



Supreme Court of the United States

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 19, 2006

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Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., today released the Report of the Judiciary's Committee to study the implementation of the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act of 1980. In May 2004 the Chief Justice's predecessor, William H. Rehnquist, responding to concerns expressed by members of Congress, appointed the Committee to study the Judiciary's implementation of the Act and to report its findings to him. Chief Justice Roberts asked the Committee to continue its work. Justice Stephen Breyer, who chairs the Committee, transmitted the report to the Chief Justice yesterday. The other members of the Committee are Pasco M. Bowman, Senior U.S. Circuit Judge, Eighth Circuit, Sarah Evans Barker, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Indiana, J. Harvie Wilkinson, III, U.S. Circuit Judge, Fourth Circuit, D. Brock Hornby, U.S. District Judge, District of Maine, and Sally M. Rider, Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice. Staff work was performed principally by three senior members of the Federal Judicial Center and one from the Administrative Office. The Committee received no special funding.

The Committee and staff studied a sample consisting of approximately 700 complaint files drawn for the most part from about 2200 complaints terminated over a three year period (2001-2003). The members of the Committee established a set of standards to assess how the complaints were handled and examined in-depth the complaint files in about 200 individual cases.

In releasing the report, the Chief Justice said, "The Committee has engaged in a thorough and comprehensive study of the judiciary's implementation of the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act of 1980, and I thank the members for their work. The report finds that overall, the judiciary has done an excellent job of handling complaints in accordance with the Act, but that in respect to a small number of highly visible cases, improvement is needed. The Committee has identified concrete steps we can take to improve the handling of all cases, and in particular, those that are highly visible. For example, one major recommendation is a more vigorous role for the Judicial Conference committee with overall responsibility for the administration of the Act, including creating a mechanism so that chief judges consider, in appropriate circumstances, transferring a case to another circuit for handling. I have asked that the report's recommendations be referred to the appropriate committees of the Judicial Conference for thorough consideration and prompt action."

The report is available electronically on the Supreme Court's Web site, www.supremecourtus.gov, under Public Information. Copies of the report may also be obtained from the Public Information Office: 202-479-3211.