

Commercial courts in the works

The Indiana Supreme Court is formalizing plans to develop specialized trial courts to handle complex business litigation. The courts, known as commercial courts, will have specially trained judges and will play a role in modernizing the way courts handle cases.

The possibility of commercial courts was first announced in January during the "State of the Judiciary." In early June, the Court unanimously approved a plan, naming a working group to recommend policies and procedures for the courts. Chief Justice Loretta Rush explained, "I'm grateful that we have a wide range of talents on this committee. They will help us establish procedures so the courts are hearing commercial cases in 2016." The working group membership is listed in the Supreme Court order, which is available at <http://tinyurl.com/IN-commercial-crts-order>.

Commercial courts are designed to promote efficient resolution of business disputes by reducing litigation costs and promoting earlier and more frequent settlement of cases. "Maintaining a strong legal environment is one of the goals of our Indiana Vision 2025 plan," said Indiana Chamber President and CEO Kevin Brinegar. "Businesses locate in states where disputes are resolved with consistency and reliability. Establishing commercial courts promotes

confidence and predictability – which helps ensure the competitiveness of Indiana's business environment."

"It's not just about businesses," explained the working group chair, Allen Superior Court Judge Craig Bobay. "We want to free up court resources by removing time-consuming business cases from the regular docket. Other cases, like child custody matters, could be heard more promptly when a complex business case is handled efficiently."

In addition to businesses and legal experts, lawmakers will collaborate on developing the framework for the courts. "This is a critical step in creating a more efficient court system in Indiana, and I applaud Chief Justice Rush on her leadership," said Rep. Tom Washburne, a member of the working group. "This initiative will free up

Indiana's judicial system to better handle the complexity of modern business litigation."

Sen. John Broden will also serve on the group. "Anything we can do to further enhance the positive role Indiana's legal system plays in fostering a strong and vibrant economy is well worth the effort," said Sen. Broden. "Further, we know that by streamlining these complex commercial law cases, we free up our courts so they can concentrate on critical cases facing Hoosier children and families."

Commercial courts will include cases where the parties have agreed to have their dispute resolved through the specialized docket. Commercial courts in the United States began in 1993 and now exist in 22 states. 