial Conference ask Congress to convert 7 temporary bankruptcy judgeships to permanent status and extend 11 temporary bankruptcy judgeships for an additional 5 years, as set forth below (“T/P” denotes conversion of temporary to permanent status; “E” denotes extension):

Puerto Rico	1 E
Delaware	7 T/P
New Jersey	1 E
Maryland	1 E
North Carolina (Eastern)	1 E
South Carolina	1 E
Michigan (Eastern)	2 E
Nevada	1 E
Florida (Middle)	1 E
Florida (Southern)	2 E

The Conference approved the Committee’s recommendation.

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### **OFFICIAL DUTY STATIONS**

On recommendation of the Committee on the Administration of the Bankruptcy System, and in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 152(b)(1), the

Judicial Conference approved a request from the Seventh Circuit Judicial Council to transfer an official bankruptcy judge duty station in the Western District of Wisconsin from Eau Claire to Madison.

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## **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on the Administration of the Bankruptcy System reported that it presented to the Judicial Conference a third and final report, prepared by the Federal Judicial Center in consultation with the Committee, regarding the pilot project to evaluate horizontal consolidation of bankruptcy clerks' offices, approved by the Conference in March 2016 (JCUS-MAR 2016, p. 8). The Committee also formally concluded the pilot and discontinued seeking additional court pairs to participate. The Committee received an update from the Federal Judicial Center on the status of its study to develop new bankruptcy case weights, which began in October 2023. The Committee continued to defer consideration of whether to identify additional courts to participate in the bankruptcy judgeship vacancy pilot, approved by the Conference in September 2014 (JCUS-SEP 2014, p. 7), until bankruptcy filings increase. The Committee also was briefed on the status of and recommendations on various strategic budget initiatives and provided feedback to the Committee on Judicial Resources on the initiatives on which the Committee was asked to consult. Finally, the Committee discussed case assignment issues that have arisen in bankruptcy courts in recent years and will continue to consider potential policy and guidance in this area, in collaboration with the Committee on Court Administration and Case Management.

## **COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET**

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### **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on the Budget reported that it discussed the judiciary's overall budget outlook and the status of the fiscal year (FY) 2025 and FY 2026 appropriations. In addition, the Committee discussed guidance for preparing the FY 2027 budget request and the continued importance of congressional outreach amid the highly polarized budget environment. The Committee also reviewed committees' evaluations of cost-saving initiatives as part of the judiciary's strategic budget initiative, and developed a report summarizing each participating committee's ongoing and final initiatives. The Committee noted that it anticipates a positive long-term result for the judiciary as final initiatives are implemented.

## **COMMITTEE ON CODES OF CONDUCT**

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### **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on Codes of Conduct reported that since its last report to the Conference in September 2024, the Committee received 27 requests for a private Committee opinion and issued 27 such opinions. During this period, the average response time to a request was nine days. In addition, the Committee chair responded to 25 requests for informal advice, individual Committee members responded to 263 requests, and Committee staff counsel responded to 600 requests, for a total of 888 responses to requests for informal advice during the past six months.

## **COMMITTEE ON COURT ADMINISTRATION AND CASE MANAGEMENT**

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### **PLACES OF HOLDING COURT**

At the request of the Southern District of Texas, and on recommendation of the Committee on Court Administration and Case Management, the Judicial Conference agreed to seek or support legislation to amend 28 U.S.C. § 124(b)(2) to add College Station as a place of holding court in the Southern District of Texas. The district sought this change to reduce burdens associated with making court appearances, filing documents, reporting for probation visits, or serving on juries for residents of the four northernmost counties in the Houston Division, which are more than 100 miles from the Houston courthouse.

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### **RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

The retention and disposition of judiciary records is controlled by records disposition schedules jointly established by the Judicial Conference and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) (28 U.S.C. § 457). At this session, the Judicial Conference approved two recommendations of the Committee on Court Administration and Case Management related to these schedules, as set forth below.

