

**AO Review of Reports and Plans
For the Judicial Conference Subcommittee on Court Administration**

District: Southern District of Georgia

Date: January 7, 1994

Upon reviewing the Advisory Committee Report and the Expense and Delay Reduction Plan for the Southern District of Georgia, staff has the following observations. The Advisory Committee made a study of local and national court statistics and interviewed all judicial officers. Attorneys and parties surveyed. Two special case samples were drawn for further analysis. While the Committee found few areas to critique within their area of review, their recommendations were expansive and national in scope. The Court carefully considered the Committee's individual recommendations, and adopted all of them. The recommendations and the plan do address identified areas of concern relative to cost and delay. This district's performance statistics would lend reasonable support to the conclusion that many of its existing rules anticipated CJRA concerns. While the Court in many instances merely reaffirmed existing policies and rules, it did directly address all guidelines, principles and techniques of the Act, in addition to the Advisory Committee's innovative recommendations.

- This plan is completely responsive to the report of the Advisory Committee, and adopts all of its recommendations for immediate implementation.
- The plan specifically provides for early and firm trial dates.
- The plan specifically reaffirms existing rules covering presumptive limits on the amount of discovery.
- The plan reaffirms specific certification burdens on counsel regarding discovery motions, and places a similar burden on parties in regard to the noticing intent of the "Litigants Bill of Rights" adopted by the Court.
- The Court has reaffirmed rules in place requiring that only counsel with authority to bind appear at pretrial conferences, and extended the requirement to settlement conferences as well.
- The plan also comported with the Advisory Committee approach to ADR, deciding not to adopt a formal ADR program. It did adopt the Litigant Bill of Rights, which

will require litigant certification of familiarity with its ADR provisions; the Court will also assist interested parties in seeking ENE and mediation services.

- The Advisory Committee recommended, and the Court will create, a complex litigation track governed by a Special Case Management Order.
- The Advisory Committee and Court both endorsed a number (14) of innovative proposals directed at the Judicial Conference, Congress and the Executive Branch to reduce litigation cost and delay.

Frederick M. Russillo, Senior Program Analyst, CAD-CPB