

# JUDICIARY'S BUDGET NEEDS REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

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**Senate Committee on Judiciary**  
**March 21, 2024**

# Vermont Judiciary Mission Statement

The mission of the Vermont Judiciary is to provide equal access to justice, protect individual rights, resolve legal disputes fairly and timely, and provide everyone the opportunity to have their day in court.



# Governor's Recommended Budget

FY24 GF Budget \$58,250,863

## Governor Recommend

Pay Act	\$2,633,940	
Internal Service Fund	(\$248,174)	
Two Superior Court Judges	\$539,234	
<b>Subtotal Increases</b>		<b>\$2,925,000</b>

FY25 Gov. Rec. \$61,175,863

# Judiciary's Budget Request

## Additional Pressures

Tech Fund Revenue Replacement	\$2,561,585	
Fifteen New Staff Positions	\$1,319,507	
S.17 Security Recommendations	\$2,044,331	
Language Access Program	\$120,000	
CHINS Superior Court Judge*	\$0	
	Subtotal	<b>\$6,045,423</b>

Proposed Judicial FY25 Budget

**\$67,221,286**

\*Funding from CHINS Tobacco Settlement Monies

# Superior Court Judge Positions

- Three Superior Judge Positions
  - Northern Float
  - Statewide Treatment Court Float
  - Statewide Juvenile Docket Float\*

\*in lieu of replacing Judicial Master; funded by Tobacco Settlement Monies

# Court Technology Fund Request

- "Tech Fund" created in 2007 for court tech needs
- Three administrative fees comprise revenue source
- Revenue source has declined significantly
- Court tech needs have increased significantly
- Tech Fund no longer a viable funding source for  
Judiciary's tech needs

## Fifteen New Staff Positions

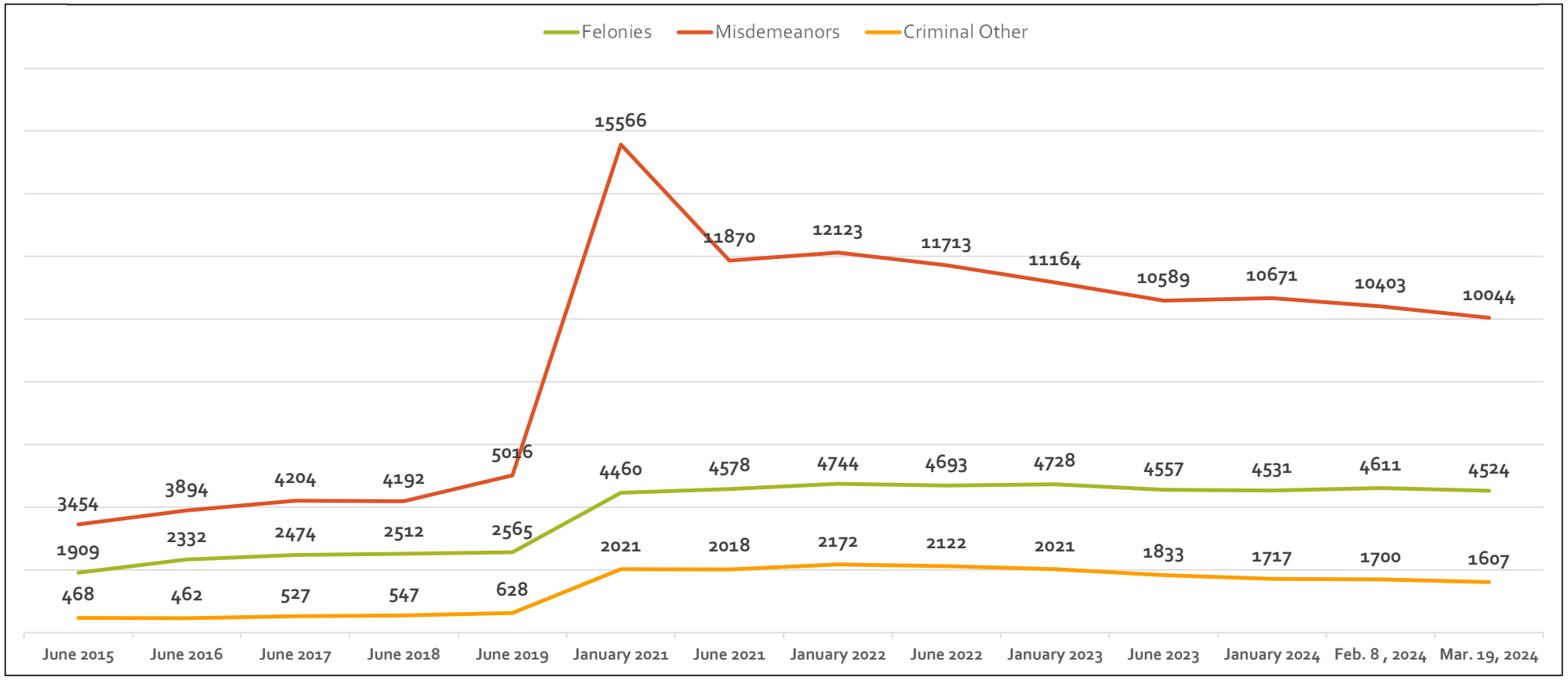
- Ten Judicial Assistants
- Two IT Help Desk Analysts
- Two Centralized Service Analysts
- One Database Administrator
- Potential for \$220,000 savings with new positions versus contracted positions

