

COURT BULLETIN

December 2015

Holiday Greetings from Court Leaders

"I count among my blessings this holiday season the privilege of working with Trial Court and appellate judges, court clerks, probation officers, court officers, and other court staff who work hard each day to provide fair and equal justice, and whose energy, commitment, and imagination are second to none. In that spirit, I commend you for your efforts in 2015 and wish you and your families a joyous holiday season and happy and healthy New Year."

- *Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Ralph Gants*



"Thanks to your continued hard work and effort, the future is bright for the delivery of justice. We look forward to working together with you in 2016 to create a modernized, evidence-based court system that's ready to help address some of society's greatest challenges while increasing public safety across the Commonwealth. We are inspired daily by your energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to excellence. We wish you and your loved ones all the best this holiday season and in the New Year."

- *Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey and Court Administrator Harry Spence*

Trial Court Celebrates National Adoption Day



Brothers and sisters forever: Juvenile Court Judge Stephen Limon was one of several judges at the Brooke Courthouse in Boston presiding over Adoption Day ceremonies this year. More than 100 children officially joined their forever families during special Adoption Day events at courthouses in Boston, Brockton, Hadley, Springfield, and Worcester.

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New Housing Court Chief Justice Sworn in at Adams Courthouse



A change in leadership. Housing Court Chief Justice Timothy Sullivan talks about his vision for the Housing Court during his swearing-in ceremony at the Adams Courthouse last month as [seated from left] Retired Housing Court Chief Justice Steven Pierce, Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey and Court Administrator Harry Spence listen. Chief Justice Sullivan is the fourth judge to head the Housing Court, which was established in 1978 to have jurisdiction over all civil and criminal matters involving the use of residential property.

Chief Justice Sullivan pledged to continue the Housing Court's expansion to serve all residents of the Commonwealth, and to help lead the Trial Court's efforts to digitize documents. "As a small court department, we can have a big impact regarding the Trial Court's drive to modernize the court system," he said.

Evidence-Based Efforts at Work: Probation Implements New Risk Assessment Tools

A new approach to pre-trial and post-adjudication risk assessment. The Massachusetts Probation Service (MPS) is in the process of implementing a series of strong, data-validated risk assessment tools for adults and juveniles. The new tools aim to make the risk assessment process consistent and evidence-based, while building a more equitable criminal justice system. These tools also support efforts to reduce the possibility of implicit bias in decision making.

"Implementing these new risk assessment tools requires a significant investment in training, upgrades to our information management systems, and a cultural shift in order to adhere to the principles of evidence-based community supervision, which, when done properly, results in solid decision-making that's based on data, not anecdote or instinct," explains Probation Commissioner Edward Dolan.

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On The Hill...

What Happens to a Bill After It Is Engrossed: Enactment

Last month, we looked at what happens when a bill is engrossed.

When a bill is engrossed, it has received a favorable vote in either the House or Senate. After engrossment in one chamber, the bill goes to the other legislative chamber to repeat the process of going through three readings and engrossment. Both the Senate and the House must pass the bill in exactly the same form before it may be enacted into law. If the House and Senate pass the exact same versions of a bill, a vote on enactment must occur in both chambers. If the second branch amends the bill in any way, the bill returns to the first branch, which must concur with the amended version.

Conference Committee. If the first branch does not concur, a conference committee is appointed by the Speaker of the House and the Senate President. A conference committee will include three members of each branch, including one member from each branch from the minority party. Usually the Chairperson of the Committee from where the bill originated is selected as the Chairperson of the Conference Committee. The Conference Committee's role is to iron out differences between the House and Senate versions of a bill, and arrive at a version that satisfies both the House and Senate. This is often referred to as the bill being "in conference" or being "conferenced."

Once a **compromise version** of the bill is agreed upon, the Conference Committee will issue a report which will be voted on by each chamber of the Legislature. This report must either be accepted or rejected; it cannot be amended. Conference Reports that are accepted by both branches of the House and Senate are sent to the Governor for signature or veto. Rejected Conference Reports are sent back to the Conference Committee for further negotiations.

Enactment is the final legislative step before a bill is sent to the Governor's desk. It means that an engrossed bill has received final approval by both branches. The bill is printed with the exact language that will appear in its official form and is sent to the Governor.

