

# NCS

NATIONAL CENTER *2018* FOR STATE COURTS

ANNUAL REPORT

# Trusted Leadership. Proven Solutions. Better Courts.

*The National Center  
for State Courts  
promotes the rule of  
law and improves the  
administration of justice  
in state courts and  
courts around the world.*

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2	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
3	MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIR
4	IMPROVING PUBLIC TRUST & ACCESS
8	ENHANCING COURT SERVICES
10	EDUCATING PROFESSIONALS & THE PUBLIC
13	INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE
14	NCSC BY THE NUMBERS
16	RECOGNIZING COURT LEADERS & SUPPORTERS
18	A CONVERSATION WITH THE CHIEF JUSTICES & JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE
19	GENERAL COUNSEL COMMITTEE
20	YOUNG LAWYERS COMMITTEE
21	LAWYERS COMMITTEE
22	HONOR ROLL OF CONTRIBUTORS
23	WARREN E. BURGER SOCIETY
24	FRIENDS OF THE COURT

# TABLE of CONTENTS

The National Center for State Courts was created by, and continues to be led by, the collective effort of the brightest and most innovative minds on issues and trends that impact justice.

NCSC is governed by the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators. We are closely aligned with 15 other national court associations.

Our staff is comprised of specialists in economics, anthropology, political science, psychology, public policy and management, sociology, public and court administration, and the law. Each discipline contributes a unique perspective, but it's the blend of these skills and knowledge that NCSC combines effectively to conduct meaningful research.

25	JOAN K. COCHET MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT FUNDING TRIBUTES
26	HONORING SERVICE
28	NCSC'S IMPACT

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# Message from the President and Chair

President John F. Kennedy believed “Change is the law of life.” This is true for people and organizations like the National Center for State Courts (NCSC).

To remain relevant, the courts, and NCSC, must adapt to changes in the world around them — particularly by improving their service and operations.

“Change” was NCSC’s byword in 2018. You have probably noticed one obvious change — the new front page of our website. But there is even more change, or progress, going on behind the scenes at [www.ncsc.org](http://www.ncsc.org).

In 2018 Michael Buenger, former state court administrator for Ohio, Missouri, and South Dakota, joined NCSC as our new Executive Vice President of Operations. His immediate focus is strengthening our relationships with senior congressional staff in Washington, D.C.; managing internal information systems; and developing national and international initiatives. We are pleased Mike has brought his experience not only as a state court administrator, but also as an international court consultant, who has helped improve the rule of law in eastern Europe and co-authored a book on American judicial power, to NCSC’s management team.

Other senior management changes involved saying goodbye to Dr. Tom Clarke, Vice President of Research and Technology, who after 14 years at NCSC decided it was time to retire. As we thank Tom for his tremendous contributions to NCSC and the nation’s state court community, we congratulate Dr. Pam Casey who has been named Vice President of Research. Pam brings a wealth of experience to the position — she’s worked at NCSC for 32 years. During this time, she headed one of the first national projects on problem-solving courts, advanced work on court performance standards and measures, and led initiatives on public trust and confidence in the justice system and access to justice, to name a few.

As much as NCSC embraces change, we never lose sight of our long-standing goal of helping courts confront pressing challenges in a rapidly changing society. Through our independent research and analysis, NCSC is:

- Helping courts confront the epidemic of opioid use with a new online resource center;
- Working with courts to defend against increasingly frequent cyber attacks on vulnerable computer systems; and
- Evaluating and improving how courts handle domestic relations cases with the Family Justice Initiative.

Another constant throughout NCSC’s 47 years of operation is our gratitude for the continuing and generous support of our friends and partners in the state courts, our client associations, our private contributors, our law firms, our dedicated volunteers who serve on numerous advisory committees — all of you who value and honor our nation’s state courts.

To complete President’s Kennedy’s 1963 remarks on change, he said.

“Those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future.” Thank you for helping to make NCSC’s future so promising.



*Mary Campbell McQueen*  
PRESIDENT  
MARY CAMPBELL McQUEEN  
*National Center for State Courts*

*Paul L. Reiber*  
CHAIR  
PAUL L. REIBER  
Chief Justice  
*Supreme Court of Vermont*



# IMPROVING PUBLIC TRUST & ACCESS

INDIANA CHIEF JUSTICE LORETTA RUSH





# State Courts' Response to the Opioid Crisis

Last year, more Americans died of opioid overdoses than of breast cancer, gunshot wounds, or even car crashes. About 120 Americans per day died of opioid overdoses. “At some point, most opioid abusers end up in court. Perhaps they have been arrested for stealing to feed their habits or perhaps an agency has deemed them unfit parents,” said Indiana Chief Justice Loretta Rush, co-chair of the National Judicial Opioid Task Force. “Whatever the reason, one fact remains: the state court justice system is now the primary referral source for addiction treatment in the country.”

This reality has put tremendous strain on our nation’s state courts, many of which have been overwhelmed by growing dockets and shrinking resources. “It takes an enormous amount of time to figure out what’s best for people who are addicted, how to care for their children, and what resources are available for them,” Chief Justice Rush said. “And those who are placed in a treatment program with court oversight may remain involved with the court for years.”

This led the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators to establish the National Judicial Opioid Task Force to find solutions. The task force, which is staffed by NCSC and funded by the State Justice Institute, made remarkable headway in 2018. Tennessee State Court Administrator Deborah Taylor Tate serves as co-chair with Chief Justice Rush.

