

## MINUTES SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON JUDICIARY

Meeting Jointly  
Thursday, June 6, 2024  
1:00 PM  
Room A, MAC  
Little Rock, Arkansas

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Committee members present: Senators Stephanie Flowers, Vice-Chair; Alan Clark, Ben Gilmore, and Clarke Tucker; Representatives Carol Dalby, Chair; Stan Berry, Vice-Chair; Andrew Collins, Cameron Cooper, Cindy Crawford, Matt Duffield, Ashley Hudson, Milton Nicks, Jr., Shad Pearce, Jay Richardson, Marcus E. Richmond, Kendon Underwood, and Steve Unger

Other members present: Senators Kim Hammer, Fredrick Love, and Dan Sullivan; Representatives Fred Allen, Howard Beaty, Jr., Denise Jones Ennett, Jon Eubanks, Kenneth Ferguson, Vivian Flowers, Jack Ladyman, David Ray, and Joy Springer

Representative Dalby called the meeting to order.

### **Consideration to Approve the March 4, 2024, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit B]**

Representative Richmond made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Representative Nicks Jr., and the motion carried.

### **Discussion of Financial Matters Related to the Courts Legislative Study**

Hon. Blake Batson, Circuit Judge, Arkansas Ninth East Judicial Circuit, and Kristin Clark, Director, Legal Services Division, Administrative Office of the Courts, presented an overview of the administrative plan that was mandated in Administrative Order Number 14 by the Arkansas Supreme Court. This plan enables a district court judge to handle pending matters in circuit courts, including protective orders, unlawful detainers, and warrants. Judge Batson emphasized the beneficial impact of this plan on law enforcement, ensuring the availability of a judge at all times for affidavits and search warrants.

Mark Whitmore, Chief Legal Counsel, Association of Arkansas Counties (AAC); Taylor Handford, Law Clerk, AAC; Hon. Rusty McMillon, President of County Judges' Association of Arkansas and County Judge, Greene County, and Blake Gary, Legal Counsel, Arkansas Municipal League; provided a discussion on the financial revenues, funds, and expenditures affecting judicial courts at the circuit and district level. Mr. Handford raised recurring concerns, primarily focusing on fees for installment payments, cost-sharing agreements, and fines imposed on defendants. He highlighted that revenue from these fees and fines are directed to the State Administration of Justice Fund.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.