# Language Access Program

- Judiciary is required to provide court interpreters
- Increased demand for interpreters in recent years that is expected to continue
- Projected increase for interpreters and translation services for FY 25 totals \$120,000



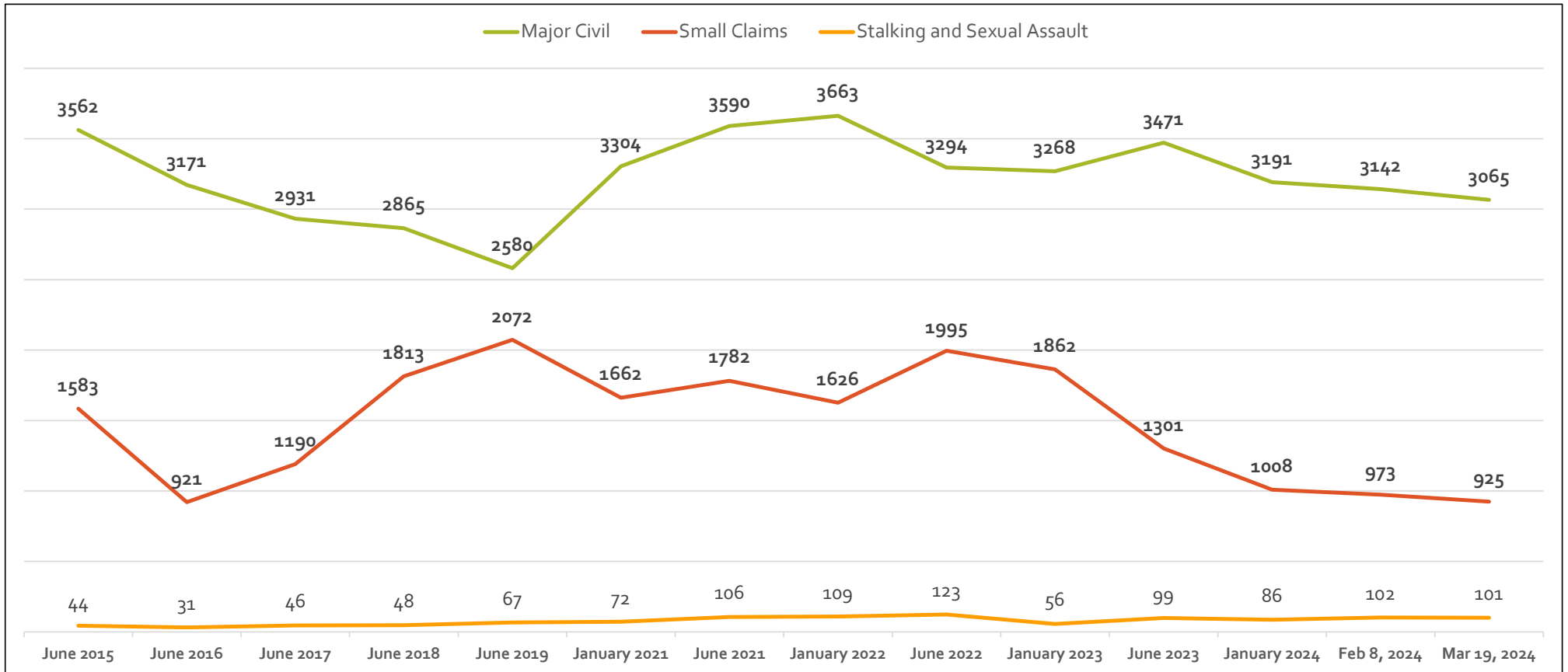
# Active Cases Pending in Criminal Division: Pre-Pandemic and Now