The task force has developed an online resource center, which provides state courts an array of materials — policy recommendations, bench cards, webcasts, podcasts, white papers, and educational resources — to help courts respond to this crisis. There remains much work ahead, Chief Justice Rush said. The task force’s work continues through 2019.



NATIONAL JUDICIAL  
OPIOID TASK FORCE  
CO-CHAIRS CHIEF  
JUSTICE RUSH AND  
TENNESSEE STATE  
COURT ADMINISTRATOR  
DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE.



## Connecting Communities and Courts

In recent years, the public's perception of the courts has risen slightly, but not dramatically. The **Community Engagement in the State Courts Initiative**, staffed by NCSC, is working to change that. Chaired by Chief Judge of the D.C. Court of Appeals Anna Blackburne-Rigsby, the initiative has identified several pilot projects around the country that will create programs to try to improve trust between courts and minority or low-income communities. The initiative is taking the approach that making smaller, incremental changes — for example, improving jury selection, — might lead to more significant improvements in public trust.

With this approach, the initiative has launched the Public Engagement Pilot Project to build on information gathered from a three-city listening tour in which judges met with community members to hear about their experiences with, and impressions of, the courts. Eleven themes surfaced during the listening tours — divided into three categories — and will serve as guidance for the pilot projects: issues based on how judges make decisions; perceived unfairness in the court system; and outcomes of judicial decisions.

### THE SIX PILOT SITES INCLUDE

- Administrative Office of the Massachusetts Trial Court
- Franklin County, Ohio Municipal Court
- Kansas City, Missouri Municipal Court
- Nebraska Supreme Court, Office of the State Court Administrator
- Puerto Rico Judicial Branch
- Texas Office of Court Administration

## Families and Courts

NCSC began a three-year project to help family courts operate more efficiently. The project, called the **Family Justice Initiative**, released a study in 2018 that concluded that the ways cases are managed are too complicated, and family courts do not have enough reliable data to effectively change the way they do things. The next step is to develop recommendations based on those findings, and then test them in four pilot project courts.

“This is an incredibly important initiative that I think will end up helping families solve some of their most difficult problems,” said Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark S. Cady, who is leading a task force on the issue. “I’m happy to be a part of this, and I’m grateful that NCSC is spearheading this.”

## Online Dispute Resolution: Coming to a Computer Near You

It is not up for debate that courts can do a better job of using technology to help people access the justice system. With **online dispute resolution (ODR)**, small-claims litigants can use their computers or smart phones to file documents, communicate with other parties, and resolve their claims without entering a courtroom.

In the fall of 2018, Utah began the nation's first statewide ODR pilot project, which NCSC is evaluating.

“The vision of the Utah online dispute resolution program is to narrow the access-to-justice gap and to improve court services through the creation of the first soup-to-nuts ODR court platform in the United States,” said Utah Supreme Court Justice Deno Himonas.

*“To date, the results of the pilot have been very encouraging.”*

UTAH JUSTICE DENO HIMONAS

## State of State Courts

Some gains are being made in the court of public opinion when it comes to the courts' use of taxpayers' dollars and the work ethic of court employees, according to NCSC's **2018 State of State Courts** survey. NCSC has commissioned this survey since 2014, with pollster GBA Strategies conducting 1,000 telephone interviews with registered voters nationwide.

Seventy-six percent of survey respondents expressed support in their state courts in 2018 — up from 71 percent in 2017. That increased support resulted in higher marks from the public on a wide variety of attributes, including a 12 percent increase in those saying that courts are a good investment of taxpayer dollars, and a 7 percent increase in those who think of courts as places where people work hard.

"It is important for any entity to do a temperature check on itself, but it is particularly important for those of us in public service. It was fascinating to be a small part of the survey process; of course, the real work begins with responsiveness to the identified needs," said Marcia Meis, Illinois State Court Administrator, who served on the project's Advisory Committee.

Still, confidence in how poor people and minorities are treated hasn't substantially improved. "This narrative has done little to alleviate well-established concerns of bias, inefficiency, and a two-tiered justice system weighted against 'regular' people," said GBA Strategies.



MARCIA MEIS

## Quality Data = Better Courts

The **National Court Open Data Standards Project** was launched to strengthen state courts' ability to solve internal business problems and to provide open, transparent, and reliable data to court users. This project plans to reduce the burden that external data requests place on courts. At the project's core is developing uniform definitions for various case types. The project is expected to improve data integrity and usability.

Court leaders are excited about the prospect of how improved data will help courts.

Kim Nieves, a data specialist for the Pennsylvania Courts, said the "project will provide an invaluable resource for states working to advance in areas, such as monitoring, evaluation, case management, and resource allocation by developing a common data language that is vetted by experts from across the country.

California Judge Brian McCabe said the project should resolve some long-standing challenges courts face. "Living and working in the information age has presented all of us with unique challenges," said Judge McCabe of Merced Superior Court.

