



STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

SUPREME COURT

CHAMBERS OF

Jon J. Jensen

CHIEF JUSTICE

November 5, 2025

The Honorable Supreme Court Justices
The Honorable District Court Judges
State of North Dakota Courts

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

Re: Chief Justice Election

Dear Justices and Judges:

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the Chief Justice of the North Dakota Supreme Court for the past six years. It has been an honor. During this time, we have accomplished a lot.

When originally seeking the position, it was my promise to provide the district courts with additional support. During my tenure, the temporary position of law clerk was turned into a permanent staff attorney position. Previously, temporary law clerks would start their clerkships and immediately begin the search for new employment to follow the completion of their clerkships. The experience and knowledge gained during a clerkship was lost when the temporary clerk would leave the judicial system. With the creation of the staff attorney position, attorneys can view working for the judicial system as a potential career, earning retirement benefits and having secure long-term employment. The experience and knowledge gained by staff attorneys can now be retained. We have transitioned from less than twelve temporary positions to twenty-nine permanent positions.

Additional support for the district courts has also been provided through the creation of three new judgeships, relieving some of the pressure in our busiest judicial districts. We have also added twenty-nine additional FTEs within the judicial system.

Compensation for the work we do is an important issue. With the North Dakota Judges Association leading the way, the Court has included within its budget requests increases in judicial compensation. The requests for increased compensation were included not only in the Court's budgets, but were made part of the State of the Judiciary addresses and in-person meetings with legislators within the individual legislative districts. The result of these efforts has been an increase of more than \$30,000 in district court judicial salaries since 2021.

The increased support for district courts is reflected in our docket currency and cases under advisement statistics. Our judicial system is at an all-time positive position regarding docket currency and the disposition of cases under advisement. This reflects the hard work being performed by individual judges, as well as how well our judicial system is functioning as a whole.

During the past six years it has been a priority to meet with judges in their districts. The purpose was to be accountable for administrative actions taken by the Court and to gather input from district judges. Those meetings have led to positive changes and are a valuable source of information to guide future decisions. Not every administrative decision has been easy. Change is often difficult. Whether in telephone calls, email exchanges, or in-person visits, I have strived to be accountable.

The position of Chief Justice, for me, has not been about a title, it has been about service and making our judicial system as great as it can be. It has been an honor to serve. While I intend to remain on the Court, I will not seek the position of Chief Justice for the next term.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jon J. Jensen

Jon J. Jensen
Chief Justice
North Dakota Supreme Court

JJJ/tak

cc: Sally Holewa, State Court Administrator (via email)
Petra H. Mandigo Hulm, Clerk of the Supreme Court (via email)