



Kansas Courts News Release

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Supreme Court forms task force to examine pretrial detention practices

TOPEKA—The Kansas Supreme Court has formed an ad hoc task force to examine pretrial detention practices in Kansas district courts and report its findings and recommendations to the court within 18 months.

The 15-member task force was created by a November 7 Supreme Court order signed by Chief Justice Lawton Nuss. Its membership includes judges, defense attorneys, prosecutors, and court services and community corrections officers. It will have its first meeting December 13 and 14 in Topeka.

The task force is charged with examining current pretrial detention practices for criminal defendants in Kansas district courts, as well as alternatives to pretrial detention used to ensure public safety and encourage an accused to appear for court proceedings.

The task force will also compare Kansas practices to effective pretrial detention practices and detention alternatives identified by other courts. This comparison could be used to develop best practices for Kansas district courts.

"Every day Kansas judges decide whether to detain criminal defendants and under what circumstances. These decisions are made amid a national discussion about alternatives to pretrial detention and the need to ensure no person is unnecessarily deprived of his or her liberty," said Nuss. "This is the perfect time for Kansas to examine its pretrial detention practices to identify if and where improvements can be made."

Judge Karen Arnold-Burger, chief judge of the Kansas Court of Appeals, who will serve as chair of the task force, agrees.

"We've seen a lot of change in pretrial detention practices across the nation the last few years. We have an opportunity to learn from other jurisdictions, what they have tried and how it has worked for them," Arnold-Burger said. "We won't know what is useful to us until we take a closer look at it, and that's what this task force will do."

The Supreme Court created the task force under authority granted to it by the Kansas Constitution to oversee all courts in Kansas.

Creation of the task force follows closely a report from the ad hoc committee on municipal courts fines, fees, and bonding practices that in September made its recommendations to the Kansas judicial administrator and the executive director of the League of Kansas Municipalities. Judge Brenda Stoss of the Salina Municipal Court chaired that ad hoc committee, and she has been appointed to serve on this task force.

The municipal court ad hoc committee recommended that areas in need of additional study included bail and pretrial detention practices.

Members of the task force are:

- Nancy Dixon, judicial administrator, Kansas judicial branch, Topeka
- District Judge Mary Mattivi, 3rd Judicial District, Topeka
- District Judge Lori Bolton Fleming, 11th Judicial District, Pittsburg
- District Judge Wendel Wurst, 25th Judicial District, Garden City
- District Judge Jared Johnson, 28th Judicial District, Salina
- District Magistrate Judge Keith Collett, 8th Judicial District, Abilene
- Judge Brenda Stoss, Salina Municipal Court
- Charles Branson, district attorney, Douglas County
- Todd Thompson, county attorney, Leavenworth County
- Tom Drees, county attorney, Ellis County
- Sal Intagliata, defense attorney, Wichita
- Justin Barrett, defense attorney, Colby
- David Harger, defense attorney, McPherson
- Robert Sullivan, corrections director, Johnson County
- Anita Cash, chief court services officer, 29th Judicial District, Kansas City, Kan.

Resources for reporters:

Kansas Supreme Court [order](#) establishing the ad hoc task force.

National Task Force on Fines, Fees, and Bail Practices [Resource Center](#).

National Center for State Courts [2017 report](#) on trends in state courts.

[Pretrial Justice Center for Courts](#)

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