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State of Georgia  
Superior Courts  
Southern Judicial Circuit

BROOKS, COLQUITT, ECHOLS,  
LOWNDES & THOMAS COUNTIES

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Attorneys in the Southern Judicial Circuit  
Clerks of the Southern Judicial Circuit

From: Chief Judge Richard M. Cowart  
Judge Brian A. McDaniel  
Judge James L. Prine  
Judge Gregory A. Voyles  
Judge Catherine M. Smith

Date: March 28, 2024

RE: **ADDENDUM** to Judicial Economy Memorandum of March 7, 2024

Effective immediately, on any civil hearing calendar that is not already full, the following scheduling procedures shall be implemented for civil hearing days in each and every county of the Southern Judicial Circuit:

- ANY contested hearing involving children WILL be set for **2 hours**, no questions asked.
- Each attorney may set a maximum of 2 contested hearings per calendar.
- If an attorney needs to set a hearing which would cause opposing counsel to reach 3 hearings on the calendar, the calendar clerk should send the request to the Court Administrator, via email, with relevant case information for approval.
- No more than 1 hour will be allowed for conferencing on the hearing day. If an agreement has not been reached by the time the case is called, the hearing WILL move forward. The Court reserves the right to not allow any amount of time for conferencing on the hearing day.
- The presiding Judge will strictly enforce the time limits set on the calendar.
- The 6 hour maximum will still apply to each calendar.

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Attorneys in the Southern Judicial Circuit  
Clerks of the Superior Court, Southern Judicial Circuit

**FROM:** Chief Judge Richard M. Cowart  
Judge Brian A. McDaniel  
Judge James L. Prine  
Judge Gregory A. Voyles  
Judge Catherine M. Smith

**DATE:** March 7, 2024

**RE:** **PROCEDURES TO PROMOTE JUDICIAL ECONOMY ON CIVIL HEARING DAYS**  
Updated and Revised

In an effort to promote Judicial economy, to efficiently utilize our limited court time, to accommodate citizens, witnesses, attorneys, parties and court personnel, attorneys will no longer be given excessive amounts of time on hearing days to attempt to work out their cases. The Court recognizes the benefits of a consent agreement, however, the practice of allowing attorneys to negotiate before calling the cases to be heard often resulted in lengthy delays before commencing the hearing. This has been especially true when one or more attorneys have multiple cases set for hearings on the same date.

The Court respectfully requests that the attorneys make genuine efforts to discuss cases PRIOR TO coming to court in an effort to limit issues or reach a consent agreement. Otherwise, the parties need to be prepared to proceed to a hearing.

Time limits set on the calendar are to be adhered to by counsel. The Court reserves the right to terminate or suspend the evidentiary portion of a hearing if the allotted time has expired. The Court also reserves the right to limit the number of contested hearings any one attorney may calendar on a single day if this interferes with the orderly resolution of the daily hearing calendar, especially if there is evidence that counsel has not attempted to limit or resolve their cases in advance.

Additionally, if a case is continued or removed off the calendar then counsel MUST contact the Clerk AND the presiding Judge and court reporter to communicate the continuance. However, a case operating under an Ex parte order may NOT be continued or removed off a calendar without the approval of the judge signing the order.