

# NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT

JONATHAN J. PAPIK  
JUDGE



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December 31, 2024

Senator John Arch  
Speaker of the Nebraska State Legislature  
P.O. Box 94604  
State Capitol Bldg., Rm. 2103  
Lincoln, NE 68509

The Honorable Jim Pillen  
Governor of the State of Nebraska  
1445 K Street  
Lincoln, NE 68509

The Honorable Jeffrey Funke  
Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court  
State Capitol Bldg., Rm. 2214  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Re: Judicial Resources Commission Annual Hearing

Dear Speaker Arch, Governor Pillen, and Chief Justice Funke:

On December 13, 2024, 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 was published on December 4, 2024. The Annual Hearing was conducted in the Nebraska Supreme Court Courtroom, State Capitol Building, and included the option of virtual conferencing via Zoom for members of the Commission and the public. This letter will serve as the Commission's written report on the 2024 Annual Hearing.

## **2024 Annual Hearing**

The Commission was briefed on the FY2024 Annual Caseload Reports and Weighted Caseload Reports compiled by the Administrative Office of Courts, and examined historical caseload trends in Nebraska's district, county, and separate juvenile courts. The Commission also reviewed and discussed other factors impacting judicial resources, including: (1) the significant increase in self-represented litigants, (2) the number of Nebraska counties with no or very few practicing attorneys, (3) the increasing need for language interpretation in

court proceedings and probation services, (4) the increase in problem solving courts, (5) statewide updates to courtroom technology, (6) the impact of local and statewide population changes, and (7) the judicial retirement forecast for the next five years.

The Commission took up the matters set out in § 24-1205. Pursuant to § 24-1205(1), the Commission took up whether a new judgeship, or a reduction in judgeships, was appropriate in any judicial district. No requests were received. No motion was made to recommend adding or reducing a judgeship in any judicial district at this time.

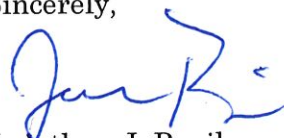
Pursuant to 24-1205(2), the Commission took up whether to recommend changes to any judicial district boundary or to the number of judicial districts. No proposals were received. No motion was made to change any judicial district boundary or the number of judicial districts at this time.

### Judicial Vacancies

The Commission took up whether a vacancy exists due to the resignation of Judge Darryl R. Lowe from the county court in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, effective October 11, 2024. After considering the statutory factors and the testimony received, the Commission unanimously determined that a vacancy exists in the office of the county court in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District and recommended the primary location be Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. After the vacancy was declared, the Nebraska Supreme Court met in special consultation and determined the primary location of such vacancy should be in Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. The judicial nominating process will begin on this vacancy, as provided by law.

The Commission also took up whether a vacancy exists due to the resignation of Judge Ryan C. Carson from the district court in the 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, effective November 1, 2024. After considering the statutory factors and the testimony received, the Commission unanimously determined that a vacancy exists in the office of the district court in the 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District and recommended the primary location be Kearney, Buffalo County, Nebraska. After the vacancy was declared, the Nebraska Supreme Court met in special consultation and determined the primary location of such vacancy should be in Kearney, Buffalo County, Nebraska. The judicial nominating process will begin on this vacancy, as provided by law.

Sincerely,



Jonathan J. Papik  
Nebraska Supreme Court

JJP/kln

pc Chief Justice Jeffrey J. Funke  
Corey R. Steel, State Court Administrator  
Joshua R. Shasserre, Clerk, Nebraska Supreme Court  
Members of the Judicial Resources Commission