



Supreme Court of Illinois

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CHIEF JUSTICE KILBRIDE AND ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT ANNOUNCE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE TO IDENTIFY AND MEET CHANGING NEEDS OF COURTS

Chief Justice Thomas L. Kilbride and the Illinois Supreme Court announced Thursday formation of a long-range planning committee to serve as a "think tank" to better adapt Illinois courts to future trends in economic, technological, scientific and social changes.

The Committee on Strategic Planning of the Illinois Judicial Conference is composed of judges, lawyers and will include other stakeholders in the justice system. It is charged with identifying emerging trends and issues that may impact the courts and the delivery of justice, and proposing specific strategies and tactics to address them.

"Instead of being reactive to change—sometimes years late—the judicial branch needs to be more proactive, more anticipatory," said Chief Justice Kilbride. "The committee will take a close look at larger issues before they require immediate attention. We need to develop strategies and prepare to adapt to Illinois' changing needs.

"I thank my colleagues on the Supreme Court for supporting this new structure within the Judicial Conference; I thank the members of the new committee for their energy and enthusiasm in embarking on this new endeavor; and I especially thank Judge Michael Hyman for his leadership in preparing and presenting the planning proposal."

The 13-person committee will be made up partly of members of the Executive Committee of the Illinois Judicial Conference and six appointees of the Chief Justice. The Illinois Judicial Conference is a vehicle mandated by the Illinois Constitution to suggest improvements in the administration of justice. Hence, the committee formalizes a new structure for strategic planning within the model of the Judicial Conference.

The terms of the appointees by the Chief Justice will be for one year, renewable for a maximum of three years. This allows the Chief Justice, and each succeeding Chief Justice, to establish their own, specific planning priorities during their three-year tenure as Chief.

"The Judicial Conference is the perfect vehicle to think about the larger issues that are impacting the courts in Illinois," said Judge Hyman, who was named chairman of the strategic planning committee.

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"We intend that it will be a critical tool for identifying and managing solutions to enhance the core missions of the justice system in Illinois.

"The committee will be looking at emerging trends and issues affecting the delivery of justice and develop specific objectives and actions to address each trend and issue. As such, the planning committee will act as an advisory think tank to research and offer informed responses to economic and social trends and public policies that impact the future of the courts."

Judge Hyman, of the Cook County Circuit Court, is a former president of the Chicago Bar Association, former chair of the Bench and Bar Section of the Illinois State Bar Association and has been active in judicial administration and strategic planning in those positions and in several others.

As envisioned, the Strategic Planning Committee would work with the various committees of the Illinois Judicial Conference as appropriate to achieve its mission. It will develop recommendations to be presented to the full, 14-member Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference. Upon Executive Committee approval, the recommendations will be forwarded to the Supreme Court for its consideration.

"The benefit of this committee is to dedicate a formal outlet for creative thinking and innovative solutions," said Judge Hyman. "Judges, individually, don't necessarily think about trends and how they can impact the work they do and how they do it.

"For instance, in society now we have a business environment that is available and operates 24/7; but our courts work on a different schedule. Right now, people come to the courts; but, maybe, the courts should someday go to the people. Are there technological resources available to make that possible? Let's think about it, research it, and take a broad look at what is going on and what we need to do for the courts to adjust."

The annual meeting of the Illinois Judicial Conference is scheduled for October 25. At Chief Justice Kilbride's request, the Executive Committee has included a discussion about strategic planning as part of the agenda.

Chief Justice Kilbride plans to talk about the need and promise of strategic planning in his address to the Judicial Conference. In addition, R. Dale Lefever, Ph.D., a court management and strategic planning consultant from the University of Michigan, will address the Judicial Conference.

In addition to Judge Hyman, the other five members appointed by the Chief Justice are Judge S. Gene Schwarm, chief judge of the 4th Judicial Circuit and chairman of the Conference of Chief Judges; Circuit Judge Keith Brown of the 16th Judicial Circuit; Chicago attorney J. Timothy Eaton, president-elect of the Chicago Bar Association; Carla Bender, clerk of the Illinois Appellate Court, Fourth District; and Peoria attorney Timothy Bertschy, a past president of the Illinois State Bar Association.

The seven members of the Executive Committee who will serve on the Strategic Planning Committee are: Appellate Justice John O. Steele of the First Judicial District; Appellate Justice Robert L. Carter of the Third Judicial District; Chief Judge Mark H. Clarke of the First Judicial Circuit;

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Chief Judge Elizabeth A. Robb of the 11th Judicial Circuit; Cook County Circuit Judge Mary Ellen Coghlan; Associate Judge Robert G. Gibson of the 18th Judicial Circuit; and Cook County Associate Judge Susan Fox Gillis.

The Strategic Planning Committee intends to elicit participation from a wide range of court stakeholders, including representatives of state's attorneys, public defenders, county boards, and the legislative and the executive branches.

An initial goal of the Committee is to hold a conference next spring focusing on how to prepare courts for the future.

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