

***A One Page Explanation  
Concerning Conversion of Nebraska's  
Temporary Judgeship***

With only four active federal district judges for the entire state, and two senior judges (who are each nearly 80 years of age), Nebraska is one of the busiest federal courts in the nation. Our fourth judge (Judge Shanahan) is nearly 70 years old and he is eligible for to take senior status in May of 2004. When he takes senior status in May of 2004, Nebraska will lose its fourth judgeship unless the temporary judgeship is converted to a permanent position or its authorization extended.

The most [recent national judicial caseload profile for 2003 prepared by the Administrative Office of the Courts](#) shows the following regarding Nebraska:

***The Current Situation—with Four Judges***

***\* Nebraska's criminal felony caseload is one of the largest in the nation.***

For criminal felony cases, Nebraska ranks 7<sup>th</sup> heaviest in the nation (out of 94 districts). The average federal judge handles 87 criminal felony cases, while a Nebraska judge handles 175 cases, double the typical workload. (If Nebraska lost the 4<sup>th</sup> judgeship, each remaining judge would handle 233 criminal felony cases or 2.7 times more than the average.)

For supervised release violation hearings, Nebraska ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation, handling 75% more violation hearings than the norm.

***\* During the past decade, when Nebraska had only four federal judgeships, the caseload exploded.***

[Since 1998, the criminal felony caseload per judge rose from 89 to 175](#), a 97% increase. Compared to 1998, total filings (civil and criminal together) for the district have risen 30.5%.

***\* Nebraska judges work fast, hard and have difficult cases.***

Nebraska ranks 6<sup>th</sup> fastest in the nation for moving cases from filing to trial and 8<sup>th</sup> best for having the fewest number of 3 year old civil cases.

Nebraska ranks 8<sup>th</sup> highest in the number of trials per judge, 68% more than the norm. For case difficulty, Nebraska ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in the nation for weighted filings.