



Ohio Judicial Conference

The Voice of Ohio Judges

August 28, 2024

Testimony of the Ohio Judicial Conference
to the
Sunset Review Committee

Committee Chair Senator Wilkin, Vice Chair Representative Hillyer, and all members of the Sunset Review Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony concerning the Ohio Judicial Conference. I am Judge Paula Giulitto, and I serve as a domestic relations judge in Portage County. I am also the current Chair of the Ohio Judicial Conference.

The Ohio Judicial Conference was statutorily created more than 60 years ago to serve the Ohio Legislature by providing insight into proposed legislation that could impact the courts. The Conference's primary purpose is to improve the administration of justice in Ohio. The Conference strives to be a resource both to the members of the General Assembly and to all Ohio judges.

The Ohio Judicial Conference is an agency within the Judicial branch that represents Ohio's 722 judges, all of whom are members of the Conference. In that capacity, it facilitates collaboration among judges in all counties and jurisdictions. The Judicial Conference has 5 officers, an Executive Committee of approximately 50 judges, and 21 working committees composed of over 200 volunteer judges representing every jurisdiction and every area of the state. The Conference cooperates and collaborates with the Supreme Court of Ohio and the judicial associations to give judges a forum, a resource, and a voice in the governance of their branch. In addition, Conference staff facilitate communication between judges and the members of the General Assembly and the Executive Branch, and with other justice system partners such as the Ohio State Bar Association, the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission, the Ohio Public Defender, the County Commissioners Association, and the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association.

The Judicial Conference has a staff of 8 that comprises a judicial services division, a legislative services division, and an Executive Director. The employees of the Judicial Conference, in accordance with the Conference's enabling statutes, provide professional and policy support to the judiciary and are also responsible for reviewing legislation introduced in the General Assembly, providing input and advice to legislative sponsors regarding judicial impact and statutory construction, and educating judges about legislative enactments. The staff also organizes the Ohio Judicial Conference Annual

Meeting, the Court Technology Conference, the Retired Judges Seminars and the Judicial-Legislative Exchange.

The Ohio Judicial Conference is funded by General Revenue Funds which pay primarily for personnel, and a rotary fund that generates revenue through membership dues, registration fees for events like the Judicial Conference Annual Meeting, and royalties from the publication of Ohio Jury Instructions. The rotary fund currently covers a portion of personnel expenses along with costs associated with the management of Judicial Conference Committees and meetings, development and maintenance of the Judicial Conference website, and implementation of strategic plan priorities.

The Ohio Judicial Conference respectfully requests reauthorization.