

**From:** [Annette Ziegler](#)  
**To:** [Supreme Court Justices](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Your proposal to redirect the work-flow for reserve judge assignments  
**Date:** Monday, August 28, 2023 5:32:20 PM

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Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Annette Ziegler <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** August 28, 2023 at 5:29:45 PM CDT  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** **Re: Your proposal to redirect the work-flow for reserve judge assignments**

You are not lawfully appointed as director. Your appointment was done by a rogue group of four justices, in secret and without our knowledge or approval. It is in violation of the constitution which prohibits a judicial officer from serving as a director.

You generated orders that are under my name without my authority or permission. The orders speak for themselves. IT IS ORDERED then my name, by signed your name. You are signing my order by your signature. You have no authority from me.

You generated the order. You signed it. You run CCAP. My name appears above your electronic signature and the word "by" indicates you are signing on my behalf. You have no such authority.

If you thought you had this authority, my name would not be there. No question, these orders have my name as the person ordering the assignment but are signed by you without my knowledge or permission.

See also 751.03(1) and SCR 70.23.

Sent from AKZ

On Aug 28, 2023, at 5:04 PM, Annette Ziegler  
<[REDACTED]> wrote:

Sent from AKZ

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Audrey Skwierawski  
<[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** August 28, 2023 at 5:00:03 PM CDT  
**To:** Annette Ziegler <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Your proposal to redirect the work-flow for reserve judge assignments

Dear Justice Ziegler,

I am in receipt of your email regarding the assignment of reserve judges.

It was good to finally receive an email from you regarding my work as the interim director as we enter my fourth week on the job. As you know I have tried to communicate with you several times. On the first full day of my appointment one of my very first actions was to stop in your chambers in order to discuss how best to work together. I found that neither you nor any member of your staff was present. Sometime later I was able to introduce myself to some members of your staff. I sent an email on August 7<sup>th</sup> to you and all members of the court expressing my gratitude for the interim appointment and the fact that I am here to serve each of you. You responded on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 with a short email, "Thank you for connecting. See you when the court term starts." I have received no further communication (until today) about how you would like to work together, how you would like to be regularly informed, nor any other matter. The conclusion I drew, that you were attempting to avoid seeing or communicating with me, was confirmed when I received a separate email from you today alleging in colorful language that my appointment is not lawful (an assertion with which I vehemently disagree) and you do not agree that I am currently the interim Director. The email concludes that **any** action I take is without your authorization, while simultaneously accusing me of hiding the reserve judge appointments from you. Respectfully, you cannot have it both ways. Either you will work with me as the interim Director and therefore we can set up communication between us to achieve things for the people of this state or you do not recognize me as the interim Director and do not intend to work with me under any

circumstances. Your actions to date lead inexorably to the latter conclusion.

The work being done by the Office of State Courts is absolutely critical to the people of the State of Wisconsin. Perhaps the most important priority for our entire court system is to ensure that the courts successfully operate each day. You are aware from your years of experience serving as a circuit court judge, deputy chief judge, presiding judge of Washington county and now as Chief Justice since 2021 that the routine approval of reserve judges is vital to keeping our courts open across Wisconsin. You are also aware that reserve judge requests are related often to emergent needs that must be filled on a very quick turn-around. The Director's authority to pay reserve judge assignments flows from Wis. Stats. Section 20.625 which provides that the money appropriated for salaries of the judges (reserve judges included, see Wis. Stats. 753.075 (3)(a)) goes to the Director of State Courts. There is no mention of the Chief Justice in this statute. The Director's authority to assign reserve judges is indisputably outlined in SCR 70.10:

**SCR 70.10 Director; assignments.** The director of state courts **shall have the responsibility and authority** regarding the assignment of reserve judges....  
where necessary to the ordered and timely disposition of the business of the court.

This SCR section contains no requirement that the Director to confer with the Chief Justice or to obtain permission from same. Indeed when I signed the orders, the name of the Chief Justice DID NOT populate in the signature box. The only signature line contained a provision for the Director to sign. If your name populated after my signature was affixed I did not receive a copy or notice of it. It seems to be a pro-forma fill-in done on the back end of the software. I had the legal authority and responsibility as well as the moral obligation to sign the orders for reserve judges. Those orders represent the very real need for the Office of State Courts to ensure that if a judge is ill or has suffered the loss of a spouse, or has some other reason to be absent from the court they do not need to worry about the coverage for their court. And the people who have cases before that judge can count on having their cases heard without serious delays.

The timely business of the court has oft been touted as a priority goal by both you and former Director Koschnick in the context of the very large case backlog that accumulated in our courts during the pandemic. Delaying an appointment of a reserve judge could have a very negative impact on any effort to decrease that backlog. From what I have observed in my short time as interim Director, we can ill afford anything that might thwart efforts to decrease the backlog. This is because the most recently available statistics show that the backlog of felony criminal cases in this state has not appreciably decreased, and in some counties has in fact increased under the previous Director. That backlog represents real people's lives. We cannot afford to play politics – the people of this State deserve better.

Thank you again for reaching out.

Judge Audrey K. Skwierawski  
Interim Director of State Courts



Judge Audrey K. Skwierawski  
Interim Director of State Courts