Paper Record Transfers. The Committee recommended revisions to Records Disposition Schedules 1 and 2 to reflect NARA's June 30, 2024 discontinuation of accepting paper records, noting the necessity of updating these schedules to remove



transfer instructions and disposition deadlines tied to paper transfer. Because the update would not change the required retention periods for these records, NARA indicated that its concurrence on the updates would not be necessary. The Conference approved the Committee's recommendation.

Grand Juror Notes. While courts have the authority to destroy grand juror notes to aid grand jurors in complying with the secrecy requirements of Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure 6(e)(2)(B)(i), the records disposition schedules are silent regarding the treatment of grand juror notes. Because grand jury notes are classified as nonrecord materials, instructions regarding their retention and disposal may be established by the Conference alone without NARA approval. On recommendation of the Committee, the Conference approved an addition to Records Disposition Schedule 2 to state that notes taken by grand jurors are nonrecords and may be destroyed as necessary to prevent unauthorized disclosure.

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## COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee on Court Administration and Case Management reported that it agreed to continue to study the implementation of the Judicial Conference's 2023 policy on remote public access to court proceedings, including developments in related caselaw, and to issue revised guidance as necessary. The Committee supported the AO's further development of a proposal to broaden current policies for access to case management data by judiciary users in connection with the Case Management/Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) system modernization project. The Committee agreed to further explore initiatives in the Northern District of New York involving the development and installation of kiosks in county correctional facilities with videoconferencing and digital signing capabilities and the use of videoconferencing kiosks to serve the public in unstaffed clerk's office space, as well as similar initiatives utilized by other courts, in coordination with other relevant Conference committees. In addition, the Federal Judicial Center briefed the Committee on its ongoing study of the scope of unredacted personal information in court filings and opinions and reported plans to develop a webpage with redaction resources for courts.

## **COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL LAW**

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### **CONSOLIDATION OF PROBATION AND PRETRIAL SERVICES OFFICES**

In 2005, the Judicial Conference approved a policy that districts maintaining separate probation and pretrial services offices should consider the consolidation of these offices whenever a chief probation or pretrial services officer retires or is transferred and consolidation may serve as a means to achieve additional economies and efficiencies without compromising the mission of pretrial services (JCUS-MAR 2005, pp. 14-15). The Conference amended this policy in 2015 to further require that the chief judge of any district court that decides to maintain separate probation and pretrial services offices upon the vacancy of one of the chief positions submit a report to the chief circuit judge—with a copy provided to the Director of the AO—explaining their decision (JCUS-MAR 2015, pp. 12-13). In furtherance of a judiciary-wide strategic budget initiative to identify ways to help limit the growth of the judiciary’s budget, the Committee on Criminal Law recommended that the Judicial Conference amend its 2015 policy so as to require that the report include (1) the estimated savings to the judiciary that could result from consolidation; and (2) pretrial performance metrics for the district, as compared to circuit and national averages, including metrics adjusted for risk levels and seriousness of charged offenses. The Committee noted that this further enhancement to the policy would help ensure that these factors are taken into consideration and prompt constructive conversations about operational effectiveness when a district is deliberating whether to consolidate. The Conference adopted the Committee’s recommendation.

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### **MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT SERVICES**

Under 18 U.S.C. § 3672, the Director of the AO has explicit authority to contract for services to provide for the detection and treatment of persons on supervision who suffer from drug dependency or a psychiatric or mental health disorder. Substance use disorder treatment is the largest expenditure in the judiciary’s treatment services program, though the availability and costs of treatment through private treatment providers varies greatly from district to district. The Committee on Criminal Law noted that the employment of in-house treatment staff has the potential to reduce or control costs for court-ordered services, improve quality of treatment, increase accountability for services provided, improve access to services (particularly in districts where few contract providers are available), and increase the judiciary’s ability to consistently collect, analyze, and integrate data related to treatment effectiveness and outcomes, among other potential benefits. To facilitate initiation of

a pilot in-house treatment services program, the Committee recommended, and the Conference approved, seeking legislation to explicitly authorize probation and pretrial services offices to provide direct in-house mental health and substance use treatment services.

