

http://www.uscourts.gov/News/TheThirdBranch/10-09-01/Judiciary_Approves_Pilot_Project_for_Cameras_in_District_Courts.aspx



September 2010

Judiciary Approves Pilot Project for Cameras in District Courts

The Judicial Conference, at its biannual meeting in September, approved a pilot project to evaluate the effect of cameras in federal district courtrooms and the public release of digital video recordings of some civil proceedings.

The pilot, which will be national in scope, will last up to three years. It will evaluate the effect of cameras in district court courtrooms, video recordings of proceedings, and publication of such video recordings. Details of the development and implementation of the pilot will be determined by the Conference's Committee on Court Administration and Case Management (CACM).

The pilot will evaluate the effect of cameras in district court courtrooms, video recordings of proceedings, and publication of such video recordings.

Courts that participate in the pilot will, if necessary, amend their local rules (providing adequate public notice and opportunity to comment) to provide an exception for judges participating in the pilot project. Participation will be at the trial judge's discretion.

Under the pilot, participating courts will record proceedings. Recordings by other entities or persons will not be allowed. Recording of members of a jury will not be permitted, and parties in a trial must consent to participating in the pilot.

The Federal Judicial Center will conduct a study of the pilot, and produce interim reports at the end of its first and second years. The Administrative Office will provide funding for equipment and training as needed by a participating court.

Electronic media coverage of criminal proceedings in federal courts has been expressly prohibited under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 53 since the criminal rules were adopted in 1946, and by the Judicial Conference since 1972. In 1996 the Conference rescinded its camera coverage prohibition for courts of appeals, and allowed each appellate court discretion to permit broadcasting of oral arguments. To date, two courts of appeals—the Second and the Ninth—allow such coverage. In the early 1990s the Judicial Conference conducted a pilot program permitting electronic media coverage of civil proceeding in six district courts and two courts of appeals.

Addressing the Challenges

The strategies and goals in the Judiciary's Strategic Plan are organized around several challenges to:

- * Provide justice in a more effective manner to meet new and increasing demands.
- * Manage resources and programs in an effective and efficient manner that reflects workload variances and funding realities.
- * Support a lifetime of service for federal judges.
- * Attract and retain a highly competent and diverse complement of Judiciary staff, while developing the next generation of Judiciary leaders.
- * Develop national technology systems while fostering the development of creative approaches and solutions at the local level.
- * Remain comprehensible, accessible and affordable for people who participate in the judicial process, while responding to demographic and socioeconomic changes.
- * Develop and sustain effective relationships with Congress and the Executive Branch, yet preserve appropriate autonomy in Judiciary governance, management and decision-making.
- * Promote public trust and confidence in the federal courts, in a manner consistent with the Judiciary's role.

Read the complete Strategic Plan at www.uscourts.gov/publications.

In other matters, the Conference:

- * Approved a new Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary, which upholds the Judiciary's tradition of meeting challenges and taking advantage of opportunities, while preserving core values. The plan includes goals to enhance the Judiciary's accessibility, timeliness, and efficiency. The plan also stresses the importance of attracting, developing and retaining judicial and court executive talent, and calls for increased education and training for judges and staff on security, ethical conduct, integrity, and accountability. For more on the initiative see the sidebar: Addressing the Challenges.

- * Found a continuing need for all authorized bankruptcy judgeships (316 permanent and 36 temporary) and therefore recommended to Congress that it not eliminate any of them. Still pending in the Senate is a House-passed bill based on the Conference's 2009 recommendation for creation of 13 additional bankruptcy judgeships and conversion of 22 existing temporary judgeships to permanent status. More than 1.5 million bankruptcies were filed in the federal courts during the 12-month period ending June 30, 2010—a 20 percent increase over the filings for the same period in 2009.

- * Approved the establishment of a program involving the Government Printing Office, the American Association of Law Libraries and the Administrative Office, that would provide training and education to the public about PACER service, and would exempt from billing the first \$50 of quarterly usage by a library participating in the program.