

TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
OF VIRGINIA



HON. DOUGLAS L. FLEMING, JR., CHIEF JUDGE  
HON. STEPHEN E. SINCAVAGE  
HON. JAMES P. FISHER  
HON. JAMES E. PLOWMAN, JR.  
HON. MATTHEW P. SNOW

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Loudoun, Fauquier and  
Rappahannock Counties  
Post Office Box 470  
Leesburg, Virginia 20178

HON. W. SHORE ROBERTSON  
HON. JAMES H. CHAMBLIN  
HON. THOMAS D. HORNE  
HON. BURKE F. MCCAILL  
HON. JEFFREY W. PARKER

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JUDGES

RETIRED JUDGES

To: Criminal Defense Attorneys Practicing in the Loudoun County Circuit Court

From: The Judges of the Loudoun County Circuit Court

Date: October 8, 2024

Re: Appointment of Counsel in Criminal Cases

There is a dire need for qualified counsel to represent indigent criminal defendants when the Office of the Public Defender cannot be appointed. Representation by capable and competent counsel is a right to which all are entitled. The Preamble to the Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct states:

*"A lawyer should be mindful of deficiencies in the administration of justice and of the fact that the poor, and sometimes persons who are not poor, cannot afford adequate legal assistance, and should therefore devote professional time and civic influence in their behalf."*

These obligations are reinforced in Rules 6.1 and 6.2 relating to *pro bono* service and the acceptance of appointments. While court-appointed representation is not strictly *pro bono* since the General Assembly provides some level of compensation, the importance of this work is highlighted in the October 2024 edition of *Virginia Lawyer*, the Official Publication of the Virginia State Bar.

Over the years, numerous requests have gone out to the local bar from different courts, requesting attorneys make themselves available for appointment. The numbers that have responded are insufficient given the pool of local practitioners seemingly available. As such, appointments have unfairly fallen on the backs of a few to the point of overburdening the willing.

Beginning January 1, 2025, the Circuit Court will have compiled a list of counsel that represent clients in criminal cases in the Circuit Court. If you practice locally, and are deemed competent counsel for a particular case, you will receive appointments. Requests to withdraw may be made for specific cases for good cause shown and in accordance with Rule 6.2. Appointments will be made on a rotating basis using the Court's list, which will be continually updated as needed.

If you would like to ensure that you are included on the Court's list, please convey that information to the Chief of Staff, Ms. Rueda.