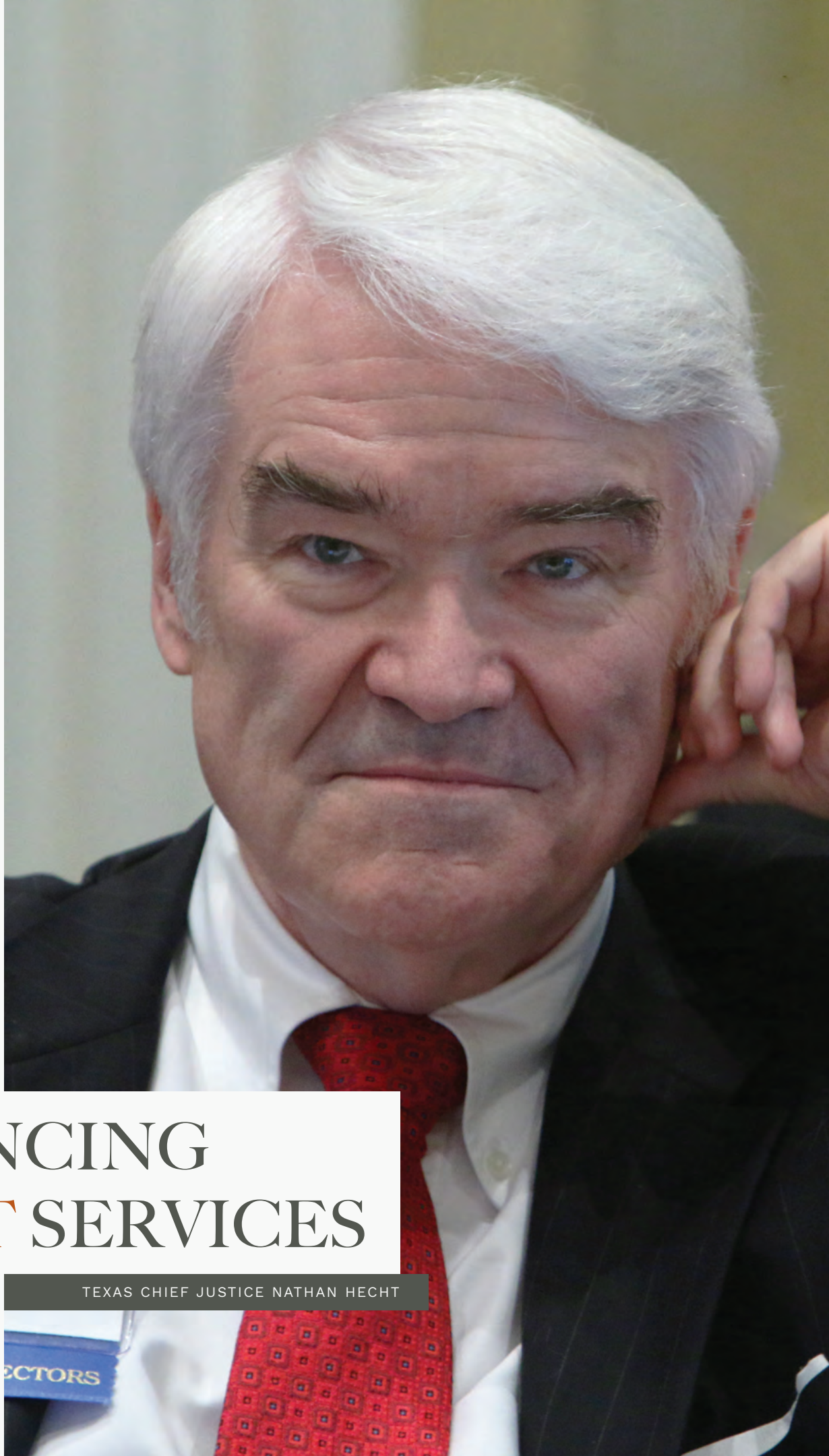
*"For the court system, the challenge is how to be more transparent, while preserving data integrity and, in some cases, confidentiality. NCSC is at the forefront of this effort in collaboration with various interested entities. It is hoped the effort produces solutions that are both workable and worthy of the challenge."*

JUDGE BRIAN McCABE



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# ENHANCING COURT SERVICES



TEXAS CHIEF JUSTICE NATHAN HECHT



# Texas and Other State Courts Develop Solutions to Fines & Fees

Texas Chief Justice Nathan Hecht was determined to right a wrong playing out in courts in Texas and nationwide: poor people being jailed because they cannot afford court fines and fees for minor offenses. “Jailing criminal defendants who cannot pay their fines and court costs keeps them from their jobs, hurts their families, makes them dependent on society, and costs the taxpayers money,” he said. “Most importantly, it is illegal under the United States Constitution.”

Chief Justice Hecht served on the **National Task Force on Fines, Fees and Bail Practices**, an initiative of the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators, which was staffed by NCSC. The task force worked for more than two years to find solutions to this issue. Good things are happening.

The Texas legislature passed a law that allows courts to determine a defendant’s ability to pay at an earlier point in the court process. For example, if a judge finds that a person cannot afford a \$500 traffic ticket, but can afford \$200, payment is made, and the case is resolved. Previously, defendants had to pay the \$500 or they were likely jailed.

In the first full year since this law was enacted, Texas courts received an unexpected result: a 7 percent increase in collections. “Courts are collecting something rather than nothing,” said Texas State Court Administrator David Slayton, “and the negative impacts for defendants are much lower.”

## OTHER MEASURES ARE WORKING

Judges in Sacramento, California; Glen Falls, New York; and Athens, Ohio are referring people convicted of traffic-related offenses to use driving simulators, which teach drivers to detect hazards, parallel park, drive safely in bad weather, and learn the dangers of speeding and distracted driving. Those who pass 15 lessons have their traffic-related fines and fees reduced by as much as \$500. The simulators were purchased with a grant from **Selective Insurance**, which is partnering with NCSC and working with the task force.



