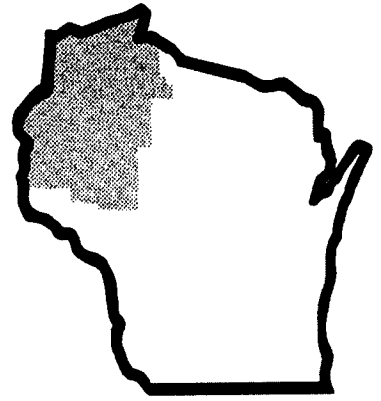


MAUREEN D. BOYLE
Chief Judge
Barron County Justice Center
1420 State Hwy 25 North
Barron, WI 54812
Telephone: (715) 537-6142
Fax: (715) 537-6269

STATE OF WISCONSIN

TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT



JOHN P. ANDERSON
Deputy Chief Judge
Bayfield County Courthouse
117 East 5th Street
Washburn, WI 54891
Telephone: (715) 373-6118
Fax: (715) 373-6317

1101 Carmichael Rd., Ste. 1260
Hudson, WI 54016
(715) 245 - 4105

CHRISTOPHER CHANNING
District Court Administrator
1101 Carmichael Rd., Suite 1260,
Hudson, WI 54016
Telephone: 715-245-4105
FAX: 715-381-4323

January 4, 2022

Clerk of Supreme Court
Attn: Deputy Clerk-Rules
PO Box 1688
Madison WI 53701-1688

Re: Rule Petition 21-03, in the Amendment of Wis. Stats. §753.24, §753.26, §757.12, §757.14, and §757.70 Relating to the Location of Court

Honorable Chief Justice and Justices of the Wisconsin Supreme Court:


I am writing to comment on Rule Petition 21-03 regarding the location of court. I served on the committee which examined and proposed certain rule changes previously and I believe that the recommendations set forth in Rule Petition 21-03 are appropriate, necessary and timely. Adopting these recommendations will have a significant impact on court operations in our rural counties struggling with limited resources. While these recommendations came after careful analysis and evaluation of the court system's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, these changes will provide continued access to justice in any crisis whether it be a natural or man-made disaster, riots or another pandemic.

§757.12 Wis. Stats., currently provides that court may only be adjourned to a location within the same county. The pandemic quickly revealed flaws in facilities across District 10 including limitations related to size, air ventilation, and public accessibility. In some instances, not only were county facilities not large enough to accommodate social distancing of jurors and litigants, there was no other appropriate facility available within county lines to accommodate court proceedings. Allowing court to be held in an alternate location, including a neighboring county that does have appropriate facilities, provides citizens access to timely and efficient process. Allowing this change will ensure that courts are able to adapt to any potential disaster which may impact the use of the courthouse and quickly transition to an adjacent county if facilities are not otherwise available to hold court.

Additionally, the creation of §753.24(2m) gives courts the flexibility to continue the procedures which were so successful in addressing the pandemic. Most courts in District 10 are continuing to use a hybrid version of in-person and remote hearings based on the type of case, the needs of the participants and the availability of personnel. In my geographically large district, courthouses are significant distances from each other and judges are assigned regularly to other counties. Having the option to allow those judges, and court reporters, to appear remotely has resulted in increased safety and decreased costs as well as a more efficient use of time and calendaring. The use of remote technology has allowed for better access to legal representation as well as interpreter services. We have also been able to effectively leverage our court reporter resources reducing the need to cancel hearings.

As the Chief Judge of District 10 it is my hope that you will seriously consider and adopt these recommendations. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen D. Boyle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "D" at the end.

Maureen D. Boyle
Barron County Circuit Court Branch 3
Chief Judge District 10

MDB/dln