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## **COMPETENCY RESTORATION EVALUATION AND TREATMENT**

Under 18 U.S.C. §§ 4241-4248, the Attorney General is required to hospitalize in a suitable facility a defendant whom the court has determined to be mentally incompetent to stand trial, and to conduct an evaluation of the potential for restoring competency within four months, to be followed by restoration treatment for those whose conditions are amenable to treatment. Noting long-standing and substantial delays in the average wait times for hospitalization in a suitable Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facility (e.g., approximately six months) due primarily to a lack of bedspace in such facilities, the Committee on Criminal Law proposed seeking statutory amendments to make commitment to BOP custody for the purposes of evaluating restorability and providing restoration treatment optional rather than mandatory (which would permit such evaluations and treatment to be furnished instead by local community providers), and to establish a time limit for hospitalization in cases where the defendant is committed to BOP custody.

On recommendation of the Committee, the Judicial Conference agreed to seek amendments to 18 U.S.C. § 4241(d) to address the continual delays in competency restoration evaluations and treatment by:

- a. Eliminating the requirement that evaluation of restorability and restoration treatment be conducted in the custody of the Attorney General; and
- b. Where the court commits a defendant who has been found mentally incompetent to stand trial for evaluation of restorability and treatment to the custody of the Attorney General, specifying a time limit by which the Attorney General must hospitalize such defendant.

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## **PROBATION CENTENNIAL RESOLUTION**

On recommendation of the Committee on Criminal Law, the Judicial Conference endorsed the following resolution in honor of the centennial of the

**Federal Probation Act:**

The Judicial Conference of the United States recognizes the 100th anniversary of the Federal Probation Act and honors all those who have served the United States Probation and Pretrial Services System for their commitment to the courts, for promoting the fair administration of justice, and for protecting the community.

On March 4, 1925, President Calvin Coolidge signed the Probation Act. This landmark legislation provided judges with an alternative to sending people to prison. To implement this new sentencing option, the Act also authorized the creation of the Federal Probation System and the appointment of probation officers. From the beginning, the duties of probation officers included remaining informed of the conduct and condition of each person under supervision and using all suitable means, not inconsistent with the conditions imposed by the court, to aid the person on probation and bring about improvements in their conduct and condition.

The duties of probation officers have expanded over the past 100 years. Probation officers may supervise individuals placed on parole, conditional discharge, pretrial release, and supervised release. They use evidence-based approaches to assess risks and needs and use interventions designed to change behaviors and reduce recidivism. They use an array of tools and techniques to enforce court-ordered restrictions and monitor the activities of people on supervision to prevent the commission of new crimes. Their investigations assist the courts with critical decisions related to pretrial release or detention and sentencing. They aid victims by facilitating the collection of restitution.

In honor of its centennial, the Judicial Conference of the United States expresses its sincere appreciation to the employees of the United States Probation and Pretrial Services System for their vital contributions to the federal judiciary and to communities across the country.

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**COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on Criminal Law reported on its continuing discussion of potential ways of incorporating evidence-based strategies into pretrial services, including: (1) its support for enhancing systemwide literacy in the use of the Federal Pretrial Risk Assessment (PTRA) tool; and (2) its engagement with the

Federal Judicial Center on its investigation into a potential pilot to study the impact on judicial decision-making of supplementing the bail report with PTRAs information. In a related effort, the Committee endorsed a revised Form AO 472 (Order of Detention Pending Trial). As part of its work on the judiciary's strategic budget initiative, the Committee endorsed various efforts to promote the use of remote meeting technology and develop best practices in that area, encourage court units to reduce overall office space, conduct further research and outreach on achieving efficiencies in supervision through the appropriate use of early termination of supervision, and consider providing incentives and removing disincentives for districts that choose to consolidate probation and pretrial services offices. The Committee discussed possible legislative proposals that would limit the impact of mandatory detention under 18 U.S.C. § 3143(a)(2), but deferred making any recommendation until further research on case data and costs is compiled. Finally, the Committee provided information on the ongoing initiative to replace the Probation and Pretrial Services Automated Case Tracking System (PACTS) with a new system, PACTS360.