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# EDUCATING PROFESSIONALS & THE PUBLIC

COURT ADMINISTRATOR JAIME BREW





# ICM Fellows Program Builds and Strengthens Professional Relationships

Like the majority of Houston area residents in August 2017, Jaime Brew was a nervous wreck as Hurricane Harvey dumped more than a year's worth of rain on southeast Texas in just a few days.

"During the storm, I remember feeling a sense of hopelessness as I watched the flood waters getting closer and closer to the house," said Brew, a member of the ICM Fellows Class of 2018. "At one point I did start to panic because I remembered I cannot swim."

"I tried to keep my mind off what was going on outside my home by working on my ICM Fellows research paper," added Brew, now the administrator for the Coppell Municipal Court, north of Dallas.

The **Fellows Program** is the highest and most rigorous certification program offered by ICM. Becoming an ICM Fellow is a multiyear, multistep process that nearly 1,300 court professionals from 47 states, the District of Columbia, and 11 countries have accomplished since 1970.

Brew credits the program with helping her "recharge her batteries" and find more purpose in her work. "I have worked in court administration for over 11 years and I must admit that around year 10, I was beginning to question whether or not what I was doing made a difference."

During the residential phase of the program, when she was with the other Fellows candidates in Williamsburg, Virginia, Brew realized that others were dealing with the same challenges she faced.

"The ICM Fellows Program helped me to truly understand the importance of my job, helped me build stronger relationships with my judges, and I learned how to conduct proper research to gather the data needed for evidence-based decision making."

As it turns out, Hurricane Harvey spared Brew and her family. The floodwaters crept into her yard, but then subsided.

*The Institute for Court Management is the education arm of NCSC. It offers online courses to court employees seeking certifications, such as the Certified Court Executive and Certified Court Manager. ICM also runs our Fellows Program.*



# NCSC Video Explains State Courts

It's understandable that most people don't realize that 96 percent of all court proceedings take place in state courts. Many were never taught that the Founding Fathers created the judicial branch as the government's third and equal branch. To help educate the public, NCSC produced an explainer video that helps the public understand how courts work and how they are accountable.

"This is much needed to help with civics education efforts," said Sharon Gladwell, communications director for the North Carolina Judicial Branch. "I am going to recommend that we include this in our "toolkit" for our statewide Speakers Bureau."

The brief video — 3 minutes and 35 seconds long — is available free to schools, courts, and the public. Check it out at

[WWW.NCSC.ORG/EXPLAINER](http://WWW.NCSC.ORG/EXPLAINER)

## HR Summit: Life Cycle of Court Employees

NCSC and the Conference of State Court Administrators hosted a Human Resource Summit in Denver in which more than 100 court management staff from around the country attended. The two-day summit titled, Employee Life Cycle, explored issues such as recruitment, retention, organizational development, and succession planning. Another HR summit is scheduled for 2019.

## eCourts 2018 Looked to Courts of the Future



NCSC hosted eCourts, one of our two major technology conferences, in Las Vegas in mid-December. A record-breaking crowd of more than 1,000 people from around the globe attended. The opening session — *Hair on Fire: Courts in 2030* — set an innovative tone for the rest of the conference by trying to predict what the courts might look like in 2030. One example: Will we see virtual courthouses ten years from now? To view that session and others, go to the eCourts website.

[E-COURTS.ORG](http://E-COURTS.ORG)

CORA THE ROBOT GREETES eCOURTS' ATTENDEES AND PROVIDES CONFERENCE INFORMATION.

## ASSOCIATIONS

NCSC provides education and conference services to the 8,200 members of the 17 court-related associations we manage.

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES (CCJ)

CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS (COSCA)

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION (AJA)

CONFERENCE OF COURT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS (CCPIO)

COUNCIL OF CHIEF JUDGES OF THE STATE COURTS OF APPEAL (CCJSCA)

COUNCIL OF LANGUAGE ACCESS COORDINATORS (CLAC)

COURT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICERS CONSORTIUM (CITOC)

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COURT ADMINISTRATION (IACA)

JOINT TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE (JTC)

JUDICIAL FAMILY INSTITUTE (JFI)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COURT MANAGEMENT (NACM)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PRESIDING JUDGES AND COURT EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (NAPCO)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE JUDICIAL EDUCATORS (NASJE)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES (NAWJ)

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF PROBATE JUDGES (NCPJ)

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF APPELLATE COURT CLERKS (NCACC)

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS IN THE COURTS (NCREFC)



# INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

JIM McMILLAN



## Helping a New Court System Work Better in Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago experienced an increase in violent crimes among children at the turn of the last decade, and, like a lot of relatively young nations, realized it couldn't treat young perpetrators of crimes like adults.

"It is clear that the justice system and the traditional punitive approach have failed to deter our young people from the allure of a life of crime," its judiciary admitted, so it would need to focus on rehabilitation.

That increase in violent crime triggered a comprehensive law called the Children Act 2012, an initiative called the Trinidad and Tobago Juvenile Court Project, and the country's first two juvenile courts, which also handle children in need of supervision, and child care and protection matters. NCSC, using part of a grant from U.S. Agency for International Development, is providing technical support so it can manage cases better. More specifically, NCSC developed the court's cloud with an eye toward minimizing short- and long-term costs and enabling the court to continue to grow its case management system.

"The cloud has allowed for the international development team to more easily share and manage the work via continual communication," said Jim McMillan, NCSC principal court management consultant who made trips to Trinidad and Tobago.

Since the courts opened in February and March of 2018, more than 1,000 individual cases — with a total of more than 20,000 documents — have been entered in its system.

