



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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New report examines workload of West Virginia Supreme Court

For immediate release

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia has issued a written decision in every properly prepared appeal since the Revised Rules of Appellate Procedure went into effect five years ago. The revised rules allow all litigants to have their appeals reviewed on the merits, according to a new report by Supreme Court Clerk Rory Perry.

“The appeal by right is guaranteed by law in West Virginia,” said incoming Chief Justice Menis Ketchum, who will become Chief Justice on January 1. “This report confirms we write a written decision on the merits in every appeal in a timely manner.”

Mr. Perry’s report also indicates:

- The Supreme Court’s caseload fell by more than half in the last fifteen years, largely due to legislative changes in the administration of workers’ compensation cases. In 2014 there were only 239 civil appeals.
- Most cases are decided within six to nine months of when the case is fully briefed and mature for the Supreme Court to decide. The clearance rate for pending appeals in 2014 was 120 percent overall.
- Almost half – 46 percent – of appeals that reached the Supreme Court in 2014 already had been reviewed by another tribunal. Appeals from decisions of state agencies are first reviewed by appellate boards and circuit courts before they are appealed to the Supreme Court.
- About 40 percent of appeals are handled by court-appointed counsel paid for by the state.
- Appeals by self-represented litigants have increased since 2011, from less than 1 percent to 14.5 percent.

The report may be viewed on the West Virginia Judiciary’s website at:
<http://www.courtsvw.gov/supreme-court/caseload-report.html>.