

Appendix I

Sample Letter to Chief Judges of the Circuits Requesting District Judge Designations to the Circuit Meetings

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Subcommittee Members

Honorable Marilyn L. Huff, Chair
Honorable Harry F. Barnes
Honorable Wiley Y. Daniel
Honorable James R. Melinson
Honorable Karen J. Williams



Staff

Ellyn L. Vail

SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL STATISTICS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL RESOURCES

July 2, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE

Honorable Boyce F. Martin, Jr.
Chief Judge
United States Court of Appeals
209 Gene Snyder United States
Courthouse
601 West Broadway
Louisville, KY 40202

Dear Judge Martin:

The Committee on Judicial Resources is working to revise the district court case weights before the next judgeship survey. To accomplish this goal, I request that you designate an active district court judge and one alternate active district judge from each of your districts to help develop the new case weights. The judges should have a broad exposure to cases and a willingness to work with other judges.

The designated judges will represent your circuit at a meeting with trained facilitators to gather systematic estimates of the average time judges spend completing specific case activities. Your circuit meeting is scheduled for August 25 - 26, 2003 in Cincinnati, OH. It is important that each district be represented, so if a designated judge is unavailable, an alternate will attend. Judge Jennifer B. Coffman of the Judicial Resources Committee will act as a liaison with your circuit, project staff, and the participants to coordinate the meeting. Judge Coffman may be designated as one of the district representatives, will attend the circuit meeting, and will respond to any questions about the project.

Prior to the meeting, the judges will be provided with additional information about the project. Specifically, they will be provided with average times for events from past studies and requested to estimate time for specific tasks on civil and criminal cases. After the circuit meeting, two of the judges from your circuit will be asked to attend a national

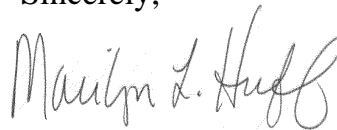
Honorable Boyce F. Martin, Jr.

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meeting in January 2004 to evaluate the consensus times from each circuit. The national consensus will be only one component of the project. Additionally, project staff will use existing data from the district courts on the actual time spent in court and existing data on docket events to compute the revised case weights by June 2004. For background information, enclosed is a summary of the benefits of the case weighting project.

The Judicial Resources Committee is also considering a longer project to revise the district court case weights with a possible case tracking study, but wanted to update the existing case weights on an expeditious basis before the next biennial judgeship survey. In order to meet our goal, I ask that you send the names of the designated district and alternate judges by e-mail to Pat Lombard of the FJC (plombard@fjc.gov) by July 25, 2003. We will then send additional information and travel authorizations to the participants and the circuit liaison. Thank you for your assistance on this project to improve the district court case weights.

Sincerely,



Marilyn L. Huff
Chair, Subcommittee on
Judicial Statistics

Enclosure

cc: Honorable Jennifer B. Coffman
Mr. James A. Higgins

Benefits of the District Court Case Weighting Project

The case weighting project has several benefits:

- It uses existing data to collect time for several court activities rather than burden judges with manual time sheets;
- It updates case weights quickly to reflect new legislation and recent case practices;
- It focuses on active district judge time for new district judgeship assessments rather than senior judge or magistrate judge time;
- It permits circuit flexibility in event weights if warranted based upon circuit practices;
- It provides revised case weights in one year rather than the past five year project;
- It does not use judge specific data for chambers time keeping;
- It provides input of district judges in each circuit about case events for consideration by the Judicial Resources Committee in the judgeship survey;
- It bridges the gap until all courts have converted to CM/ECF when more statistical information will be available from automated and uniform databases.