*NCSC International is a global leader in court management and administrative services, working with justice systems worldwide to modernize court operations to help courts function more efficiently and transparently, offer quality services that increase access to justice and respond effectively to community needs.*

*Over the years we have worked in more than 40 countries, implementing rule of law initiatives. NCSC also works in the areas of civil law, common law, sharia law, and traditional settlement systems.*

- NCSC's International Division team has designed and implemented **case management, case tracking, and case reporting systems** in courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Honduras, Nigeria, Serbia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Indonesia.
- NCSC has overseen the design, renovation, and installation of **modern records management and IT/communications technology** in judicial institutes and courts in Kosovo, Lebanon, Mongolia, and Serbia.
- NCSC is working with the **International Association for Court Administration**, an organization with members in 24 countries that promotes professional court management in emerging democracies.
- In 2018 NCSC moderated the first-ever self-assessment for **Colombia's Constitutional Court** — the same level as the U.S. Supreme Court.

# BY THE NUMBERS

56

NUMBER OF RESEARCH  
DIVISION PROJECTS

\$16,823,242

AMOUNT OF FEDERAL AND  
FOUNDATION GRANTS FOR RESEARCH

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES  
NCSC INTERNATIONAL  
IS WORKING IN, FROM  
NICARAGUA TO NIGERIA,  
BOSNIA TO THE BAHAMAS

25

158

NUMBER OF FULL-TIME  
NCSC EMPLOYEES

NUMBER OF  
COURT-RELATED  
ASSOCIATIONS  
SERVED BY  
NCSC IN

17  
2018

3,815

THE NUMBER OF NCSC  
FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

11,029

NUMBER OF SUBSCRIBERS  
TO NCSC'S FLAGSHIP  
NEWSLETTER @ THE CENTER

# +160

NUMBER OF MEMBERS  
OF NCSC'S LAWYERS  
AND GENERAL  
COUNSEL COMMITTEES

# 29

NUMBER OF COURT  
ADMINISTRATORS  
WHO BECAME ICM  
FELLOWS IN 2018

# 250

APPROXIMATE  
NUMBER OF  
COURT LEADERS  
WHO ATTENDED  
OUR NCSC  
JUDICIAL  
EXCELLENCE  
EVENTS IN  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

# +90

NUMBER OF TIMES ICM  
COURSES WERE HELD IN 2018

# 85

NUMBER OF NEW CONTRACTS  
SIGNED BY COURT CONSULTING  
SERVICES IN 2018

# \$7,348,488

# 42

NUMBER OF STATES IN  
WHICH COURT CONSULTANTS  
WORKED IN 2018

# 1,500

NUMBER OF TIMES NCSC WAS  
CITED IN STATE AND NATIONAL MEDIA

# 582

NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO SUBMITTED ESSAYS  
FOR THE 2018 CIVICS EDUCATION ESSAY CONTEST





# RECOGNIZING COURT LEADERS & SUPPORTERS

JUDGE ELIZABETH HINES



# Judicial Excellence Events

## *Rehnquist Award Recipient Elizabeth Hines*

District Court Judge Elizabeth “Libby” Hines from Ann Arbor, Michigan, received **NCSC’s 2018 William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence**, one of the highest judicial honors in the country. While Judge Hines’ work is far-ranging, she is most recognized for her groundbreaking work in domestic violence.

Presented annually by the National Center for State Courts, the Rehnquist Award honors a state court judge who demonstrates the outstanding qualities of judicial excellence, including integrity, fairness, open-mindedness, knowledge of the law, professional ethics, creativity, sound judgment, intellectual courage, and decisiveness.

Chief Justice of the United States John G. Roberts, Jr. presented Judge Hines the award during a ceremony in the Great Hall of the U.S. Supreme Court November 15. “To be recognized by NCSC for the work I have been privileged to do — and to meet the Chief Justice of the United States — is absolutely thrilling. Thank you to the National Center and Chief Justice Roberts for making me the happiest judge alive!” Judge Hines said at the dinner.

Judge Hines’ work has shaped the way many courts handle domestic violence cases. In the early 2000s, she was appointed to represent her court on an executive committee that managed a Judicial Oversight Demonstration Initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, one of only three sites in the country selected to find what court practices work best in domestic violence cases. This was a five-year-project, and today Judge Hines’ court serves as a national resource for the handling of such cases.

“My interest in DV began when I was the prosecutor in charge of cases in the juvenile court. There, I saw the harm to children growing up in a violent home. I also saw the resilience of children given support...I know that the orders I make in court do not just affect the adult in front of me, they affect everyone in the home, so I’d better get it right. Thank you to the experts at the National Center, the American Judges Association, the Center for Court Innovation, NCJFCJ, and the National Judicial College who help us get it right.”



JUDGE ELIZABETH HINES AND  
CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN G. ROBERTS, JR.

**Annually, NCSC hosts judicial excellence events in Washington, D.C. to honor and to recognize court professionals who have demonstrated outstanding work. The 2018 events included the William H. Rehnquist Award Reception and Dinner, A Conversation with the Chief Justices, the annual Justice Roundtable, the Recognition Luncheon, and the induction of new members to the Warren E. Burger Society.**



## A Conversation with the Chief Justices

Preserving judicial independence took center stage at the **2018 Conversation with the Chief Justices** in Washington, D.C., in November.

Fifteen chief justices lined the front of the room for an open and candid discussion with more than 50 General Counsel and Lawyers Committee members invited to engage in this question-and-answer session.