## **COMMITTEE ON DEFENDER SERVICES**

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### **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on Defender Services reported that it discussed ongoing efforts to ensure that all Criminal Justice Act (CJA) clients have meaningful access to counsel during their initial appearance hearings as required by law, procedural rules, and judiciary policy. In addition, the Committee was updated on the development of best practices for federal defenders' use of generative artificial intelligence in legal research and writing, consistent with rules of professional conduct and guidance from state and national bar associations. The Committee noted the importance for all CJA practitioners—who have ethical obligations to remain proficient in the use of technology to benefit their clients—to have access to and training on such technologies. Finally, the Committee met with then-Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco and discussed the need for continued collaboration on issues that have a significant impact on the Defender Services program, including the remote detention of pretrial detainees and the federal death penalty.

## COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL-STATE JURISDICTION

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### COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee on Federal-State Jurisdiction reported that it continued its analysis of the appealability of sua sponte remand orders in class action matters and added a new item to its Jurisdictional Improvements Project—the citizenship of unincorporated entities for the purpose of venue. The Committee received a report from its state chief justice members, discussing, among other items, post-pandemic caseloads in the state courts, judicial security, and public trust and confidence in courts. The Committee also discussed recent developments and legislative activity relating to administrative law following the repeal of the *Chevron* doctrine.

## COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

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### COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee on Financial Disclosure reported that it was updated on the continuing development and implementation of the new electronic financial disclosure filing and release system, including its anticipated national implementation in early 2026. The Committee approved a revised version of the filing instructions—renamed the Judiciary Financial Disclosure Filing Instructions (Filing Instructions)—that consolidates instructions for the Form AO-10 (Financial Disclosure Report) and the Form AO-10T (Periodic Transaction Report) and incorporates, among other things, the relocation of examples of how to complete financial disclosure reports from the financial disclosure regulations to the Filing Instructions, the addition of several new examples regarding disclosure of gifts and reimbursements, and the addition of guidance on reporting cryptocurrency.

As of December 13, 2024, the Committee had received 4,504 financial disclosure reports and certifications for calendar year 2023 (out of a total of 4,552 required to file), including 1,334 annual reports from Supreme Court justices and Article III judges; 304 annual reports from bankruptcy judges; 569 annual reports from magistrate judges; 1,795 annual reports from judicial employees; and 502 reports from nominee, initial, and final filers.

## COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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### COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee on Information Technology reported that it received an update on efforts to modernize the judiciary's CM/ECF system, including the status of current development activities, the anticipated timeline for implementation, and projected funding requirements for fiscal year (FY) 2025 and FY 2026. Given the importance of modernizing CM/ECF, the Committee urged expediting the project. In addition, the Committee received an update on plans for a Judiciary Cybersecurity Protection Profile (JCPP) project, which aims to further the judiciary's ability to effectively measure the cybersecurity posture of individual courts and business units in an automated manner. The Committee expressed its support for an AO initiative to pilot adoption of the executive branch's Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) program within the AO. The Committee also agreed to request that the Committee on the Budget consider restoring certain reductions made to IT areas of the judiciary's FY 2026 budget request (*see supra*, p. 5). The Committee received an update on the AO's plans to deliver an IT Workforce Strategic Plan by July 2025 and urged its expeditious completion. Finally, the Committee was informed of the successful completion of the effort to relocate one of the judiciary's internet data centers on schedule and within budget.

## COMMITTEE ON INTERCIRCUIT ASSIGNMENTS

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### COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee on Intercircuit Assignments reported that 75 Article III judges undertook 104 intercircuit assignments from July 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024. During this time, the Committee continued to disseminate information about intercircuit assignments and aided courts requesting assistance by identifying and obtaining judges willing to take assignments. The Committee also reviewed and concurred with 13 proposed intercircuit assignments of bankruptcy judges and 4 of magistrate judges.

## **COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL JUDICIAL RELATIONS**

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### **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on International Judicial Relations reported on international rule of law work by federal judges since the Committee's last report to the Judicial Conference. The Committee considered reports addressing such work from the Supreme Court of the United States; AO; Committee on Defender Services; Federal Judicial Center; Federal Court Clerks Association; Congressional Office for International Leadership; U.S. Agency for International Development; U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; and U.S. Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State. The Committee received a briefing from U.S. Department of Justice Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training Director Erik Peterson addressing recent global trends in the delivery of rule of law development assistance. The Committee also received a briefing from University of Arizona School of Government and Public Policy Associate Director Paul Schuler, who discussed his research findings on global democratic backsliding.

