



NEWS RELEASE

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

September 24, 2002

Contact: David Sellers

Judicial Conference Judgeship Recommendations Endorsed by Administration

The Judicial Conference of the United States was told by Attorney General John Ashcroft today that the Bush Administration supports creation of new judgeships to help federal courts in dire need of relief.

The Conference requested that Congress add a total of 54 judgeships — six permanent and four temporary judgeships to the courts of appeals and 23 permanent and 21 temporary judgeships to the district courts.

Congress has not increased the ranks of federal appeals courts since 1990. Meanwhile, those courts' caseloads have increased by 32 percent. The 19 district judgeships established since 1990 represent a 2.5 percent growth over a period in which criminal and civil filings nationwide have increased 30 percent.

While a judgeship bill was introduced in the Senate in September 2000, there never was a hearing or formal consideration by either House. The Conference transmitted its updated judgeship recommendations to Congress in February 2001. No legislation has been introduced in either house.

Earlier this year Leonidas Ralph Mecham, the Judicial Conference's Executive Secretary, wrote Congressional leaders to point out that when the number of judicial vacancies and the number of needed new judgeships are added, the "overall total shortage of judges becomes staggering."

"How many major corporations or Executive Branch agencies could function with so many senior management positions unfilled," Mecham asked in his May 28, 2002, letter.

(MORE)

In other matters, the Conference:

- Adopted several proposed amendments to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, including one that explicitly recognizes the discretion of a judge to refuse to approve a class action settlement unless class members have a second chance to opt out after the settlement's terms have become known. The proposed amendments will now be sent to the Supreme Court, which has until May 1, 2003, to transmit them to Congress. Congress has a 7-month statutory period to act on the amendments. If it does not enact legislation to reject, modify, or defer the amendments, they take effect as a matter of law on December 1, 2003.
- Approved on a permanent basis a policy governing personal use of government office equipment, including information technology. The policy was developed by the federal Chief Information Officers Council in conjunction with ethics, legal, procurement, and human resources experts. It was approved by the Conference a year ago with the expectation that it would be tailored for the Judiciary before being implemented on a permanent basis. The policy represents a national minimum standard and each court has the right to maintain more restrictive policies.
- Urged every federal court to include a prominent link from its web site to its circuit's forms for filing complaints of judicial misconduct or disability.

The Judicial Conference is the principal policy-making body for the federal court system. The Chief Justice serves as the presiding officer of the Conference, which is composed of the chief judges of the 13 courts of appeals, a district judge from each of the 12 geographic circuits, and the chief judge of the Court of International Trade. The Conference meets twice a year to consider administrative and policy issues affecting the court system and to make recommendations to Congress concerning legislation involving the Judicial Branch. A list of the Conference members is attached.

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TABLE 1.

**ADDITIONAL JUDGESHIPS OR CONVERSION OF EXISTING JUDGESHIPS
RECOMMENDED BY THE JUDICIAL CONFERENCE**

CIRCUIT/DISTRICT	AUTHORIZED JUDGESHIPS	JUDICIAL CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION
U.S. COURTS OF APPEALS		6P, 4T
FIRST	6	1T
SECOND	13	2P
SIXTH	16	2P
NINTH	28	2P, 3T
SUBTOTAL		10
U.S. DISTRICT COURTS		23P, 21T, 7T/P, Extend T
ALABAMA, NORTHERN	7	1P, 1T
ALABAMA, MIDDLE	3	1P
ALABAMA, SOUTHERN	3	1T
ARIZONA	12	4T
CALIFORNIA, NORTHERN	14	1P
CALIFORNIA, CENTRAL	27	2T
CALIFORNIA, EASTERN	7	2P, T/P
CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN	8	5P, 3T
COLORADO	7	1P, 1T
FLORIDA, MIDDLE	15	1P, 1T
FLORIDA, SOUTHERN	17	1P
HAWAII	4	T/P
ILLINOIS, CENTRAL	4	T/P
ILLINOIS, SOUTHERN	4	T/P
INDIANA, SOUTHERN	5	1T
NEBRASKA	4	T/P
NEW MEXICO	6	1P, 1T
NEW YORK, NORTHERN	5	1T, T/P
NEW YORK, EASTERN	15	3P
NEW YORK, WESTERN	4	1T
NORTH CAROLINA, WESTERN	3	2P
OHIO, NORTHERN	12	Extend T
OREGON	6	1T
TEXAS, EASTERN	7	1T
TEXAS, SOUTHERN	19	1P
TEXAS, WESTERN	11	2P, 1T
VIRGINIA, EASTERN	11	1P, T/P
WASHINGTON, WESTERN	7	1T
SUBTOTAL		44
TOTAL		54**

P = PERMANENT

T = TEMPORARY

T/P = TEMPORARY MADE PERMANENT

Extend T = EXTEND TEMPORARY 5 YEARS

** 29P, 25T DOES NOT INCLUDE 7T/P

JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES
September 2002

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, Presiding

Chief Judge Michael Boudin Chief Judge D. Brock Hornby	First Circuit District of Maine
Chief Judge John M. Walker, Jr. Chief Judge Frederick J. Scullin, Jr.	Second Circuit Northern District of New York
Chief Judge Edward R. Becker Chief Judge Sue L. Robinson	Third Circuit Delaware
Chief Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III Chief Judge Charles H. Haden II	Fourth Circuit Southern District of West Virginia
Chief Judge Carolyn Dineen King Judge Martin L.C. Feldman	Fifth Circuit Eastern District of Louisiana
Chief Judge Boyce F. Martin, Jr. Chief Judge Lawrence P. Zatkoff	Sixth Circuit Eastern District of Michigan
Chief Judge Joel M. Flaum Chief Judge Marvin E. Aspen	Seventh Circuit Northern District of Illinois
Chief Judge David R. Hansen Chief Judge James M. Rosenbaum	Eighth Circuit District of Minnesota
Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder Judge Judith N. Keep	Ninth Circuit South District of California
Chief Judge Deanell R. Tacha Chief Judge Frank Howell Seay	Tenth Circuit Eastern District of Oklahoma
Chief Judge J. L. Edmondson Chief Judge Charles R. Butler, Jr.	Eleventh Circuit Southern District of Alabama
Chief Judge Douglas H. Ginsburg Chief Judge Thomas F. Hogan	District of Columbia Circuit District of Columbia
Chief Judge Haldane Robert Mayer	Federal Circuit
Chief Judge Gregory W. Carman	Court of International Trade

Conference Secretary:
Leonidas Ralph Mecham, Director
Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts