

United States District Court

Southern District of Indiana

CHAMBERS OF
JAMES R. SWEENEY II
CHIEF JUDGE

204 UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE
46 EAST OHIO STREET
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-1903
(317) 229-3650

November 13, 2025

Members of the Southern District of Indiana Bar:

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana is committed to the impartial administration of justice for all litigants. A large share of the work of the court involves pro se indigent litigants. There is an ongoing and urgent need to provide counsel for these litigants in a small percentage of civil cases.

In an effort to address this need, Local Rule 87, Representation of Indigent Litigants, was adopted in 2016. This rule created a Voluntary Panel of attorneys who are willing to volunteer to represent indigent litigants in civil cases and an Obligatory Panel of attorneys from which the court will recruit counsel if no attorney from the Voluntary Panel is available to appear in a given case.

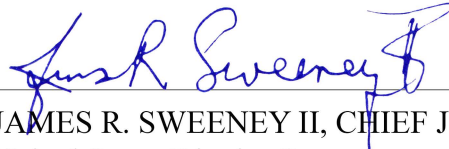
Over the past nine years, attorneys on the Voluntary and Obligatory Panels have provided meaningful representation in hundreds of cases. Recruited counsel have participated in settlement conferences, evidentiary hearings, and trials. Recruited counsel's ability to communicate with opposing counsel, draft professional briefing of legal issues, and provide competent advocacy in court proceedings have benefitted the litigants they represent and the court overall. Those attorneys who represent indigent litigants under Local Rule 87 are fulfilling the Oath they took when they were admitted to the Bar of Indiana. The last line of the oath reads:

I will never reject, from any consideration personal to myself, the cause of the defenseless, the oppressed or those who cannot afford adequate legal assistance; so help me God.

It remains the court's goal to facilitate a program that will fulfill the needs of this district without placing an undue burden on the Bar. The court recognizes that appointments made under Local Rule 87 might involve areas of the law with which an attorney might not be familiar. Thus, the court continues to invest significant resources to assist volunteer and recruited counsel, including continuing legal education programming and attorney mentors.

Your continued support of the court's pro bono efforts is greatly appreciated. We look forward to seeing you in court.

Sincerely,



JAMES R. SWEENEY II, CHIEF JUDGE
United States District Court
Southern District of Indiana