## **COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIAL BRANCH**

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### **JUDGES' TRAVEL REGULATIONS**

On recommendation of the Committee on the Judicial Branch, the Judicial Conference approved amendments to the Travel Regulations for Justices and Judges, *Guide to Judiciary Policy*, Vol. 19, Ch. 2. The substantive changes include clarifications to specify that limitations on enhanced expenses apply to all senior judges (rather than only senior district judges), and a simplification and clarification of the provisions governing allowances for reimbursement of subsistence expenses where a judge owns a residence at a place of official travel. The amendments also make several non-substantive and organizational changes.

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### **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on the Judicial Branch reported that it discussed recent legislative items of interest to the judiciary, including those related to judicial security, judgeships, workplace conduct, ethics and transparency, and reform of the judiciary's case management system. The Committee also discussed the organization of the next Congress and the outlook for appropriations for the branch. The Committee was



briefed on civics education and outreach activities across the judiciary, including an update from the Supreme Court Historical Society’s Director of Civics Education about the Society’s civics education programs. The Committee also discussed judicial health and wellness programs and its continuing support of circuit efforts and a JNet website.

## **COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT AND DISABILITY**

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### **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on Judicial Conduct and Disability reported that it discussed and considered complaint-related matters under the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act, 28 U.S.C. §§ 351-364 (Act), and the Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings (Rules). The Committee approved updates to the publicly available, online Digest of Authorities on the Act. The Committee and its staff have also continued to address inquiries regarding the Act and the Rules, and to give other assistance as needed to circuit judicial councils and chief judges.

## **COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL RESOURCES**

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### **ARTICLE III JUDGESHIPS**

The Committee on Judicial Resources considered requests and justifications for additional judgeships in the courts of appeals and the district courts as part of its 2025 biennial survey of judgeship needs. Based on its review, and after considering the views of the courts and circuit judicial councils, the Committee recommended that the Judicial Conference request from Congress the addition of two permanent Article III judgeships for the courts of appeals and 69 permanent Article III judgeships in the district courts. The Conference adopted the Committee’s recommendations, agreeing to transmit the following request to Congress:

#### Courts of Appeals

Ninth Circuit	2
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District Courts

Arizona	3
California-Central	12
California-Eastern	5
California-Northern	2
Colorado	2
Delaware	2
Florida-Middle	7
Florida-Northern	1
Florida-Southern	3
Georgia-Northern	4
Idaho	1
Indiana-Southern	1
Iowa-Northern	1
Nebraska	1
New Jersey	4
New York-Eastern	2
New York-Southern	2
New York-Western	1
Oklahoma-Eastern	2
Oklahoma-Northern	1
Tennessee-Middle	1
Texas-Eastern	2
Texas-Northern	1
Texas-Southern	2
Texas-Western	6

Judgeship Vacancies. As part of the 2025 biennial survey of judgeship needs, the Committee also reviewed workloads in appellate and district courts with consistently low per-judgeship caseloads for the purpose of determining whether to recommend to the President and Senate that an existing or future judgeship vacancy not be filled. On recommendation of the Committee, the Conference agreed to recommend to the President and the Senate not filling the next judgeship vacancy in the Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, the Southern District of West Virginia, the Eastern District of Michigan, and the District of Wyoming, based on consistently low per-judgeship caseload.

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**SENIOR JUDGE STAFFING**

Current Judicial Conference policy permits judges to hire or retain chambers staff while in senior status provided that they continue to perform “substantial judicial work,” and leaves to circuit judicial councils the determination of whether or not services performed are substantial (JCUS-SEP 1950, pp. 21-22). In 2016, the Conference encouraged circuit judicial councils to consider various recommendations on establishing a robust process for senior judge staffing allocation when evaluating staffing needs for senior judges (JCUS-SEP 2013, pp. 23-24), including that only case-related tasks be used to define “substantial judicial work.” The Committee on Judicial Resources noted that many circuit judicial council senior judge staffing guidelines nevertheless permit staffing based on non-case-related work, and that using only case-related criteria would theoretically reduce the number of approved staff and associated costs. Therefore, in furtherance of a judiciary-wide strategic budget initiative to identify ways to help limit the growth of the judiciary’s budget, the Committee recommended that the Judicial Conference amend its 1950 policy on staffing for senior judges, effective October 1, 2027, to state as follows:

