

SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA

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January 12, 2026

Members of the General Assembly of Virginia
General Assembly Building
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia
Supreme Court of Virginia
100 North Ninth Street
Richmond, VA 23219-1315

Re: 2025 Report of the Judicial Council of Virginia

Dear Members of the General Assembly and Justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia:

As Secretary of the Judicial Council of Virginia, I am pleased to submit the 2025 Report of the Judicial Council, as required by Code § 17.1-705.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With best wishes, I am

Very truly yours,

Karl R. Hade


cc: Division of Legislative Automated System
Enclosure

2025

Judicial Council of Virginia



Report to the General Assembly and Supreme Court of Virginia



The Judicial Council of Virginia
2025 Report to the General Assembly and Supreme Court of Virginia
Supreme Court of Virginia, Office of the Executive Secretary
Richmond, Virginia
Published January 2026

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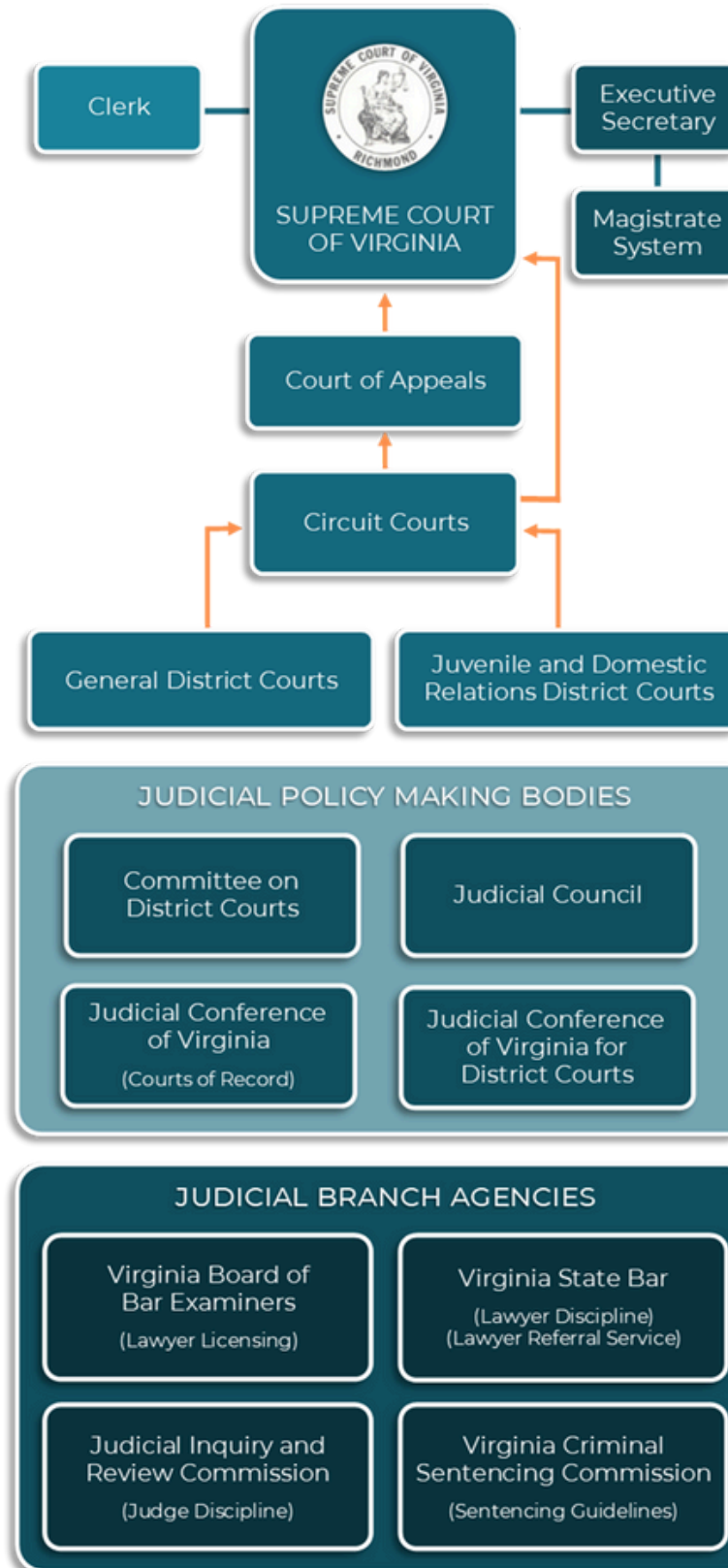
The Judicial Council of Virginia

