

NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT

STEPHANIE F. STACY
JUDGE



P.O. BOX 98910
STATE CAPITOL BUILDING
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68509
(402) 471-3737

December 11, 2019

Senator Jim Scheer
Speaker of the Nebraska State Legislature
State Capitol Bldg., Rm. 2010
Lincoln, NE 68509

The Honorable Pete Ricketts
Governor of the State of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE 68509

The Honorable Chief Justice Michael Heavican
State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68509

Re: Judicial Resources Commission Annual Hearing

Dear Speaker Scheer, Governor Ricketts, and Chief Justice Heavican:

On December 10, 2019, the Judicial Resources Commission held its annual hearing pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 24-1205 (Reissue 2016). Advance notice of the time, place, and agenda for the annual public hearing was published on November 25, 2019.

In addition to the annual hearing agenda, the Commission took up two recent judicial retirements: the retirement of Judge Toni Thorson from the Separate Juvenile Court of Lancaster County, and the retirement of Judge Matt Samuelson from the County Court in the 6th Judicial District.

This letter will serve as the Commission's report on the 2019 annual public hearing, as well as its report on the two judicial retirements.

2019 Annual Hearing

The Commission reviewed current caseload and weighted caseload reports, and examined historical data showing judicial caseload trends at the statewide, district, and county levels. The Commission also reviewed other data that influences judicial resources, including the expansion of problem solving courts, the increased need for court interpreters, statewide population changes, and improvements to

courthouse bandwidth. The Commission received an update on the statewide judicial time study being conducted by the National Center for State Courts, the goal of which is to more accurately measure the judicial workload in Nebraska's district, county, and separate juvenile courts. A final report from this study is expected sometime in the spring of 2020, and will include an updated case weighting methodology to improve the accuracy and uniformity of judicial workload statistics.

After considering the issues set out in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 24-1205, the Commission had no changes to recommend this year.

Judicial Retirements

During the hearing on December 10, 2019, the Judicial Resources Commission also determined that:

(1) A judicial vacancy exists in the office of the Separate Juvenile Court for Lancaster County, due to the retirement of the Honorable Toni Thorson, effective October 16, 2019; and

(2) A judicial vacancy exists in the County Court in the 6th Judicial District, due to the retirement of the Honorable Matt Samuelson, effective October 31, 2019. Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 24-809.05 (Reissue 2016), the Supreme Court, at special consultation today, determined that the primary office of this vacancy should be in Blair, Washington County, Nebraska with the understanding that the appointed judge is expected to sit one day per week in Fremont, Dodge County, Nebraska.

Accordingly, the judicial nominating process will begin on both these vacancies, as provided by law.

Respectfully,


Stephanie F. Stacy

SFS/dm

pc Chief Justice Michael G. Heavican
Corey R. Steel, State Court Administrator
Wendy Wussow, Clerk, Nebraska Supreme Court
Members of the Judicial Resources Commission