

IN THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

2025 ND 192

In the Matter of the Vacancy in Judgeship No. 6 with Chambers in Fargo, East
Central Judicial District

No. 20250363

Per Curiam.

[¶1] On October 10, 2025, Governor Kelly Armstrong notified the Supreme Court of the resignation of the Honorable Nicholas W. Chase, Judge of the District Court, East Central Judicial District, effective immediately. Judge Chase's resignation creates a vacancy under N.D.C.C. § 27-05-02.1.

[¶2] Under N.D.C.C. § 27-05-02.1, within 90 days of receiving notice of a vacancy, this Court is required to determine whether the office is necessary for effective judicial administration. This Court may, consistent with that determination, order the vacancy filled, order the vacant office transferred to another judicial district in which an additional judge is necessary, or abolish the vacant judicial office, with or without a transfer.

[¶3] Under N.D. Sup. Ct. Admin. R. 7.2, notice of a written consultation with attorneys and judges and other interested persons in the East Central Judicial District was posted October 13, 2025, on the website of the Supreme Court regarding the vacancy created by Judge Chase's retirement in Judgeship No. 6. Written comments on the vacancy were permitted through October 30, 2025. This procedure is sufficient for purposes of the consultation required under N.D.C.C. § 27-05-02.1.

[¶4] No comments were received. A report containing population and caseload trends, and other criteria identified in Sup. Ct. Admin. R. 7.2, Section 4, was filed

October 29, 2025, by the East Central Judicial District. The State Court Administrator filed weighted caseload statistics for calendar years 2024 and 2025 for the East Central Judicial District and statewide, with the 2025 data annualized to project totals.

[¶5] The East Central Judicial District is comprised of Cass, Steele, and Traill counties. The district has 11 judges, with 10 judges chambered in Fargo, and one judge chambered in Hillsboro. This district has two judicial referees. The district has one juvenile and two adult treatment courts. According to the district's report, Judgeship No. 6 is responsible for an equal share of the caseload in Cass, Steele, and Traill counties.

[¶6] The population of Steele and Traill counties decreased, but the population of Cass County increased 23% percent from 2010 to 2020. The total case filings for the district is projected to increase two percent in 2024/2025 as compared to 2023/2024. A large increase in contract collection case filings is expected. Case filings are expected to slightly decrease in felony and misdemeanor cases. The weighted caseload report shows that the two-year average need for judicial officers in the East Central Judicial District increased from 13.04 in 2023/2024 to 14.19 in 2024/2025. The report reflects a need for 0.675 judicial officers for the treatment court. The district has a shortage of 1.19 judicial officers based on the 2024/2025 two-year average.

[¶7] Under the criteria of Section 4 of N.D. Sup. Ct. Admin. R. 7.2, this Court has considered all submissions and its own administrative records on statewide weighted caseload data.

[¶8] Based on the record before us, this Court determines this office is necessary for effective judicial administration in its present location.

[¶9] IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that Judgeship No. 6 with Chambers in Fargo, East Central Judicial District, be filled in the manner provided by N.D.C.C. ch. 27-25.

[¶10] Jon J. Jensen, C.J.

Daniel J. Crothers

Lisa Fair McEvers

Jerod E. Tufte

Douglas A. Bahr