Membership as of November 30, 2025

The Honorable S. Bernard Goodwyn	Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Virginia
The Honorable Marla Graff Decker	Chief Judge, Court of Appeals of Virginia
The Honorable Claude V. Worrell, Jr.	Judge, Sixteenth Judicial Circuit
The Honorable Penney S. Azcarate	Judge, Nineteenth Judicial Circuit
The Honorable Christopher B. Russell	Judge, Twenty-Fifth Judicial Circuit
The Honorable Deanis Simmons	Judge, Twenty-Eighth Judicial Circuit
The Honorable Jacqueline S. McClenney	Judge, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit
The Honorable Stacey W. Moreau	Judge, Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit
The Honorable George Barton Chucker	Judge, Fourteenth Judicial District
The Honorable Jay E. Dugger	Judge, Eighth Judicial District
The Honorable Scott A. Surovell	Chair, Courts of Justice Committee, Senate of Virginia
The Honorable Richard C. (Rip) Sullivan	Member, Courts of Justice Committee, Virginia House of Delegates
Corrynn Peters, Esquire	Attorney-at-Law, Member of the Bar of the City of Norfolk
Michael N. Herring, Esquire	Attorney-at-Law, Member of the Bar of the City of Richmond
Karl R. Hade*	Executive Secretary

*Ex-officio

Virginia Judicial System



Route of Appeal →

Introduction

The Judicial Council of Virginia was established by statute in 1930. The Council is charged with making a continuous study of the organization and the rules and methods of procedure and practice of the judicial system of the Commonwealth of Virginia, including examining the work accomplished and results produced by the judicial system. See Va. Code § 17.1-703.

Request for Additional Judgeships

Virginia Code § 17.1-507 provides that no additional circuit court judge shall be authorized or provided for any judicial circuit until the Judicial Council has made a study of the need for such additional circuit judge and reports its findings and recommendations.

In 2024, the Judicial Council received a request for three additional judgeships from the Twentieth Judicial Circuit. The Executive Committee of the Judicial Council recommended the request for the additional judgeships be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the full Judicial Council. The Executive Committee also requested the Office of the Executive Secretary (“OES”) develop a protocol or process to assist the Council in objectively evaluating claims for additional judgeships that differ vastly from the conclusions of the workload study.

In 2025, the Judicial Council reviewed the Report on the 20th Judicial Circuit Operations: Evaluation of the Request for Judgeships from OES and recommends the authorization of one additional judgeship in the Twentieth Circuit. The Judicial Council also reviewed and adopted the Evaluation Protocol for Circuit and District Judgeship Requests developed by OES to assist the Council in objectively evaluating claims for additional judgeships.

In 2025, the Judicial Council received a request for an additional judgeship from the Twenty-Seventh Judicial Circuit. The Council reviewed documentation and statistical information presented by the Twenty-Seventh Judicial Circuit and recommends the authorization of one additional judgeship in the circuit.

Revision to *Guidelines for the Training and Certification of Court-Referred Mediators*

The Judicial Council promulgates guidelines for the certification of mediators in Virginia. In 2025, the Council approved the following changes to the Guidelines for the Training and Certification of Court-Referred Mediators proposed by the Division of Dispute Resolution Services in the Office of the Executive Secretary.

Section C of the Guidelines was revised to update the instructions for an individual seeking a waiver of all or part of the training and mentorship requirement for certification to be consistent with current and established practice.

Section D of the Guidelines was revised to clarify the process by which a mediator providing training may receive Continuing Mediator Education (CME) credit towards recertification, making the Guidelines consistent with current and established practice. In addition, Section D was revised to specify the maximum number of CME credits a mediator may receive from a core course training. This limitation on continuing education courses encourages experienced mediators to refresh or advance their skillset, while still requiring exposure to new topics.

An approved 8-hour training course on support matters, with a focus on child support, was added as a requirement to be certified as a family mediator in juvenile and domestic relations district court and in circuit court.

Proposed Standards for the Qualification and Performance of Attorneys Appointed Pursuant to Va. Code § 16.1-266 to Represent Parents and Guardians in Child Dependency Cases

Virginia Code § 16.1-266.1, amended in 2024, required the Judicial Council, in conjunction with the Virginia State Bar and the Virginia Bar Association, to adopt standards for the qualification and performance of attorneys appointed pursuant to Va. Code § 16.1-266 to represent the parent or guardian of a child when such child is the subject of a dependency case, on or before January 1, 2026.

In 2025, the Judicial Council adopted standards for the qualification and performance of attorneys who are appointed to represent parents and guardians in child dependency cases. The standards adopted by the Judicial Council resulted from recommendations made by an advisory workgroup formed by the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia for this purpose.

Report from the Court Performance Advisory Committee

In July of 2023, OES created the Court Performance Advisory Committee (“CPAC”), to recommend performance measures and to use the data to manage and improve court performance. CPAC is composed of four judges, four clerks, one magistrate supervisor and one chief magistrate. Since its creation, CPAC has formed four substantive subcommittees: (1) case-related data, reporting and standards, (2) court user perspectives, (3) employee viewpoints, and (4) magistrates.

In 2025, the Judicial Council received a report from Judge Stacy Moreau, Chair of CPAC, detailing the work of each subcommittee. The Judicial Council approved the CPAC recommendation for uniform case numbering in circuit court and noted that a standard for case numbering is a recommendation, not a mandate, for circuit court clerks.

The Honorable Harry L. Carrico Outstanding Career Service Award

In 2004, the Judicial Council of Virginia created an Outstanding Career Service Award in honor of the Honorable Harry L. Carrico, Chief Justice of Virginia from 1981 to 2003.