The conversation continually circled back to recent attacks on the judiciary and how lawyers and others can help the judiciary combat them.

“This is a profound issue that is becoming a bigger problem,” said Iowa Chief Justice Mark Cady. “We, as chiefs, have an influence on our courts, but the issue of judicial independence is something we really need a lot of help with.”

Participants said this event was invaluable to them because it provided a free exchange of ideas and concerns outside of a courtroom — an opportunity they do not often get.



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JUDGE TOKO SERITA

## Justice Roundtable

What are the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) on the law? Participants of **NCSC’s Justice Roundtable** engaged in a two-hour, in-depth conversation about what challenges AI might present for the legal profession.

The Justice Roundtable, held each year in November in Washington, D.C. brings together more than 125 court leaders and legal experts associated with NCSC — chief justices, judges, general counsel, lawyers, and business leaders — for a thought-provoking conversation in a private setting about an issue that is impacting the country’s legal community.

Gary Marchant, an Arizona State University law professor, moderated the discussion, led by a panel of experts representing IBM, the University of Toronto, and the Wilson Elser law firm.

The panelists and attendees discussed what lawyers and the courts should do if artificial intelligence and its byproducts, such as autonomous vehicles and medical devices, do not work as intended and lead to harm — everything from physical injury and discrimination to criminal acts and privacy breaches.

Gillian Hadfield, a roundtable panelist and a professor of law and strategic management at the University of Toronto, predicted that “our conventional common law categories will have a difficult time” with artificial-intelligence-related cases, and that new technology created by artificial intelligence will lead to new regulations and laws.



ROUNDTABLE PANELISTS, FROM LEFT: MICHAEL O'BRIEN,  
DONNA HADDAD, GILLIAN HADFIELD AND GARY MARCHANT



# General Counsel Committee

Members of the National Center for State Courts General Counsel Committee commit to heightening the visibility of the NCSC's mission and to developing and implementing future NCSC programs. In addition to their financial support, each member of the committee provides important outreach to the justice, legal, and business communities.

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## RANDALL M. EBNER

Randy Ebner, vice president and general counsel of Exxon Mobil Corporation, has developed a national reputation for his long-standing commitment to the work of the country's state courts.

"I've spent much of my career as a litigator in various state court systems throughout the United States. In that time, I've found that the stronger and better functioning a state court system is, the more it can provide a critical, efficient, and fair forum for dispute resolution."

Ebner also is a champion of NCSC, serving as co-chair of the General Counsel Committee and Board member. Through his commitment, Exxon Mobil continues its support of NCSC's work into a fourth decade.

"The National Center for State Courts provides a strong, non-politicized vehicle to help ensure access to justice, efficiencies in state court systems, and the promotion and protection of the rule of law," he said.

*"The Center also helps underscore the importance of maintaining an independent and unbiased judiciary."*

# Young Lawyers Committee

Lawyers Committee members' firms are encouraged to mentor a young attorney to serve on the Young Lawyers Committee. The Young Lawyers Committee membership brings a unique perspective to the dialogue with state court leaders who are helping to improve court operations through the changing landscape of litigation.

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## F. JAMES ROBINSON JR.

Jim Robinson, an active member of NCSC's Lawyers Committee and a 2018 Burger Society recipient, is recognized for being a defender of state courts.

The Kansas attorney, who specializes in business law said he views the courts as "a priceless constitutional gift." To Robinson, the courts are defined by ideas — "fair and impartial courts, not under the thumb of the government's political branches, not beholden to party interests and public opinion and solely accountable to the Constitution and the rule of law" — that must be taught to each generation.

A senior partner with Hite, Fanning & Honeyman, Robinson is "greatly concerned about politically motivated, and increasingly strident, attacks highlighting a few unpopular state court decisions. Those attacks undermine courts' legitimacy."

Robinson has encouraged members to take an active role in protecting state judiciaries from unfair political attacks. He has worked closely with Kansas Chief Justice Lawton Nuss to build support for his state's judicial system, where he has witnessed escalating tensions between the legislature and the judiciary.

Robinson has worked to build relationships between court leaders and the legal profession and cultivate a broad-based coalition. He and others met with lawmakers, launched public education campaigns, and organized a high-profile, pro-retention campaign in 2016 for five Kansas Supreme Court justices who were on the ballot. All five won.



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The National Center for State Courts Lawyers Committee members dialogue with state court leaders and actively participate in the development and implementation of programs and initiatives that support NCSC's mission to serve the courts.

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# WARREN E. BURGER SOCIETY



Vermont Chief Justice Paul L. Reiber, president of the Conference of Chief Justices and chair of the National Center for State Courts' Board of Directors, inducted five individuals in the Warren E. Burger Society, which honors those who have volunteered their time, talent and support to the National Center in exceptional ways.

## THE 2018 HONOREES:

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The Burger Society is named for the former Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court who helped found NCSC in 1971. The induction ceremony took place at a luncheon on Nov. 18 in Washington, D.C.

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The Friends of the Court program provides an opportunity for those who care about the NCSC's mission to make a personal financial contribution in support of NCSC's work and programs. These contributions enable NCSC to provide quality training and education, independent research, and to promote awareness of issues surrounding the administration of justice. The National Center gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made a gift in 2018.

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## Joan K. Cochet Memorial Scholarship

Joan Cochet worked at NCSC for 10 years, during which time she touched the lives of many with her gracious and generous spirit. Joan worked closely with court leaders, members of the nation's court associations, and Fellows of the Institute for Court Management at the National Center for State Courts.

