

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER A-2022- 62

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ENDING
CIVIL BACKLOG DOCKET PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, in 2021, the legislature appropriated certain funds to assist the Courts in developing a plan to reduce the backlog of cases in the State of Florida which were caused by Court closures during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the Fifth Judicial Circuit utilized a portion of those funds to create a specific division of backlog civil cases in each county; and

WHEREAS, the backlog of civil cases has been significantly and substantially reduced through this program; and

WHEREAS, it is no longer necessary to have a separate division for older civil cases in order to allow for the efficient administration of justice, it is therefore,

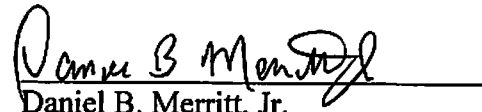
ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that:

- 1) Effective January 1, 2023, the Clerks of Court in each respective county of the Fifth Judicial Circuit shall no longer assign new or reopened civil cases to the "Civil Backlog Docket" or any Senior Judges assigned specifically to a Civil Backlog Docket.
- 2) On or before January 1, 2023, all "reopened" civil cases in the Fifth Judicial Circuit which have been assigned to the "Civil Backlog Docket," or assigned specifically to a Senior Judge who presided over the Civil Backlog Docket Program shall be randomly assigned by the Clerks of Court to the Judge(s) who currently preside over the civil division.
- 3) In reassigning cases as set forth in paragraph two (2) above, the Clerk of Court should make an equal distribution of cases in accordance with the case assignments set forth in each county's current Administrative Order on Judicial Assignments.

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- 4) On or before March 1, 2023, any remaining "open" civil cases in the Fifth Judicial Circuit which have been assigned to the "Civil Backlog Docket," or assigned specifically to a Senior Judge who presided over the Civil Backlog Docket Program shall be randomly reassigned to the Judge(s) who currently preside over the civil division. The reassignments shall be by separate order in each individual case, with copies being served on all parties.
- 5) This order amends and supersedes Administrative Orders A-2021-28-A; A-2021-29; A-2021-30; A-2021-31; A-2021-32; and A-2021-56.

27th **DONE AND ORDERED** in Chambers, at Brooksville, Hernando County, Florida, this day of December, 2022.


Daniel B. Merritt, Jr.
Chief Judge
Fifth Judicial Circuit