

7th Congress State of the Judiciary Message

I. Introduction

Paralegals assist certified attorneys in their practice of law. They conduct research, draft documents, write reports, and do other daily procedural tasks. To the ordinary citizen, the function of a paralegal is synonymous with any other legal professional like an attorney. Though not qualified to practice law, these paralegals offer tremendous support so that attorneys can focus on winning their cases without worrying about filing discovery disclosures or sending routine messages to clients. So too are paralegals often people's first step to becoming a fully fledged attorney.

Paralegals have served a similar (yet minimized) purpose in our community. A paralegal scheme can be first traced back to Attorney General DOJGov where he announced the Department of Justice would be hiring paralegals. This was expanded on by Attorney General HigherExpectations where she suggested that paralegals should become a stepping stone to certified practice as attorneys before the District Court. This idea really came to fruition at the behest of then-District Court Judge NezuSuccu. She worked to gather support from the District Court, Bar Members, and other actors in the legal system to bring a paralegal program to life. Through her work, the legal system witnessed firsthand a system where aspiring attorneys can achieve become one through

participating as a paralegal under the mentorship of a senior bar member. A paralegal could practice in the District Court all under the guidance of a participating attorney.

None of this work was on account of nothing. Indeed, why would one go through the heavy workload of creating this program? The answer lies in the problems that the District Court was consistently facing. Since its creation, the District Court has repeatedly found it difficult to find and offer attorneys to defendants. This is notably true in criminal cases with indigent defendants. Judges had to consider whether a criminal case could proceed without offering counsel to indigent defendants solely because there were no attorneys available to defend. This led to case proceedings moving slowly and was especially true in early criminal cases. In some instances, cases were left untouched for days or weeks on dockets because of this reason.

To combat this problem, the District Court looked at ways on how to make systematic changes to the bar in order to increase the number of attorneys. One direct way that was devised was to create temporary exemptions to government attorneys like in the Department of Justice and the District of Columbia's Attorney General's Office. Another was to decrease the amount of questions on the bar exam to encourage more individuals to take the exam. Perhaps the most creative initiative was the paralegal program that the District Court crafted.

The paralegal program is soon being phased out entirely in the District Court and has been replaced recently with an authority created by Congress. This, however, should not signal an end to finding and creating solutions to problems that courts, attorneys, and the justice system faces. Solutions of whatever magnitude and that are made on

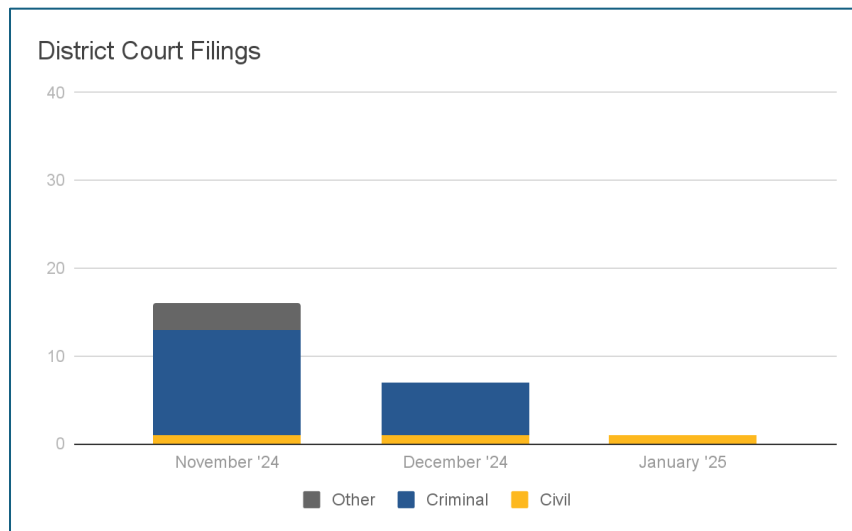
whichever level, individual or institutional, are all valuable. Actions by judges, policymakers, attorneys, and even ordinary citizens can have a profound impact on the justice system as a whole. Such solutions must always be sought after in a continuously evolving justice system with new problems ready to sprout. The paralegal program represents a small tale of a party ready and willing to tackle a problem head-on. So too has Congress demonstrated this through its intervention of the District Court bar. Indeed, the creation of the Bar Association shows that not one initiative will endure as a permanent solution. We should always stand ready and be willing to solve problems in an ever-changing environment so that we always strive for the best.

II. Supreme Court's Caseload

This figure analyzes all initiated appeals starting December 1, 2024 until January 31, 2025. The total number of appeals filed in the Supreme Court in December was 2. A percentage change cannot be discerned because the number of appeals filed in the previous month was zero. The total number of appeals filed in the Supreme Court in January was zero which is a 100% decrease from the previous month.

III. District Court's Caseload

This figure analyzes all initiated cases starting December 1, 2024 until January 31, 2025. A total of 7 cases have been filed or initiated in the District Court during December which is a 56.25% decrease from the previous month. Of those cases, 1 was a civil action, and 6 were criminal actions. A total of 1 case has been filed or initiated in the District Court during January which is a 85.71% decrease from January. The single case was a civil action.



IV. Conclusion

Please do not take my omission of gratitude to the President and Congress for their work on improving the federal judiciary and legal community as some sort of encrypted message of disapproval or attitude of angst. I find that these messages would best serve its purpose if it were not handicapped by boilerplate language. That being said, I thank the President and Congress for their keen interest and hard work on improving the federal judiciary and our legal community.

My best wishes.

NathanInslee

Chief Justice of the United States