Her service represented the highest ideals of the Center. The scholarship was named in her honor to help deserving students achieve the status of ICM Fellow — the highest level of ICM's certification program.

The National Center would like to recognize the following individuals who made a gift in 2018 to the Joan K. Cochet Memorial Scholarship.

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*In memory of Hon.  
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**PRESIDENTS LEGACY  
SOCIETY**  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS

Established by the National Center for State Court in honor of its four presidents, Edward B. McConnell, Larry L. Sipes, Roger K. Warren, and Mary C. McQueen, the Presidents Legacy Society recognizes donors who have included the National Center for State Courts in their estate plans through a bequest or other planned gift.

These generous demonstrations of support have prompted the establishment of a society that recognizes and celebrates donors who provide legacies to help the National Center for State Courts to fulfill its mission to improve the administration of justice through leadership and service to courts.



## Sandra Day O'Connor Award for the Advancement of Civics Education



Marilyn Cover, executive director of Oregon's Classroom Law Project, received the 2018 Sandra Day O'Connor Award for the Advancement of Civics Education.

Cover was selected for determination, creativity, leadership, and reach. "Her impact on students and teachers — as well as judges, legislators, and other elected officials — extends far beyond her home base in Oregon, where she and a handful of lawyers, teachers, and judges started what is now the Classroom Law Project (CLP) in the early 1980s," former Oregon Chief Justice Thomas Balmer said in his nomination letter. CLP includes classroom instruction, teacher training, mock trials, and courtroom visits.

Cover's commitment to civics education spans four decades and has impacted thousands of students. She successfully convinced Oregon governors and legislators to enact a state law that designates the first Friday in December as Oregon Civics Day for Teachers. Cover's commitment to civics education spans four decades and has impacted thousands of students.

## Warren E. Burger Award for Excellence in Court Administration



Maureen E. Conner, Ph.D., professor emerita at Michigan State University, received the 2018 Warren E. Burger Award for Excellence in Court Administration.

"Maureen has provided much-needed vision and strong leadership in judicial administration. She has done so in a highly collaborative, forward-looking manner, creating strong organizational partnerships to further the professional development of judicial officers and court managers," said one of her nomination letters, signed by more than 16 members of court associations.

Conner joined Michigan State University in 1991 where she created a knowledge base for judicial branch education. She launched and led the Master of Science degree and two certificate programs in judicial administration.

## G. Thomas Munsterman Award for Jury Innovation

Pat Young, former Alaska jury coordinator, was the 2018 recipient of NCSC's G. Thomas Munsterman Award for Jury Innovation, which recognizes state and local courts or individuals that have made significant improvements or innovations in jury procedures, operations, and practices.

Young was recognized for demonstrating exceptional leadership and project management skills to bring together levels of the court system to implement jury management innovations. She played a key role in encouraging the court system to develop jury videos and was instrumental in creating a juror services web page. She also developed judicial training on juror utilization.



## 2018 Distinguished Service Awards

NCSC annually presents a handful of *Distinguished Service Awards* to court leaders who have made significant contributions to the justice system.

### CURRENT OR FORMER STATE APPELLATE COURT JUDGE

- **Hon. Maite Oronoz Rodriguez**, *Chief Justice of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court*
- **Hon. Rhys Hodge**, *Chief Justice of the Virgin Islands Supreme Court*

### CURRENT OR FORMER STATE TRIAL COURT JUDGE

- **Hon. Duane Slone**, *Fourth Judicial District, Eastern Tennessee*

### STATE-LEVEL COURT ADMINISTRATOR OR EMPLOYEE

- **Kevin Iwerson**, *Chief Information Officer, Idaho Judicial Branch*

### TRIAL COURT-LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR

- **Theresa Ewing**, *Fort Worth, Texas Municipal Court Director*

### INDIVIDUAL NOT EMPLOYED BY THE COURTS

- **Katherine Alteneder**, *Executive Director of the Self Represented Litigants Network*



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## NCSC 2018 Staff Awards

**THE STAFF EXCELLENCE AWARD** recognizes the employee whose work has significantly contributed to the fulfillment of NCSC's mission. The recipient consistently produces a high quality of service that enhances our reputation and earns the support and trust of all segments of the court community.

- **Jennifer Elek**, *Senior Court Research Associate*

**JEANNE A. ITO AWARD** acknowledges an employee who has worked at NCSC for five years or less and who exemplifies the same traits as Jeanne Ito, who developed a reputation for innovation, initiative and enthusiasm during her five years at NCSC.

- **William Gale**, *Program Manager*

**FLORENCE MCCONNELL AWARD** honors former employee Florence McConnell. This award goes to the employee whose interaction with the courts and with fellow employees creates an atmosphere of trust and respect. The recipient not only maintains a high level of professional performance but also is supportive of colleagues in their personal challenges.

- **Nikiesha Cosby**, *Association Manager*

**ROBERT W. TOBIN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** recognizes excellence and achievement by staff who worked on an exceptional product. Bob Tobin was a long-time employee who retired in 2015.

### THE VIZ-A-THON TEAM

- **Natasha Anderson**, *Program Specialist*
- **Brandan Collins**, *Web Architect*
- **Kathryn Genthon**, *Senior Court Research Analyst*
- **Kathryn Holt**, *Senior Court Research Analyst*
- **Diana McSpadden**, *IT Development Manager*
- **Olivia Underwood**, *Court Research Analyst*
- **Brittney Via**, *Court Research Analyst*

### DALE A. SIPES MEMORIAL PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Named after former NCSC employee Dale Sipes, this award recognizes an individual who is responsible for an extraordinary project or activity that improved service to the state courts and enhanced NCSC's reputation.

