

Courthouse Closings

June 14, 2016

Chief Court Administrator Patrick L. Carroll III today announced the first round of courthouse closings and consolidations that will occur as a result of a \$77 million reduction in the Judicial Branch's budget for FY 17. The courts that will be closed are: [Juvenile Matters at Danbury](#), [Juvenile Matters at Torrington](#), [Juvenile Matters at Stamford](#), and [the Judicial District Courthouse in Willimantic](#). Please note that the Stamford Judicial District courthouse located at 123 Hoyt Street in Stamford will remain open and all other court business will continue to be heard. It is anticipated that these closings will take effect by the end of the calendar year.

Statement of Chief Court Administrator Judge Patrick L. Carroll III

It is unfortunate that these courthouse closings must occur. They will be disruptive and will impact many people. I want to stress that the closure of courthouses is not driven by savings generated by closing the facilities. Rather, these initial closings are required because of the loss of staff across the state through attrition, a strict hiring freeze and layoffs that have already been announced. However, we are doing the best that we can to position the Judicial Branch so that we can continue to meet the needs of the people we serve, despite substantially fewer resources.

It is important to note that the Judicial Branch's FY 17 budget is \$77 million less than what was originally appropriated. As I have said repeatedly since February, a budget reduction of this magnitude would necessitate a significant reduction of the Judicial Branch's workforce, courthouse closings and consolidations, and cuts to the many programs that provide services for adult and juvenile offenders. I also made it clear that the Judicial Branch would no longer be operating 24-hour lockup facilities in New Haven and Hartford if such a large reduction occurred.

We have laid off 239 permanent, full-time employees and ended the service of 61 temporary employees. We have cut \$14.5 million from programs that serve adult and juvenile offenders. And, as of June 30, 2016, we will no longer operate the two 24-hour lockup facilities, so that the

judicial marshals who work in those lockups can be redeployed to locations impacted by the layoffs.

We now turn our attention to the monumental task of reshaping our court system through courthouse closings and consolidations.

As I have already indicated, we fully recognize the impact that these changes will have. None of these decisions we face are being made without a careful review of many factors including caseloads, distances between court locations, available space and staffing and our ability to lessen the inevitable disruption to the public. We estimate that the Branch will be operating with well over 500 fewer employees at the end of next fiscal year as opposed to the beginning of the fiscal year because we will be unable to replace staff who have been laid off or who leave because of retirements and resignations. Moreover, the following fiscal year shows no promise of relief and may even be worse. The bottom line is that we will not have enough staff to operate the 43 courthouses we have today and will struggle to staff the courthouses that remain open. So, we are positioning the Branch to operate with far fewer employees in the future.

Regardless of the economic landscape, however, our core responsibilities remain unchanged. We will still have defendants and victims of crime whose constitutional rights must be protected, we will still have people come into court to have their disputes resolved, and we will still have families and youth in need of services. Both Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers and I are committed to doing everything in our power to ensure that every individual who walks through a courthouse door has meaningful access to justice.

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