

News Release



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STUART RABNER

Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court

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Statement of Chief Justice on Suspension of Civil and Matrimonial Trials in Vicinages Due to Vacancy Crisis

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner issued the following statement today:

“Earlier this year, trials in the Civil Division and matrimonial trials were suspended in two vicinages because of the high number of judicial vacancies. Since then, the number of vacancies in Vicinage 15, comprised of Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem counties, has been substantially reduced from nine to two judgeships out of a total of 28, enabling the Judiciary to resume conducting trials in Vicinage 15 at once.

However, the number of vacancies in Vicinage 13, comprised of Hunterdon, Somerset, and Warren counties, remains unchanged. Because there are still not enough judges to conduct civil and matrimonial trials in Vicinage 13, the moratorium on conducting those trials regrettably remains in place.

For the past three years, the court system has operated with an average of more than 60 vacancies. Fortunately, multiple individuals have been confirmed in recent weeks, which has reduced the number of vacancies statewide to 53 positions.

The situation in certain parts of the state, however, continues to pose a challenge. In the Passaic Vicinage, in particular, seven out of 28 judgeships are vacant, and several of those positions have gone unfilled for multiple years. As a result, we will not be able to conduct civil and matrimonial trials in the Passaic Vicinage, except for very limited circumstances, beginning July 31, 2023.

The Judiciary’s goal is to serve the public by providing a place to resolve disputes fairly and expeditiously. In order to do so in every vicinage, we respectfully ask the Executive and Legislative branches to continue to address the critical issue of judicial vacancies in a timely manner.”

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