



**MEMPHIS SHELBY CRIME COMMISSION**

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***RE: Composition of Tennessee's Judicial Districts***

Dear Members of the Advisory Task Force:

First, as a licensed attorney in Tennessee and someone who has been involved deeply in our state's criminal justice system for some 23 years, I thank you for your willingness to serve our state through your service on the Advisory Task Force created to review the composition our judicial districts.

From 1996-2011, I served as district attorney general for the 30<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (Shelby County). From 2011-2016, I served as commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, as well as chair of Governor Haslam's Public Safety Subcabinet. Since September of 2016, I have served as executive director of the Public Safety Institute at the University of Memphis (created to evaluate various public safety measures and identify best practices) and president of the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission (a non-profit which advocates and promotes best practices in Memphis/Shelby County to improve public safety).

In calendar year 2018, based on data from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System, Shelby County had 121,944 reported Group A crimes (which includes 46 separate categories of crime), including 13,860 reported major violent crimes (murders, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults) and 48,553 reported major property crimes (burglaries, auto thefts, and other felony thefts).

Of course, this large number of reported crimes has an impact on our courts' caseloads (even though many reported crimes go unsolved). This includes our general sessions criminal courts (with a caseload of well over 100,000 cases per year), juvenile court, and our criminal courts (which, of course, are part of your review).

In fiscal year 2018, accordingly the Tennessee Comptroller's Judicial Weighted Caseload Update, there were 32,390 case filings in the criminal courts of the 30<sup>th</sup> Judicial District – a reflection of our crime challenge in Shelby County.

In addition, according to the Shelby County District Attorney General's Office, at the end of the calendar year 2018, the number of defendants with pending cases in the divisions of criminal court was up 4.6 percent compared to the end of calendar year 2017.

In summary, the criminal courts in Shelby County face a daunting task with a heavy caseload (and with the potential for more increases as law enforcement increases its resources and deploys those resources in a data-driven manner). As you review judicial district composition and consider proposing possible redistricting, I hope you will consider carefully the data and the challenges facing our criminal court judges in Shelby County.

Sincerely,



Bill Gibbons  
President

bcc: Judge John Campbell  
District Attorney Amy Weirich