

CIVIL JUSTICE ADVISORY GROUP
of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania

June 12, 1991

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Chair

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Reporter

Dean Mark Nordenberg

Court Liason

The Honorable Donald Ziegler

Clerk's Office Liason

Al Wilson

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Alan R. Krier, Esq.

Father Christian Oravec

Pamela Mayer

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Dawn M. Svirsko, Esq.

Mr. Phillip Argetsinger
Administrative Office of
U.S. Courts
Court Administration Division
Washington, DC 20544

Re: District Advisory Committee

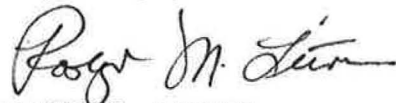
Dear Mr. Argetsinger:

In accordance with our telephone conversation, I enclose herewith the general instruction packets that went out to the four subcommittees in our district doing analyses of (1) general civil cases, (2) complex cases, (3) civil cases in which the United States is a party, and (4) pro se cases.

As I indicated on the telephone, we plan to send private litigant questionnaires (sample enclosed) to those private litigants whose identities are obtained from the lawyer questionnaire. Since I understand it was the experience of the Florida group that having the lawyers forward the questionnaires to the litigants didn't result in a high return, we decided to try to do it this way.

We plan to conduct actual private litigant interviews following the return of those questionnaires and to do interviews of our judges as well.

Very truly yours,



ROSLYN M. LITMAN

RML:spb

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Donald E. Ziegler
The Honorable Maurice B. Cohill
Dean Mark A. Nordenberg, Reporter
Al Wilson, Clerks Office

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Dear Litigant:

Last year Congress enacted a law requiring the federal courts to study the length of time and costs litigating civil lawsuits. Our group is seeking information from parties who have had cases before the court in the Western District of Pennsylvania. Your case, [insert case name and number], was one of those selected.

Please take a moment to fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope by June 30, 1991. Your views are important to us. We greatly appreciate your time and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

QUESTIONS FOR LITIGANTS

- I. Were you the plaintiff or defendant in the case noted on the cover letter?
(circle one)
- A. plaintiff
 - B. defendant
- II. Please indicate the total costs you spent on this case for each of the categories listed below. If you are unable to categorize your costs, please indicate the total cost only.
- A. Attorneys' Fees _____
 - B. Attorneys' Expenses (photocopying, postage, travel expenses, etc.) _____
 - C. Consultants _____
 - D. Expert Witnesses _____
 - E. Other (please describe) _____
 - F. Total Cost of Litigation _____
- III. Please estimate the amount of money which was at stake in this case.
\$ _____
- IV. What type of fee arrangement did you have with your attorney? (circle one)
- A. hourly rate
 - B. hourly rate with a maximum
 - C. set fee
 - D. contingency
 - E. Other -- please describe:
- V. Did this arrangement in your opinion result in reasonable fees being paid to your attorney? (circle one)
- A. yes
 - B. no
 - C. do not know

Comments:

VI. Were the costs incurred by you on this matter
(circle one)

- A. Much too high
- B. Slightly too high
- C. About right
- D. Slightly too low
- E. Much too low

VII. If you believe the cost of litigation was too high, what actions should your attorney or the court have taken to reduce the cost of this matter?

VIII. Was the time that it took to resolve this matter
(circle one)

- A. Much too long
- B. Slightly too long
- C. About right
- D. Slightly too short
- E. Much too short

IX. If you believe that it took too long to resolve your case, what actions should your attorney or the court have taken to resolve your case more quickly?

X. Was arbitration or mediation used in your case? (circle one)

- A. No
- B. Yes

If arbitration or mediation was used, please describe the results.

XI. Please add any comments or suggestions regarding the time and cost of litigation in the federal courts.

If you have any questions, please call the office of Dean Mark Nordenberg at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law (412-648-1401). Please indicate that your call concerns the questionnaire from the District Court Advisory Group. You will be put in touch with someone who can help you.

Thank you for your time and comments. Please return in the enclosed envelope by June 30, 1991.