



THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

Comment on Proposed Amendments and Forms to the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio

Public Comments
Advisory Committee on Case Management
Supreme Court of Ohio

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Attention:
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For more than a decade, The Buckeye Institute has **championed** commonsense public safety reforms. Unfortunately, Ohio’s balkanized court system makes it difficult for stakeholders and policymakers to obtain reliable data on criminal cases necessary for effective policymaking. The proposed amendments to the common pleas statistical reporting form take a small but meaningful step to resolve this data deficiency. Accordingly, The Buckeye Institute respectfully recommends that the Supreme Court of Ohio adopt the proposed amendments.

To determine whether a policy change is needed and how to tailor it to meet the community’s needs, lawmakers, agencies, and local officials need reliable data. Additional data is then required to determine whether an enacted policy achieves its goals. Stakeholders research and analyze such data to assist the General Assembly and other state and local officials with their legislative and administrative duties. For example, the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission has published statutorily required **monitoring reports** since 1999, but “statewide aggregated data does not exist” for many of the topic areas that the commission—by law—must investigate. The commission, therefore, relies primarily on publicly available data but has been unable to publish a complete study. Without full and accurate publicly available data, stakeholders cannot provide the requisite assistance, and government agencies cannot do their jobs as effectively.

The proposed amendments to the statistical reporting form will augment the Ohio attorney general’s new **crime and sentencing data dashboard** to provide a more complete, statewide picture of criminal law enforcement for Ohio courts.

First, the amendments require data on the number of cases moved to inactive status because they were referred to diversion or to intervention in lieu of conviction. This data will help explain why some cases take longer than normal to resolve.

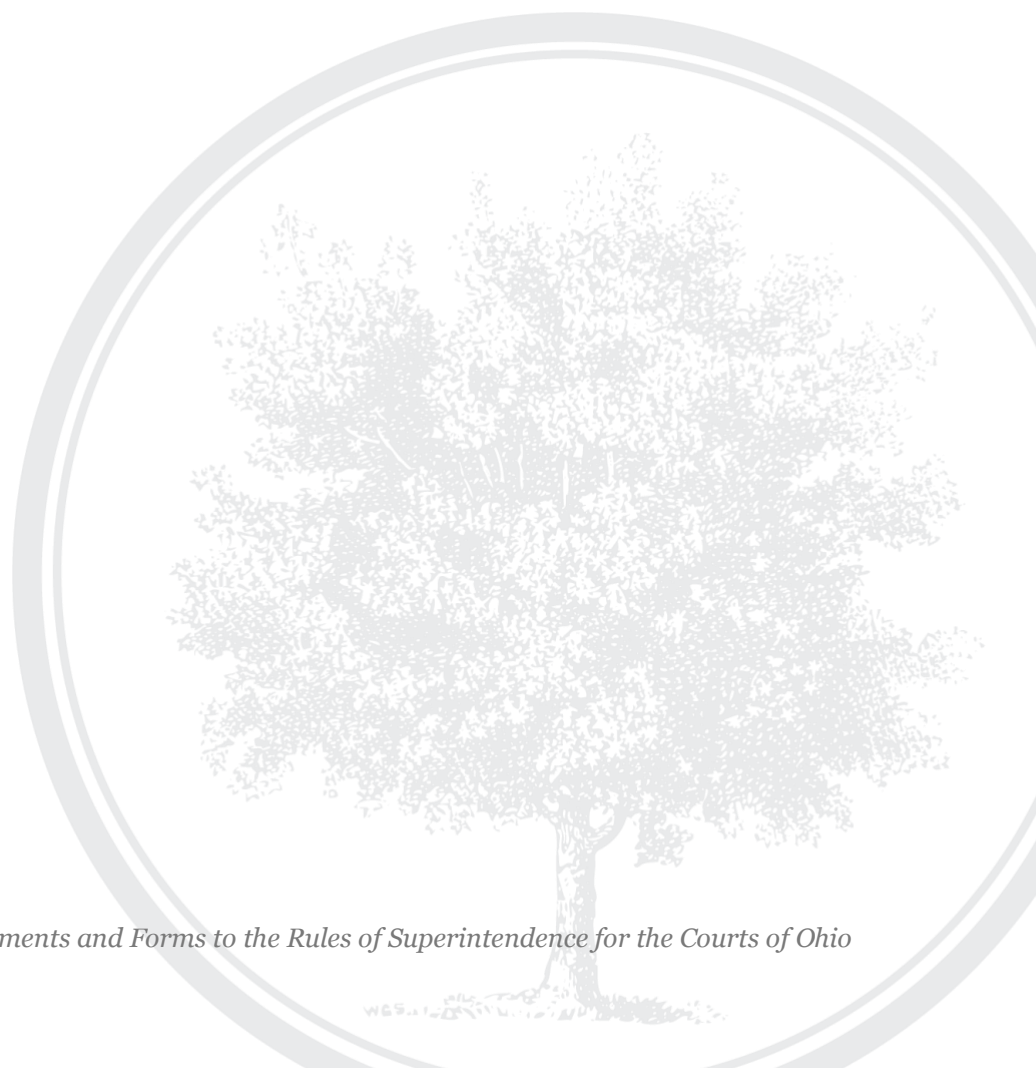
Second, the amendments require courts to distinguish between trials heard by judges and those heard by magistrates, which is key to understanding who decides criminal cases. This information will inform voters and the General Assembly whether more elected, rather than appointed, judges are needed to handle criminal cases in a jurisdiction.

Third, the amendments will improve stakeholder understanding of case dispositions by requiring data for additional categories, such as dispositive motions, pleas, dismissals resulting from diversion, and dismissals resulting from successful intervention in lieu of conviction.

Finally, the amendments require sentencing data to distinguish between state prisons, jails, community-based correctional facilities, community control sanctions, and a combination thereof. That data can help determine whether state funds are being directed to their best uses.

The additional data collected by the forms and made public will also enhance confidence in the judiciary. The reported data will offer a fuller, more accurate picture of criminal proceedings and sentencing, and will help to inform the public about the role and efforts of the judiciary in securing public safety.

For the foregoing reasons, the Supreme Court of Ohio should adopt the proposed amendments to the common pleas statistical reporting form.



About The Buckeye Institute

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