

PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana Announces Intracircuit Assignment

In an effort to ease the ongoing Judicial Emergency in the Southern District of Indiana, the court, beginning March 1, 2017, will have two additional judicial officers providing limited assistance by taking a discrete number of civil case assignments from the Indianapolis docket. The Southern District of Indiana is in a state of Judicial Emergency by virtue of an existing judicial vacancy and a weighted filing in excess of 600 per Judgeship. In the 12-month period ending June 30, 2016, the weighted filings per Judgeship in the Southern District stood at 717; a judicial vacancy has been in place on the court since the Honorable Sarah Evans Barker assumed senior status on June 30, 2014.

The opportunity to bring two additional judicial officers to the court came about after the Judicial Conference of the United States ("JCUS") Committee on Intercircuit Assignments ("ICA Committee") identified the Southern District of Indiana as a potential pilot court for a newly implemented district judge sharing program, approved by the Judicial Conference at its September 2016 session. The pilot allows courts with high weighted caseloads ("borrowing courts") to obtain assistance from judges in courts with low weighted caseloads ("lending courts"). The Southern District was identified as a possible "borrowing court" and the Eastern District of Wisconsin as a "lending court."

Following contact by the ICA Committee, the Honorable William C. Griesbach, Chief Judge, and the Honorable Lynn S. Adelman, District Judges in the Eastern District of Wisconsin, reached out and offered their services. Over a three month period, each will receive a discrete number of civil case assignments from the Indianapolis case assignment wheel. The Judges will be partnered with Southern District Magistrate Judges and will utilize the Southern District's Uniform Case Management Plans. They will preside over their assigned cases both by telephone and at the Birch Bayh Federal Building and United States Courthouse in Indianapolis.

To facilitate this arrangement, on February 3, 2017, the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit entered a designation that allows Judges Griesbach and Adelman to perform the duties of District Judges in the Southern District of Indiana.

The court, with the support of the JCUS Committee on Judicial Resources, continues to seek a more permanent solution to its Judicial Emergency. The JCUS, in every study it has conducted since 2005, has repeatedly recommended that Congress create an additional permanent Judgeship in the Southern District; Congress last established an additional Judgeship in the Southern District of Indiana in 1978. In December 2016, the Committee on Judicial Resources approved the Subcommittee on Judicial Statistics' final recommendation to add one additional permanent Judgeship to the Southern District of Indiana. That recommendation will be considered by the JCUS at its March 2017 session and, if approved by the JCUS, be sent to Congress for consideration thereafter.

The court also continues to await the appointment of a successor to the Honorable Sarah Evans Barker. In the interim, the court is most grateful for the assistance that Chief Judge Griesbach and Judge Adelman will provide in the coming months.

For further information regarding this intracircuit assignment, please contact Chief Deputy Clerk of Court Alison Chestovich at 317-229-3710 or Alison_chestovich@insd.uscourts.gov.