Next month, learn what happens to an enacted bill when it reaches the Governor's desk.

Action in the Court: the Trial Court on Film



Hollywood comes to Lawrence: The Lawrence Superior Court doubled as a bank for actor/director and Cambridge-bred Ben Affleck's latest film, "Live by Night," a 1920's-era drama set for release in 2017. Massachusetts courts have been featured in numerous films and TV shows throughout the years...

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Office of Community Corrections Holds Open House at Worcester Juvenile Resource Center



Ribbon cutting. Court Administrator Harry Spence and Worcester Juvenile County Court First Justice Carol Erskine cut the ceremonial ribbon to celebrate the opening of the Worcester Juvenile Resource Center's (JRC) new home at 70 James Street in Worcester earlier this month. Massachusetts Probation Service Commissioner Edward Dolan spoke about the JRC's key role in Probation's diversion strategy for juveniles, saying that: "This Center serves as a laboratory for the type of work we want to spread across the Commonwealth."

The Juvenile Resource Center has helped more than 275 Worcester youth redeem course credit, get back to grade level, make sports teams, get jobs, and receive treatment for their needs. Teachers from Worcester Public Schools help participant youth stay on track academically, while clinicians provide individual assessments, family support, and trauma-informed care. Therapeutic groups offer sessions in anger management, life skills, and substance abuse awareness.

JRC staff gave tours of the new facility and explained how they help young participants make good choices when they are out in the community, by engaging in restorative justice practices, real time learning experiences, and therapeutic recreation.

IT Corner...

Access to [Mass.gov/courts](https://www.mass.gov/courts)

All court staff are able to access the Judiciary's public website at [mass.gov/courts](https://www.mass.gov/courts), which provides a wealth of resources to use in assisting the public. The joint internet site for the

Judicial Branch launched in Spring 2014, and was upgraded to add the robust law library website by the end of that year. The judiciary site is one of the busiest on mass.gov, thanks in large part to juror registration, job openings and a vast form library. As shown below, the Trial Court's intranet home page includes a direct link to mass.gov/courts.



Courtroom Recording

Implementation of the new digital audio recording system, For the Record (FTR), is underway across the state. The new recording system incorporates state-of-the-art acoustical features. It will operate on the Trial Court network and will eventually be integrated with MassCourts. Judicial Information Services (JIS) took advantage of the installation to upgrade the network connections and cabling in the courtrooms for the foreseeable future.

Detailed assessments of most courthouses have been conducted to determine wiring and cabling needs for FTR and future courtroom technology applications. Initial deployment of FTR is in the Superior Court and other courtrooms in buildings with the Superior Court. FTR is now operational in the Plymouth Trial Court and has been installed in the Ruane Judicial Center in Salem. Installation will occur next at the Worcester Trial Court by the end of the month.

The transition to FTR represents a significant change for the Court, one that will expand capability and apply technology in important new ways. JIS, Facilities Management and Fiscal are coordinating the FTR deployment with local courts. Work is being completed on weekends and the Superior Court courtrooms should be completed by the end of the fiscal year. The entire project will be completed in 2017.

Managed Print Services

The Brooke Courthouse is the latest to undergo a transition to a managed print services solution with a single vendor for the entire courthouse. New equipment installation was completed earlier this month. This coordinated approach to printers, scanners and faxes has been implemented in the Malden District Court, Dudley District Court, the Worcester Trial Court, Greenfield Trial Court, Plymouth Trial Court, Brockton Trial Court and the Office of Court Management, as a way to introduce the latest functionality, improve maintenance and control costs. Future installations will occur in the Springfield Hall of Justice and the Fall River Trial Court.

From the archives:

[Managed Print Services: Trial Court Pilots 21st Century Printing Technology](#)

The Courts & The Community...

Facilities Team at the Fenton Collects Toys for Kids in Need



Secret Santas. Facilities and other court employees at the Fenton Judicial Center in Lawrence collected close to \$1,300 in donations, shattering previous records and enough to fill several sleigh-loads of toys for children in need of some holiday cheer. The toys will be distributed by Toys for Tots.

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Don't stress...

Coming Up in January:

Security creates a new fitness standard for the Court Officer exam; A look at the Pew Trust Results First project...