Supreme Court of Illinois

March 5, 2021

SUPREME COURT ANNOUNCES CREATION OF NEW STATUTORY COURT FEES TASK FORCE

Chief Justice Anne M. Burke and the Illinois Supreme Court announced today an order for the creation of a new Supreme Court Statutory Court Fees Task Force ("Task Force") to replace the original 15-member Task Force created under the Access to Justice Act. The new Task Force is charged with conducting a thorough review of the entire Criminal and Traffic Assessment Act (CTAA), including the various statutory fees imposed or assessed on criminal defendants and civil litigants and the fiscal impact of the new civil and criminal fee schedules. It will also identify any issues with implementation and propose recommendations for legislative and/or rules changes as needed. The Order is available on the Court website by clicking here.

The original Task Force's recommendations were the basis for the CTAA, 705 ILCS 135/1-1 *et seq.* and Section 27.1b of the Clerk of Courts Act, 705 ILCS 105/27.1b. Both statutory provisions became effective on July 1, 2019 with a sunset date of January 1, 2021. The sunset date was later extended to January 1, 2022.

In response to the CTAA, the Supreme Court approved Civil Filing and Appearance Fee Schedules, enacted changes to Supreme Court Rule 298 (Application for Waiver of Court Fees), adopted new Supreme Court Rule 404 (Application for Waiver of Court Assessments), and approved a form for circuit clerks to report fund distribution.

"The reforms enacted to simplify court costs were an important step and we are grateful to the original Task Force for its hard work," Chief Justice Burke said. "There was always the expectation that additional improvements would be necessary, and we look forward to hearing from the new Task Force on what those might be."

The new Task Force is a bipartisan body of judges, retired judges, legislators, circuit clerks, and members of the private bar from across the state. It is required to hold its first meeting within sixty (60) days and will issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the Supreme Court and the General Assembly within one year of the filing of the Order.

Steven F. Pflaum, of Neal, Gerber and Eisenberg LLP, has been appointed as chairperson of the Task Force. Mr. Pflaum also chaired the original Task Force.

"The legislation and Supreme Court Rules that implemented the recommendations of the original Task Force have enabled our State to make important strides in the effort to improve the fairness and transparency of court fees and costs, and to address concerns about their potential impact on access to justice," Pflaum said. "The new Task Force created by the Supreme Court will enable us to build on the progress that has already been made by recommending any adjustments needed to ensure that the CTAA and related court rules achieve their intended purposes."

The six additional appointees to the Task Force by the Supreme Court are Adam Vaught of Hinshaw and Culbertson LLP, Cook County Circuit Court Judge Thomas M. Donnelly, the Hon. Elizabeth A. Robb (Ret.), First District Appellate Justice LeRoy K. Martin, First Judicial Court Judge Michael A. Fiello, and 17th Circuit Court Chief Judge Eugene G. Doherty.

The composition of the Task Force will additionally contain four members of the Illinois General Assembly, appointed as follows:
- One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;
- One member appointed by the Senate President;
- One member appointed by the Senate Minority Leader.

In addition to those four members, the Task Force will contain two members appointed by the Governor and two members appointed by the President of the Illinois Association of Circuit Court Clerks.

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts will provide administrative support to the Task Force.

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