- **Stacey Smith**, *Executive Assistant to the President*

# NCSC'S IMPACT FELT IN MANY WAYS...

## Helping Courts Cope with Natural Disasters

Recent natural disasters have highlighted the need for courts to better prepare for, and respond to, emergencies. With a grant from the State Justice Initiative, NCSC has embarked on the **Continuity of Operations Planning Project** to help courts affected by natural disasters have relevant and up-to-date resources to more effectively function during a natural emergency or disaster. The project has identified four initiatives to be completed by the end of 2019:

- Study lessons learned from recent natural disasters/emergencies for courts
- Provide direct COOP planning technical assistance to states/territories affected
- Update existing NCSC COOP materials and develop new technical content
- Modernize and upgrade the NCSC COOP Online Planning Guide and template

## Viz-a-thon Brings State Court Organization to Life

NCSC hosted the first court-related data visualization contest, which we called **State Court Viz-a-thon**. In all, 80 people entered, taking a massive amount of data about the state court system and creating eye-pleasing and intuitive data visualizations. NCSC plans to use concepts from the winning visualizations to improve the data charts in the Court Statistics Project, a vast trove of state court caseload data from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam.

- NCSC researchers helped North Carolina develop requirements for a new **case management system** that is expected to save court employees time and reduce data entry errors. The next step is for North Carolina to select a case management system vendor that understands the needs of the courts.
- An NCSC report gave jury managers more information about how to accommodate **jurors with disabilities**. The report summarized the Americans With Disabilities Act and other disability statutes as well as the numerous types of disabilities, and the technological advances to assist courts in helping those with disabilities.
- NCSC provided a first-of-its-kind resource for judges that focused on professional growth. The information in the report, **Elements of Judicial Excellence: A Framework to Support the Professional Development of State Trial Court Judges**, is based on more than 100 hours of interviews with Illinois circuit court judges, 24 hours of focus-group discussions, and follow-up surveys. The State Justice Institute funded the project.
- The Kansas Supreme Court in 2018 used a **compensation study** done by NCSC to try to convince state lawmakers to raise the salaries of court employees. The study found that some court employees are paid 18 percent below market level. The State Justice Institute helped finance the study.
- The courts can be hectic places, and court employees often don't have the luxury of thinking long-term, so NCSC in 2018 started a **project to peer into the future** and try to determine how the courts will be impacted by technological innovations, demographic shifts and other factors.

## RESOURCES

**State Court Organization**, ncsc.org/sco presents detailed comparative data about how state trial and appellate courts are organized and administered in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the territories of Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and Virgin Islands. Topics range from the types of courts established in each state to specific aspects of law or procedure.

The 2018 edition of ***Trends in State Courts*** reported on how courts are meeting the changing needs of society. The articles examined what courts are doing — or need to do — to confront issues such as drug abuse, human trafficking and immigration enforcement.

In 2018, our **Joint Technology Committee** published several interesting **research papers** to help guide the courts. A few titles include *Social Media Marketing for Courts*, *When Might Blockchain Appear in Your Court*, and *Marketing a Court Website*.

NCSC produces numerous **court-related newsletters**. *@ the Center*, our flagship newsletter, went from monthly to weekly in 2018. Other newsletters include *Gavel to Gavel*, *Connected*, *Judging Traffic*, *Jur-E Bulletin* and *Court Tech Bulletin*, which State Tech magazine recognized as one of 30 must-read state and local IT blogs from 2018.

NCSC produces a monthly podcast, **Court Talk**, which discusses societal issues and how they relate to the courts.

# Conference of Chief Justices

NCSC is governed, in part, by the Conference of Chief Justices, who gathered for their midyear meeting in Florida. The attending members include:



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MINNESOTA CHIEF JUSTICE LORIE GILDEA  
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NEW HAMPSHIRE CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERT LYNN  
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#### THIRD ROW, FROM LEFT

INCOMING MISSOURI CHIEF JUSTICE GEORGE DRAPER III  
MISSOURI CHIEF JUSTICE ZEL FISCHER  
MARYLAND CHIEF JUDGE MARY ELLEN BARBERA  
RHODE ISLAND CHIEF JUSTICE PAUL TUTTELL  
OREGON CHIEF JUSTICE MARTHA WALTERS  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CHIEF JUDGE ANNA BLACKBURN-RIGSBY  
ARIZONA CHIEF JUSTICE SCOTT BALES  
NEBRASKA CHIEF JUSTICE MICHAEL HEAVICAN  
GUAM CHIEF JUSTICE KATHERINE MARAMAN

#### BACK ROW, FROM LEFT

MASSACHUSETTS CHIEF JUSTICE RALPH GANTS  
FLORIDA CHIEF JUSTICE CHARLES CANADY  
TENNESSEE CHIEF JUSTICE JEFFREY BIVINS  
IOWA CHIEF JUSTICE MARK CADY  
KANSAS CHIEF JUSTICE LAWTON NUSS  
UTAH CHIEF JUSTICE MATTHEW DURRANT  
NORTH DAKOTA CHIEF JUSTICE GERALD VANDEWALLE  
TEXAS CHIEF JUSTICE NATHAN HECHT



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