



CHAMBERS OF
JAMES F. HOLDERMAN
CHIEF JUDGE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
219 SOUTH DEARBORN STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604

TELEPHONE
312-435-5600

September 4, 2012

John E. Thies, President
Illinois State Bar Association
20 S. Clark St., Ste. 900
Chicago, IL 60603

**Re: The Proposed Plan for Forced Periodic Shutdowns of Federal District Court
in Chicago and Rockford, Illinois During 2013 Due to Lack of Funding**

Dear Mr. Thies,

The enforcement of the laws and the delivery of justice in the United States Courts is in peril. I write for your assistance.

As you know, in August 2011, President Obama signed the Budget Control Act into law. The Act established a congressional joint committee dubbed the "Super Committee," to find further cuts in federal spending. Due to the Super Committee's failure to reach agreement for reduced federal spending, the Budget Control Act requires the government to engage in what is called "Sequestration," effective January 2, 2013.

Sequestration requires that federal spending be reduced by \$1.2 trillion over 10 years through automatic, across-the-board budget cuts. Sequestration will apply to all United States Courts if Congress takes no action to stop it. As a result of the across-the-board cuts contemplated by Sequestration, the Northern District of Illinois will have no choice but to periodically close our courthouses' doors in Chicago and Rockford and furlough staff due to a lack of funding.

At this point, we are considering closing the district court one business day each week, probably each Wednesday, starting the first week in January 2013, and running through the last week of September 2013. During these weekly shutdowns, no civil case and no criminal case court proceedings will take place. The supervision of convicted felons on post-incarceration release as well as criminal defendants out on bond will be severely limited, and the community will be at greater risk because of it. In the alternative, we could shutdown our court for a continuous period of 39 business days starting the first business day of 2013, January 2, 2013, and stay closed every business day through February 27, 2013. This alternative, however, is not feasible for a number of constitutional and practical reasons.

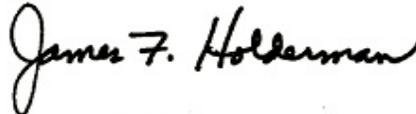
The Administrative Office of the United States Courts (“AO”) has requested that each court inform the AO how Sequestration will affect court operations and the community each court serves.

I am therefore asking for your assistance as well as that of other leaders of our community and country. Please discuss my letter among the members of your organization and send me an e-mail stating how you believe the people you work with and serve would be affected if our district court was closed one business day each week, starting roughly four months from today. Unfortunately, because of the limited time available for congressional action, we are under time constraints to provide our response to the AO. Please send your e-mail to me at *James_Holderman@ilnd.uscourts.gov* and to our Clerk of Court Thomas G. Bruton at *Thomas_Bruton@ilnd.uscourts.gov* by September 10, 2012.

There is still time for Congress to consider this matter, but it is limited. My hope is that our joint responses will help the delivery of justice in America by the United States Courts during this difficult time. I suggest that your e-mailed letters include specific facts that may help us on our court and our elected officials better understand the consequences should we close the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois during 2013 as I have described.

As always, on behalf of our court and all the people in the Northern District of Illinois, I thank you for your assistance and invaluable input.

Sincerely,



James F. Holderman
Chief Judge

JFH/gik