The Judicial Council of Virginia has named the Honorable S. Bernard Goodwyn, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia, as the recipient of the 2024 Harry L. Carrico Outstanding Career Service Award. Chief Justice Goodwyn was presented the award at the annual meeting of the Judicial Conference of Virginia on May 15, 2025.

Awarded in honor of the longest serving chief justice and the longest serving member in the history of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The Harry L. Carrico Outstanding Career Service Award is presented annually by the Judicial Council of Virginia to a Virginia judge who, over an extended career, has demonstrated exceptional leadership in the administration of the courts while exhibiting the traits of integrity, courtesy, impartiality, wisdom, and humility. All appellate, circuit and district court judges are eligible for nomination.

In presenting the Award, Justice Cleo Powell stated, “Chief Justice Goodwyn's career is a testament to the very essence of professionalism embodied by Justice Carrico. His dedication to fairness, equal access to justice, and the integrity of the judicial system resonates deeply with the spirit of this award.”

Chief Justice Goodwyn is a member of the Board of Directors of the Conference of Chief Justices and Chair of its Criminal Justice Committee, and the former Co-Chair of the Virginia Access to Justice Commission. Chief Justice Goodwyn is a recipient of the Virginia Bar Association’s Gerald L. Baliles Distinguished Service Award.

Chief Justice Goodwyn was appointed to the Supreme Court of Virginia by Governor Timothy M. Kaine in 2007 and was unanimously elected by the General Assembly to the Supreme Court of Virginia in 2008 and re-elected in 2020. The Justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia unanimously elected him to serve as Chief Justice effective January 1, 2022. Chief Justice Goodwyn previously served for ten years as a Judge of the Chesapeake Circuit Court and for two years as a Judge of the Chesapeake General District Court.

Prior to his distinguished career on the bench, Chief Justice Goodwyn served in private law practice and as faculty at the University of Virginia School of Law. He earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and his law degree from the University of Virginia.

II. RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO RULES OF COURT

Background

Article VI, Section 5 of the Constitution of Virginia authorizes the Supreme Court of Virginia to promulgate rules governing the practice and procedures in the courts of the Commonwealth.

In 1974, the Judicial Council of Virginia established the Advisory Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure in Virginia Courts to provide members of the Virginia State Bar and other interested participants a means of more easily proposing Rule changes to the Council for recommendation to the Supreme Court. The duties of this committee include: (a) evaluating suggestions for modification of the Rules made by the Bench, Bar, and public, and recommending proposed changes to the Judicial Council for its consideration; (b) keeping the Rules up-to-date in light of procedural and legislative changes; and (c) suggesting desirable changes to clarify ambiguities and eliminate inconsistencies in the Rules.

Rules recommended by the Council and subsequently adopted by the Supreme Court are published in Volume 11 of the Code of Virginia. All orders of the Supreme Court amending the Rules, along with an updated version of the Rules that incorporates the amendments as they become effective, are posted on Virginia's Judicial System website at <https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/rules.html>.

RULE CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL AND ADOPTED BY THE SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA IN 2025

At the May 6, 2025, meeting, Judicial Council considered and recommended to the Supreme Court these changes to the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia:

1. Conform Rule 5A:27 to the recently amended Code § 17.1-403;
2. Conform Rules 4:1 and 4:9A to the newly added Code § 8.01-420.9;
3. Amend Rules 3:17, 5:1, and 5A:1 to automatically substitute successors of parties sued in their official capacity;
4. Amend Rule 3:8 to address serial pleading;
5. Amend Rule 4:7(a)(7) to allow use of depositions from prior cases involving the same parties and subject matter;
6. Amend Rules 5:30 and 5A:23 to require amicus briefs to disclose when they were prepared or funded by a party;

7. Amend Rules 5:38 and 5A:36 to facilitate appellate mediation;
8. Conform Rule 1:24 to the recent statutory amendment;
9. Conform Rule 5A:6(d), the form accompanying that rule, and Form CC-1345 to the recent statutory amendment;
10. Amend Rule 7C:5(c)(2) to add a cross-reference to Code § 19.2-389(I);
11. Amend Rules 5:5(d) and 5A:3(e) to permit late notice of appeal by incarcerated individuals who were not notified of the final order.

Rules 1:24, 3:17, 4:1, 4:9A, 5:1, 5A:1, 5A:6(d), the form accompanying 5A:6, 5A:27, 7C:5(c)(2) were amended by Order dated June 18, 2025, effective July 1, 2025.

Rules 3:8, 4:7(a)(7), 5:5(d), 5:30, 5:38, 5A:3(e), 5A:23, 5A:36, were amended by Order dated June 18, 2025, effective August 17, 2025.

At the October 21, 2025, meeting, Judicial Council considered and recommended to the Supreme Court this change to the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia:

1. Deletion of the table that accompanies Rule 1:15 as it is obsolete.

Rule 1:15 was amended by Order dated and effective November 24, 2025.