



NEWS RELEASE

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

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Courts Gird for Likely Impact of Sentencing Appeals, Class Action Lawsuits

President Bush has forwarded to Congress the Judiciary's request for \$101.8 million in supplemental funding for the current fiscal year.

A recent Supreme Court ruling on sentencing and newly enacted class action legislation together are expected to cost federal courts in excess of \$100 million.

"The Judiciary has neither the financial nor personnel resources to cover these new workload requirements," said Leonidas Ralph Mecham, director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, in a letter to President Bush.

Acting on the letter, the President sent the request to Congress on March 2.

"Federal courts lost the services of about 1,350 employees in fiscal year 2004 as a result of budget constraints, face sharply increasing rental payments to the General Services Administration, and are finding it very difficult to cope with the effects of their existing caseload this fiscal year, let alone this new, additional workload," Mecham said. "The requested supplemental appropriation for fiscal year 2005 is a critical lifeline."

The Supreme Court's twin majority opinions on January 12, 2005, in *United States v. Booker* and *United States v. Fanfan* (*Booker/Fanfan*) made federal sentencing guidelines advisory and declared certain enhancements to the guidelines unconstitutional. In addition to an increased workload associated with pending and new cases, a significant number of inmates likely will seek relief by asking district and appellate courts to reconsider sentences imposed before *Booker/Fanfan*.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the newly enacted class action legislation will move a projected 300 complex class action lawsuits from the states into the federal courts over the coming months. The impact of this additional workload was not taken into account when Congress passed the Judiciary's fiscal year 2005 appropriations bill.

The \$101.8 million in projected costs increases include: \$40.5 million for district and appellate courts; \$60 million for defense counsel services; \$400,000 for Federal Judicial Center training workshops for judges, probation officers, federal defenders and other court personnel; and \$900,000 for the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

[Mecham's letter](#) to the President was accompanied by a [detailed description](#) of the cost impact of both the *Booker/Fanfan* opinions and the class action legislation.

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