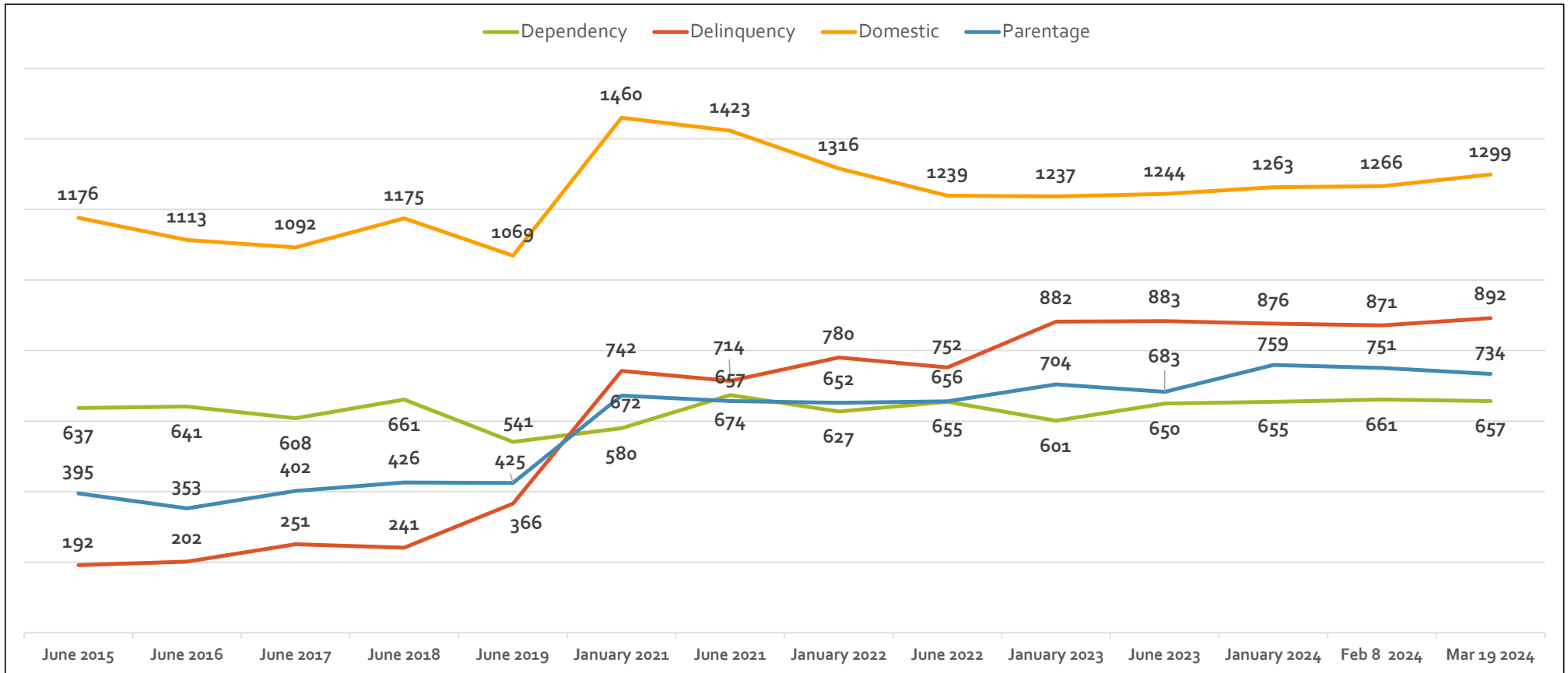
# Pending Criminal Cases as of 3.19.24

COUNTY	Under Dispo guidelines	Near Dispo guideline	Over Dispo Guideline	N/A	Percentage over Dispo "Backlog"	Total Pending Cases
Addison	180	40	121	96	28%	437
Bennington	483	98	679	233	45%	1493
Caledonia	246	70	827	197	62%	1340
Chittenden	1349	237	990	565	32%	3141
Essex	38	13	104	76	45%	231
Franklin	505	65	229	354	20%	1153
Grand Isle	21	11	31	24	36%	87
Lamoille	205	49	253	136	39%	643
Orange	126	30	149	92	38%	397
Orleans	274	98	981	159	65%	1512
Rutland	523	131	857	355	46%	1866
Washington	494	91	302	478	22%	1365
Windham	512	107	605	372	38%	1596
Windsor	326	67	306	215	33%	914
Total	5282	1107	6434	3352	40%	16175