All circuit judicial councils shall adopt appropriate staffing guidelines for senior circuit judges and senior district judges adhering to the following requirements and criteria:

- a. To qualify for a chambers law clerk, paralegal, or judicial assistant, a senior circuit judge or a senior district judge must carry a substantial caseload, that is, one sufficient to keep that chambers law clerk, paralegal, or judicial assistant engaged full time.
- b. Each circuit judicial council’s senior judge staffing guidelines must be based solely on objective, case-related criteria, such as weighted case filings, pending case assignments, number of “sitting days” per year, case terminations, trial and non-trial bench hours, or other objective case-related criteria which the circuit judicial council deems to be appropriate.
- c. Circuit judicial council staffing guidelines for senior judges shall not provide workload credit in the staffing formula based upon non-case-related duties, such as committee assignments, speaking engagements, ceremonial duties, or any other non-case-related duties. Absent advanced approval of the circuit judicial council based upon a clear description of specific tasks to be completed by chambers staff,

staffing credit shall not be provided to a senior judge for non-case-related duties.

- d. Each circuit shall provide an annual report of its senior judge staffing determinations to the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference.

The Conference adopted the Committee's recommendation.

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## **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on Judicial Resources reported that it approved the allocation of additional court law clerk positions for fiscal years 2025 through 2026 under Track III of the court law clerk program established by the Judicial Conference in September 2021 (JCUS-SEP 2021, pp. 20-21). The chair of the Committee, on recommendation of its Subcommittee on Workplace Conduct, approved a request on behalf of the Committee for a temporary exception to several Judicial Conference human resources policies (JCUS-SEP 1994, pp. 57-59; JCUS-SEP 1996, pp. 61-62; JCUS-SEP 2007, p. 26), to allow an additional term law clerk and career law clerk to be assigned to a chief district judge's chambers through August 2026 in order to address a workplace conduct matter.

## **COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL SECURITY**

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### **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on Judicial Security reported that it met with representatives from the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), Federal Protective Service (FPS), and General Services Administration (GSA) to discuss security concerns impacting the judiciary. During the discussion with the USMS, Deputy Director Mark Pittella committed to improving the USMS's administration of the Judicial Facility Security Program through enhanced communication and collaboration with the judiciary, and to developing a Memorandum of Agreement with the judiciary to codify business protocols, information sharing, and financial oversight required to manage and execute the Court Security appropriation. During its meeting with FPS, the Committee discussed new reporting requirements for facility security committees under P.L. 118-157, the Improving Federal Building Security Act of 2024. Additionally, the Committee was updated on the progress of state legislation protecting judges' personally identifiable information and asked its Subcommittee on Operations,

Technology, and Education to develop further engagement strategies to raise awareness about the need for state-level online privacy protections. The Committee also was briefed on the Courthouse Hardening Program, including progress made on obligating and spending funding received to date for this program.

## **COMMITTEE ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MAGISTRATE JUDGES SYSTEM**

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### **CHANGES IN MAGISTRATE JUDGE POSITIONS**

After considering the recommendation of the Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judges System and the views of the AO and the affected district court and circuit judicial council, the Judicial Conference increased the salary of the part-time magistrate judge position in Bellingham in the Western District of Washington from Level 4 (currently \$45,522 per annum) to Level 3 (currently \$68,282 per annum), effective April 1, 2025.

