Ad Hoc Committee on High Volume Case Filings

Hon. Charles Stormont, Chair
March 11, 2026
12:00 – 1:00
Judicial Council Room – Matheson Courthouse
Virtual & In-person

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1. Welcome

Judge Stormont opened the meeting with welcome remarks.

2. Legislative Efforts

- S.B. 270 passed, sponsored by Senator Cullimore. Details are being worked out. There will be a charge to the Judicial Council to lift up the new district court division. There will be a need for rules. "Debt collection" is undefined in the bill and will need to be defined.
- There would be commissioners for much of the work, but likely moving cases between home courts and commissioners and back again. Ample discretion in how to set up this new division of courts. Some discussion on the limitations under the current rules of what commissioners can and can't do. A question on whether two commissioners will be enough for a statewide calendar. There are additional question about court staffing. In Matheson, five staff are used for this for cases in the Third District. Also some discussion on where to locate it as a statewide court division. It is unknown yet if this new court division would also absorb small claims debt cases. And whether post-judgement matters are handled by the new court division will also need to be resolved.
- This committee is a supreme court committee, not a judicial council committee. The committee expressed a preference that the committee stay together and continue its work. It has all of the stakeholders and has had several months of work and stakeholder engagement. Nick and Maryt will ask the supreme court to make the committee available to the Judicial Council and figure out any administrative changes to make the committee's

work cross deputized in some way if needed. The Judicial Council would need to weigh in as well on whether to use the existing committee.

- If the committee has to dissolve, then the committee can pivot to the next topic, which would be family law.
- Some discussion on eviction cases, which later become debt collection cases. Heather reiterated the availability of mediators for evictions.

3. 10-day summons and E-repository update

- Creditors counsel reiterated its need to have some safeguards that disclosing the existence of a pending action would not violate the FDCPA restriction on disclosure to third parties. A rule to that effect would be helpful.
- It is unknown for now if Brody's team could use SB 270 money to build the E-repository. If so, those funds aren't available until July 1 and the new court division must be running by January 1. The actual cost would also need to be determined.
- Kristine Laterza described what the new repository would do and how it would work. It would be accessible by the parties, the attorneys, and the court. The portal would generate a summons number, and that number would follow throughout the case. If the respondent files an answer, the repository can hold it and then automatically file it when the complaint is filed. If the case is resolved without an answer, the case can be marked as resolved. If nothing happens, the case expires after a certain number of days. And the self-represented people can use that number to open a file via MyCase. And if people call to ask about the case, court staff can look it up with the summons number.
- There was some discussion of mirroring parts of this like small claims cases.

5. ODR presentation

- Janine Liebert, Director, Self-Help Center; Jonathan Mark, MyPaperwork Program Manager; and Chantel Julander, ODR Program Manager, gave a presentation on the nuts and bolts of ODR. In small claims, there is no answer. Instead, there is a QR code and the person has to register for ODR. Then the person is guided through plain language prompts which then end with a mediated payment plan. That mediated agreement is done with asynchronous communication, facilitated by Utah Dispute Resolution.
- This is at 37 justice courts for now but will be statewide by the end of 2026.
- There is a Standing Order 13 of the supreme court that provides certain steps. The program has early triage via chat/guided interview questions.
- This can be made to work for debt collection cases too. Customizing it to different bulk filer preferences is also possible.
- Eviction mediation done person to person has a lower success rate of about 20%. It is more successful with mediators. Other mediations providers in evictions include Mountain Mediation and BYU. The mediations are via Zoom.

- If mediation were required, the FDCPA third-party disclosure concern could be satisfied if there is a disclosure that the FDCPA restriction on third-party disclosure was waived.
- Discussion of mediation sources among various stakeholders around the state. There are more than may be commonly known. And the rising number of CJAs could play a role here.

6. Action items

- It sounds like the group does not want to change the 10-days summons, except perhaps the way it is worded and being a confusing document. That can be for continued discussion.
- Next meeting will be April 8 because of a conference many folks need to attend.