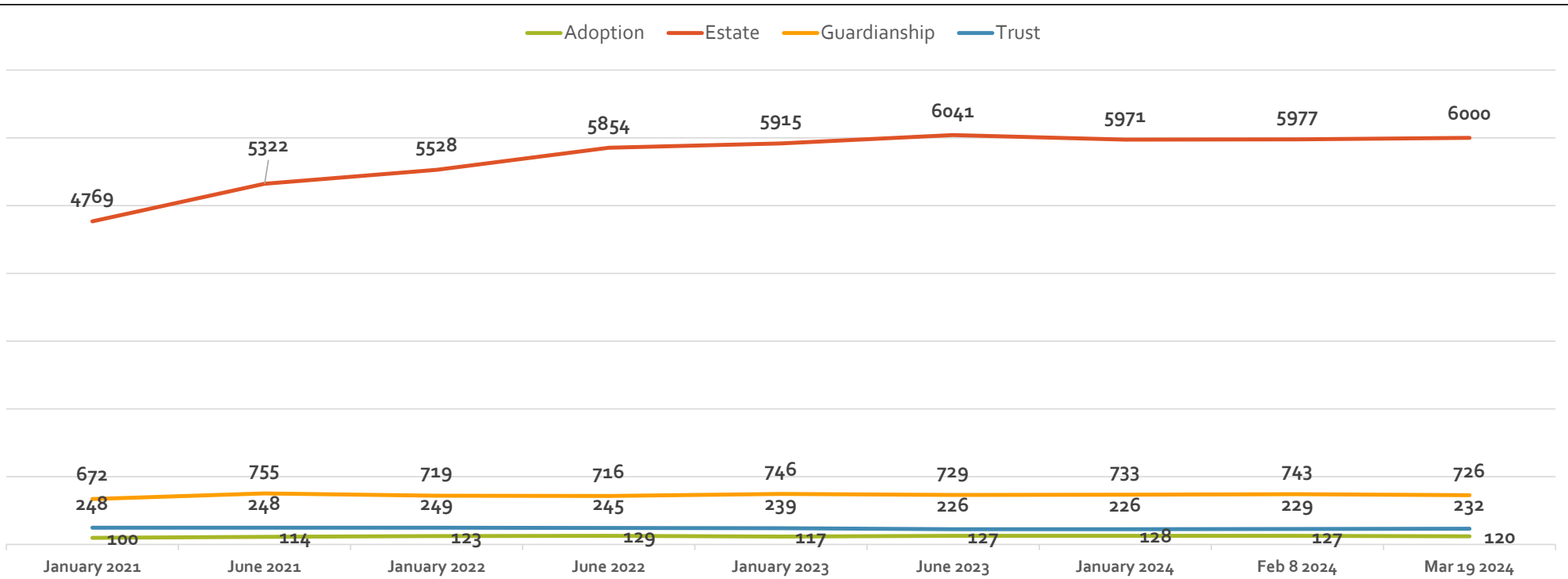
# Active Cases Pending in Civil Division: Pre-Pandemic and Now



# Active Cases Pending in Family Division: Pre-Pandemic and Now



# Active Cases Pending in Probate Division



# Caseflow Management

- Judiciary has employed established caseflow management principles in addressing backlog
- Consultation with other jurisdictions and organizations
- Application of established principles of effective caseflow management



# Implementation of Principles in Vermont has included:

- Input from stakeholders
- State-wide and unit specific backlog plans
- Ongoing review of pending cases
- Next event set in each case
- Review of scheduling strategies



## Steps Taken to Address Backlog

- Maximizing use of remote technology
- Development of new data measures
- Generation and review of statistical reports
- Ongoing collaboration with stakeholders
- User surveys
- Jury draw and trial dates added





## S.17 Directed Judiciary to Address:

1. Number of sheriff deputies needed.
2. Recommendation regarding creation of classified position.
3. Corresponding budget request.



## Information Gathering:

- Courthouse visits.
- Stakeholder meetings.

## Factors impacting the Recommendations:

- Security personnel roles.
- Levels of security risk.
- Judicial discretion.



## Recommendation Regarding Security Positions and Roles:

- 47 armed and uniformed sheriff deputies – screeners, rovers and court officers in courtrooms.
- 33 Judiciary-employed and plain-clothed court officers in courtrooms.
- 5 Judiciary-employed and plain-clothed court officers available to be assigned state-wide.
- 3 Judiciary-employed supervisors state-wide.



# Recommendation Regarding New Classified Positions

- Judiciary-employed court officer in courtrooms.
- Expanded enforcement authority/ advanced training in non-lethal use of force.
- Ability to fulfill administrative duties if no hearings or trials in courthouse where assigned.
- Training program unique to the position.



# Budget Request Related to Recommendations

	Current	Proposed	Diff (+/-)	Rate/Hr.	Annual/FTE	Total Cost
Sheriff Deputy	39.98	47.05	7.07	\$ 52.89	\$ 111,069	\$ 5,225,796
Private Guard	10.25	0	-10.25	\$ 40.00	\$ 84,000	\$ -
JUD Officer I	17	17	0		\$ 84,323	\$ 1,433,491
JUD Officer II	0	21	21		\$ 90,848	\$ 1,907,808
Supervisor	2	3	1		\$ 100,000	\$ 300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>69.23</b>	<b>88.05</b>	<b>18.82</b>			<b>\$ 8,867,095</b>

**Current Budget \$ 6,822,764**

**Net New Cost (+/-) \$ 2,044,331**



# Questions?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

