

Chief Information Officer Steven Duncan
Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures
and State Assets Hearing Testimony
March 29, 2022

Good morning, Chair Gregoire, Chair Collins, and members of the Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to testify in support of H4499 and to let you know how well positioned we are to digitally transform the Judiciary branch.

As a relative newcomer to working for the Commonwealth, I want to provide a quick overview of my IT and managerial experience. Prior to joining the Judiciary in April, I spent the prior 13 years at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the last eight as the IT Director, focused on many of the same challenges that face the Judiciary today. I led the implementation of a modern and sustainable infrastructure, reengineering and digitization of core business processes, and the creation of an information security program designed to deal with nation state adversaries. Prior to my time at Harvard, I spent 13 years as a partner in software development organization managing teams in the delivery of custom software solutions to higher education and non-profit organizations. I am honored to now be the Chief Information Officer of the Judiciary and to be leading the organization through our digital transformation.

As the new CIO, I am here to tell you that the court system is ready to undertake the challenges of a digital transformation. One of our major challenges is to question why they are performing a function and to generate a willingness to think about doing

things differently that is not constrained by how it has been done in the past. And we are there.

No one could have imagined the way COVID-19 would change the way that we work and interact with each other, but it forced everyone in the Judiciary to rethink how work gets done and to be innovative in how justice is administered, supported, and delivered. The court system is ready for change and pushing for new technology to support new methods for delivering our services, but the technology environment will need investment to support this innovation.

The successful planning, implementation, and use of technology requires close engagement with judicial leadership and court department leaders. We have reinstated our Technology Governance Committee with Supreme Court Justice Wendlandt, Appeals Court Chief Justice Green, Trial Court Chief Justice Locke, and Trial Court Administrator Bello to prioritize investments, provide oversight, and ensure decision making follows strategic priorities.

To support the Technology Governance Committee, we have formed the Technology Advisory Group with wide representation across the departments including first justices, judges, and clerks to provide input on project prioritization and to ensure alignment across the departments. This oversight will ensure the success of the digital transformation is a shared responsibility between IT and the business units and will leverage the full capabilities of the organization.

At the center of the governance process and the successful execution of technology projects will be the Project Management Office. We have implemented a

proposal intake process, adopted a standard project structure, and developed standard project reporting.

We now have a team of PMI-certified project managers who have gained experience in project execution across the Judiciary during the pandemic and have successfully led numerous high-profile projects, including Zoom, remote access, Office 365, and laptop deployments to community. These projects also provided valuable experience in leveraging contractors on projects where we need to temporarily scale up or when specialized skills are required on a specific project.

We have also taken important steps in preparing for the reengineering and change management needs related to case management. A key deliverable of the IT Bond Bill is a digital case flow, where the court and the parties exchange information digitally, there is no scanning, and printing occurs sparingly. With a true digital case flow, judges will have quick and easy access to all information needed to make a decision.

We have made progress in digitizing some areas of the case management process, but the reality is, as Chief Justice Locke told you, that most of the cases submitted electronically are still printed as they flow through the court. To achieve a true digital case flow, we are working with the Trial Court departments to align business processes. To assist in unifying processes and with change management, we have embedded a business analyst in each of the departments under the direction of the eCourts Director.

As we move our business processes online, it will be crucial that we improve our infrastructure to ensure that we reliably conduct the business of the courts. The IT Bond

Bill provides the critical funding to ensure the network will be reliable and the applications will be responsive. Bond funding will also support improvements to our cybersecurity posture with better tools to detect and respond to threats, reducing the ability of bad actors to disrupt the mission of the Judiciary. Most importantly, bond funding will provide the means for the Judiciary branch to better serve all court users so that we provide justice with dignity and speed.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about our readiness to take on this digital transformation. I would also like to thank Secretary Wood and the EOTSS team for their partnership and generosity with their time and resources over the last year and look forward to strengthening our collaboration in the future. I am happy to answer any questions.