

United States District Court

Western District of Arkansas
Judge Isaac C. Parker Federal Building
30 South 6th Street, Room 317
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901

P. K. Holmes, III
Chief U. S. District Judge

Phone: (479) 783-1466

March 6, 2012

Mr. Tom D. Womack, President
Arkansas Bar Association
P.O. Box 3077
Jonesboro, AR 72403-3077
email: twomack@wipmlaw.com

Ms. Stephany Slagle, President
Garland County Bar Association
221 Hazel Street
Hot Springs, AR 71901
email: stephany@slaglelaw.net

Mr. Michael W. Loggains, President
Boone County Bar Association
816 N. Main, Suite B
Harrison, AR 72601

Dear Messrs. Womack and Loggains and Ms. Slagle:

I am writing you concerning the proposed courthouse closings in the Western District of Arkansas by the Space and Facilities Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States. The list compiled by the Committee includes the Harrison and Hot Springs Divisions. The list uses a quantitative analysis to rate the non-resident courthouses. The scores place Harrison at the top of the list and Hot Springs in the middle of the list. While I understand the need to cut costs by closing inefficient courthouses, the criteria does not take into account qualitative factors that will affect those constituencies that use those courthouses.

I would like to have your input on the proposed closings of the Harrison and Hot Springs Divisions. Each of your constituencies may be affected in different ways, and I am interested in hearing how the courthouse closings will affect you. I have several concerns that are not taken into account in the quantitative analysis.

One factor in the Harrison Division is the large geographical area the division covers. Litigants in the Harrison Division would likely have to go to court in the Fayetteville Division. For example, Baxter County is a long distance from the Fayetteville Division, and those litigants and their lawyers would be far away from courthouse facilities. Northern Arkansas would not be serviced by any federal courthouse within a reasonable proximity.

Another factor that affects both the Harrison and Hot Springs Divisions is the presence of the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Corp of Engineers and their law enforcement operations. Both divisions have a significant docket of criminal matters that involve federal magistrate's court. The magistrate judges in both divisions have a large caseload of criminal cases, especially when compared to other courthouses on the closure list. If those courthouses are closed, those cases will have to be handled in another division, or

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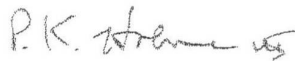
other facilities will have to be rented to hold magistrate's court. Litigants as well as law enforcement personnel will be affected.

The proposed closings of the Harrison and Hot Springs Divisions do not take into account these qualitative factors. Your input on these factors, as well as other factors you may have, would be helpful in obtaining as much information as possible when discussing the proposed closures within the Eighth Circuit and the Judicial Conference of the United States.

I currently serve on the Space and Facilities Committee for the Eighth Circuit Judicial Conference. This committee will be reviewing the information on all of the proposed courthouse closings in the Eighth Circuit. We have the response date of April 13, 2012 to provide information to the Judicial Conference of the United States on the proposed closings. I would appreciate your input before that date so that we may have all the information necessary to discuss these proposed courthouse closings.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,



P. K. Holmes, III

PKH/jas
c: Honorable Leon Holmes