

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF UPSON COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

**TEMPORARY AMENDMENT TO THE "CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASE  
ASSIGNMENT STANDING ORDER REQUIRED BY UNIFORM SUPERIOR COURT  
RULE 3.1 EFFECTIVE JANUARY 3, 2017"**

**WHEREAS** Judge Robert M. Crawford (hereinafter, "Judge Crawford") has previously recused from all criminal, civil forfeiture, and child support cases; and

**WHEREAS** Judge Crawford has voluntarily reassigned all civil cases assigned to him to Judges Christopher C. Edwards (hereinafter, "Judge Edwards"), W. Fletcher Sams (hereinafter, "Judge Sams"), and Scott L. Ballard (hereinafter, "Judge Ballard") by Order entered October 31, 2019; and

**WHEREAS** the Governor of the State of Georgia will appoint a new judge to fill the vacancy created by the passage of House Bill 28 during the 2019 session of the Georgia General Assembly effective January 1, 2020 (hereinafter, the "Fifth Judge")<sup>1</sup>;

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that the *Civil and Criminal Case Assignment Standing Order Required by Uniform Superior Court Rule 3.1 Effective January 3, 2017* (the "Case Assignment Order") be **TEMPORARILY AMENDED** as follows:

1. Criminal Cases.

- a. All currently pending and future criminal cases shall be assigned to and presided over by Judge Sams.
- b. Beginning January 1, 2020, Judge Sams shall be assigned and preside over all criminal cases.
- c. Due to exigent circumstances, and upon request by Judge Sams, any other Judge is authorized to assist in presiding over any criminal case without the necessity of a transfer order.
- d. In the event that Judge Sams is disqualified from hearing a criminal matter (either presently or in the future), then the same shall be re-assigned by the Clerk, without further order, to Judge Ballard.


<sup>1</sup> Upon the investiture of the Fifth Judge, the Clerk shall create a three-letter designation for the Fifth Judge that shall be included in the case number assigned to the Fifth Judge's cases.


2. Civil Cases.


- a. Through and including December 31, 2019, Judge Ballard shall continue to preside over all pending civil cases from which he is not disqualified. During this time, the Clerk shall continue to assign such cases in rotation as ordered in the Temporary Amendment to the "Civil and Criminal Case Assignment Standing Order Required by Uniform Superior Court Rule 3.1 Effective January 1, 2017" filed on October 30, 2019. Judge Sams shall preside over any civil action from which Judge Ballard is disqualified, through and including December 31, 2019.
- b. Beginning January 1, 2020, all civil cases shall be re-assigned to Judge Ballard and the Fifth Judge as follows:
  - i. The Clerk shall assign all civil cases to the Fifth Judge until such time that 275 cases have been assigned to the Fifth Judge, subject to U.S.C.R. 4.8 regarding companion or related cases.
  - ii. After 275 cases have been assigned to the Fifth Judge, the Clerk shall assign civil cases equally between Judge Ballard and the Fifth Judge based upon the permutated rotations of judge selection provided herewith to the Clerk. The Clerk of Court shall maintain a record of case assignment in ink and, in the event of a reassignment, shall strike through the original assignment with a single pen stroke and note the new assignment such that there is a legible record of both the originally-assigned Judge and the newly-assigned Judge.
  - iii. Due to exigent circumstances, and upon request by Judge Ballard or the Fifth Judge, any other Judge is authorized to assist in presiding over any civil case without the necessity of a transfer order.
3. All other provisions of the Case Assignment Order not affected by this Order shall remain in full force and effect.
4. This Order shall be effective upon the signature of the below-signed judges, in accordance with U.S.C.R. 3.1. This Order shall supersede all other temporary amendments to the "*Civil and Criminal Case Assignment Standing Order Required by Uniform Superior Court Rule 3.1 Effective January 3, 2017.*"

5. This Order shall be the law applied within the Griffin Judicial Circuit as to all judges of the Griffin Judicial Circuit and all other officers of the Court and shall remain in effect until further Order.

SO ORDERED this 18 day of Nov, 2019.

  
CHRISTOPHER C. EDWARDS  
Chief Judge, Superior Court  
Griffin Judicial Circuit

  
W. FLETCHER SAMS  
Judge, Superior Court  
Griffin Judicial Circuit

  
SCOTT L. BALLARD  
Judge, Superior Court  
Griffin Judicial Circuit