

PAULA SKAHAN
JUDGE OF DIVISION I

GLENN WRIGHT
JUDGE OF DIVISION II

J. ROBERT CARTER, JR.
JUDGE OF DIVISION III

CAROLYN WADE BLACKETT
JUDGE OF DIVISION IV

JAMES M. LAMMEY, JR.
JUDGE OF DIVISION V



JOHN WHEELER CAMPBELL
JUDGE OF DIVISION VI

LEE V. COFFEE
JUDGE OF DIVISION VII

CHRIS CRAFT
JUDGE OF DIVISION VIII

W. MARK WARD
JUDGE OF DIVISION IX

JENNIFER JOHNSON MITCHELL
JUDGE OF DIVISION X

**THE CRIMINAL COURT OF TENNESSEE
THIRTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT AT MEMPHIS
201 POPLAR
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38103
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July 8, 2019

Chairman Chancellor Telford Forgety and members of the Advisory Task force:

Thank you for your service to our great State and scheduling another public hearing in West Tennessee to discuss judicial resources. We would like to take this opportunity to discuss the 30th Judicial District criminal court side of the discussion. As you are well aware, there are 10 criminal court judges in the 30th Judicial District. This District has had 10 criminal court judges since Division 9 and 10 were created by the General Assembly in 1990. Shelby County faces a serious crime problem and the criminal courts are front and center in dealing with that problem. Currently there are 15,339 defendants with cases pending in criminal court. These defendants have pending 38,147 felony counts and 6,063 misdemeanor counts. These criminal counts include 371 first degree murder counts. Needless to say the criminal courts in the 30th District stay extremely busy. Along with our crime problem, we have to deal with the co-existing problems that come with crime, drug addiction and mental health issues. With our sudden, recent increase in opioid addiction and deaths, this problem has become extremely resource intensive.

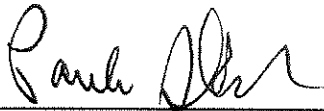
There may be a misconception that because the 30th Judicial District has the most judges it consumes the most state funds. In reality, Shelby County funds a tremendous amount of the costs of its criminal court on its own. The Shelby County Public Defender's Office is not in the State Public Defender system. Its staff is composed entirely of county employees paid by Shelby County. Since statute caps the number of state paid staff at the District Attorney's Office, the District Attorney now fills 62% of the necessary positions by using county-paid employees. We are thankful for the support that Shelby County provides to the criminal justice system, because without that support the criminal justice system in the 30th Judicial District would collapse under its own weight.

Because of our persistent jail overcrowding problem, the District Attorney, the General Sessions and Criminal Court judges have instituted a new vertical prosecution policy that allows for continuity as the case moves through our system. Currently there are 2,300 defendants in the

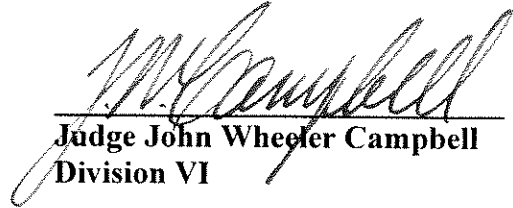
Shelby County jail in pretrial detention or housed pending transfer to the Department of Correction. This new policy, which began June 3, is directly aimed at speeding up the time that cases move through the courts and was designed around the current 10 judges. A reduction of judges on the criminal bench would have a disastrous effect on the whole criminal justice system. A loss of a judge would increase the caseload of the remaining judges by 1500 defendants per year. The last weighted case load study shows that the 30th Judicial District is within ½ a judge of the ideal number. This shows that the District has the right amount of judges for our caseload at this time. Things are working in the 30th District. Please don't recommend that it be changed.

Thank you for the opportunity to set out the special conditions that are found in the 30th Judicial District. I look forward to seeing each of you on the 15th at the public hearing.

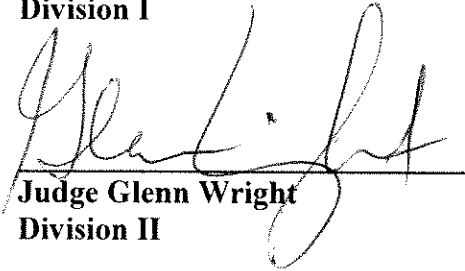
Sincerely



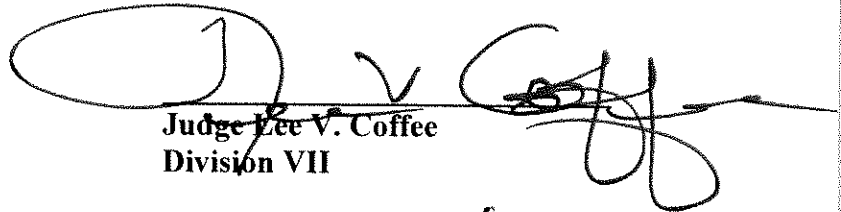
**Judge Paula Skahan
Division I**



**Judge John Wheeler Campbell
Division VI**



**Judge Glenn Wright
Division II**



**Judge Lee V. Coffee
Division VII**



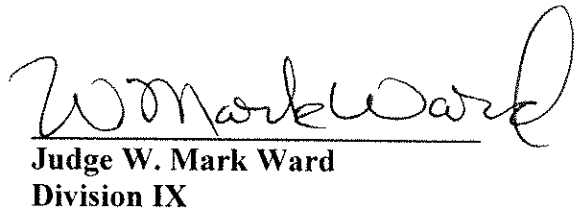
**Judge J. Robert Carter, Jr.
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**Judge Chris Craft
Division VIII**



**Judge Carolyn Wade Blackett
Division IV**



**Judge W. Mark Ward
Division IX**



**Judge James M. Lammey, Jr.
Division V**



**Judge Jennifer Johnson Mitchell
Division X**