

Honorable
Jeffrey A. Kremers
Presiding Judge Misdemeanor
Lee Ann Philbert
Court Reporter

STATE OF WISCONSIN
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

MILWAUKEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
901 North 9th Street, Rm 502
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53233-1425
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February 7, 2018

Sent Via Electronic Mail and U.S. Mail

Clerk of Supreme Court
ATTN: Deputy Clerk – Rules
P.O. Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701-1688

Re: Rule Petition 18-01 regarding Judicial Administrative Districts

Dear Deputy Clerk for Rules:

I am writing in response to Rule Petition 18-01. I am writing to express my concerns with the proposed elimination of the 6th Judicial District. My concerns are my own and do not necessarily represent the opinions of anyone else in my District.

The Director of State Courts is proposing to eliminate District Six and disperse its counties into the surrounding districts. That might be a good idea or it might not. We just do not know nor do we have the data to make that decision.

The Director asserts that, "After analyzing the impact of technological innovations and other factors including geographical distance between circuit court branches, judicial need, and weighted case load, the Director of State Courts believes that the court system can function as effectively with nine judicial administrative districts as it currently does with ten." None of the details of that analysis are included in the petition and no report on the analysis has been provided. No doubt technology has made some aspects of court management easier. On the other hand the number of judges, courthouses and clerks of court has not changed. Nor has the number of County Administrators or County Boards changed. So the most labor intensive, travel heavy aspects of the job seems to be the same if not increased.

The number of counties interested in becoming involved in the Evidence-Based Decision Making Initiative is growing. We have more specialty treatment courts and TAD programs coming on line all the time. These efforts require significant collaboration and coordination with other system partners. These efforts, in my opinion cannot be managed long distance. Efforts to revamp the pretrial decision protocol, while different in every county, will result in significant changes in many of our counties.

I do not know whether this makes the elimination of District Six a good idea or a bad idea. I do believe that further study is required before making such a significant change in how our court system is administered.

The Director also states, "By eliminating the position of the district court administrator upon the current administrator's retirement, and by allowing the current lease to lapse without renewing, the court system will realize substantial savings." Again, there is no detail presented for the basis of this claim. It may be the incremental increase in distance is not great but it does require additional trips to these courthouses by DCAs who now have additional counties to cover and who are, in my view, are already stretched to the limit.

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While the lease is ending, the Chief Judge in District Six is finishing his term, and the DCA is retiring, those are continuing events that I do not believe should be used as the basis or explanation for taking some action that may not be in the best interests of the Court.

I only ask that there be additional study and a full presentation of the details of the analysis used as a basis for this petition before making such an important decision for all the communities, court staff, DCAs and Judges who would be affected by such a decision.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Jeffrey A. Kremers
Circuit Court Judge
Milwaukee County