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### **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judges System reported that it considered nine district-wide surveys of magistrate judge positions and, where appropriate, endorsed suggestions regarding magistrate judge utilization in those districts. Between its June 2024 and December 2024 meetings, the Committee, through its chair, approved filling 19 magistrate judge position vacancies in 14 district courts (JCUS-MAR 2024, pp. 19-20), and the Committee approved three requests for the recall of a retired magistrate judge in two districts. One of the recalls required approval because the judge's additional wages were estimated to exceed \$10,000 and two others required approval because the judges were already serving on recall with staff in another district. At its December 2024 meeting, the Committee approved a request from one court to fill a magistrate judge position vacancy and requests from 9 courts for the recall, extension of recall, or extension of staff or clerk's office support, for 11 retired magistrate judges. The Committee continued to discuss development of a tool for evaluating magistrate judge utilization and decided against adding a utilization summary report to the already extensive survey reports. The Committee was updated on the status of various strategic budget initiatives and provided feedback to the Committee on Judicial Resources on the strategic budget initiatives on which the Committee was asked to consult. The Committee discussed the Federal Judicial Center's final draft report on matters relating to the magistrate judge selection and

appointment process and a draft joint letter from its chair and the chair of the Committee on Judicial Resources regarding outreach efforts in the process. The Committee agreed to ask for feedback on both the report and the letter from the Committee on Judicial Resources. Finally, the Committee continued to discuss Committee on Criminal Law initiatives related to reducing pretrial detention and provided feedback to that committee on proposed revisions to Form AO 472 (*see supra*, p. 13) and on the process by which magistrate judges are consulted on future revisions to form orders.

## COMMITTEE ON RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

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### COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure reported on coordinated efforts among its advisory committees in response to suggestions on expanding access to electronic filing by self-represented (*pro se*) litigants, adopting nationwide rules governing admission to practice before the U.S. district courts, and requiring complete redaction of social security numbers. The Committee approved publication of proposed amendments to a Bankruptcy Rule, a Bankruptcy Form, and a Civil Rule. The proposed amendment to Bankruptcy Rule 2002 would simplify the caption of most notices under the rule and in most cases would no longer require the last four digits of the debtor's social security number or individual taxpayer identification number. The proposed amendment to Civil Rule 81 would provide that a jury demand must always be made after removal if no such demand was made before removal and a party desires a jury trial. The public comment period for the proposed amendments will be open from August 2025 to February 2026.

## COMMITTEE ON SPACE AND FACILITIES

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### FEASIBILITY STUDIES

In accordance with the Asset Management Planning policy, courthouse construction projects must have a completed General Services Administration (GSA) feasibility study prior to being placed on the *Federal Judiciary Courthouse Project Priorities* list (JCUS-MAR 2008, p. 26; *Guide to Judiciary Policy*, Vol. 16, Ch. 1, § 130.10(c)). After considering the space, security, and building needs at the Boggs Federal Building in Wilmington, Delaware, the Committee on Space and Facilities recommended that the Judicial Conference request that the GSA conduct a Phase I

feasibility study for that building. The Judicial Conference approved the recommendation.

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## COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee on Space and Facilities reported that it approved, subject to funding availability, four requests for supplemental Component B funding pursuant to the Judicial Conference-approved rent allotment methodology (JCUS-SEP 2007, pp. 36-37), and three requests for funding for No Net New projects in support of the Judicial Conference’s No Net New policy adopted in September 2013 (JCUS-SEP 2013, p. 32). The Committee concluded its discussion of eight space-related initiatives assigned to the Committee for exploration as part of a judiciary-wide strategic budget initiative, and proposed a framework for a longer-term initiative aimed at reducing rent to the Committee on the Budget for consideration. The Committee adopted a refinement to the business rules governing the Asset Management Planning process (JCUS-MAR 2008, p. 26) that excludes resident circuit judge chambers needs from the methodology used to produce the urgency ranking of court locations’ space needs in order to improve the accuracy and stability of that ranking. The Committee also discussed recommendations made in a Government Accountability Office report released in November 2024 regarding the 2021 *U.S. Courts Design Guide*. Finally, the Committee met with GSA’s Public Buildings Service Commissioner, who briefed the Committee on significant matters impacting the judiciary, including estimating costs for courthouse construction projects and rent and service issues relating to existing courthouses.

## FUNDING

All of the foregoing recommendations that require the expenditure of funds for implementation were approved by the Judicial Conference subject to the availability of funds and to whatever priorities the Conference might establish for the use of available resources.

Chief Justice of the United States  
Presiding