



THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

FULTON BUILDING

16TH FLOOR

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HARRISBURG, PA 17101

THOMAS G. SAYLOR
CHIEF JUSTICE

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December 9, 2016

Dear Colleague:

This letter concerns the continuing judicial education program that has been an ongoing subject of discussion at recent conferences and otherwise. The Supreme Court has now formalized the program by entering an order being provided to you by email, applicable to commissioned trial and appellate judges and certified senior judges, effective January 1, 2017.

My colleagues and I are grateful for your support for this program, which, although it imposes new obligations on all of us, will regularize our continuing education in furtherance of our professional stewardship to the public. Many valuable suggestions that we have received are incorporated into the design of the program.

In terms of a few specifics, the policy requires jurists to complete 12 hours of continuing judicial education each year, with at least 3 of these hours in judicial ethics. Judges can earn 4 hours each year through distance education and 4 through teaching or alternative education activities.

Initially, judges will bear the responsibility for submitting attendance forms for recordkeeping purposes, with the assistance of the Judicial Education Department of the AOPC. As the program matures, however, we hope to adopt the Continuing Legal Education model for contemporaneous attendance recording.

Supervision of the program will be administered through a Board of Judges with the assistance of the Judicial Education Department. The Board will be empowered to make accreditation decisions, consider appeals on matters involving non-compliance, and grant waivers and deferrals.

For the new policies to have their intended effects and meet the diverse educational needs of our judiciary, we will increase the availability of educational opportunities offered through the Judicial Education Department. Over the coming year, the Department's staff will work with judges and university faculty to design an educational program that provides regionally accessible courses, as well as distance education opportunities. Beginning in 2018, judges will be required to earn 4 of their 12 hours each year through this program.

December 9, 2016

Again, all of the Justices appreciate the extraordinary effort so many of you already make to continue your education, as well as your participation in this new program, and we look forward to our continued service together in administering justice in Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,


Thomas G. Saylor

cc: Justices
Thomas B. Darr, Court Administrator
Stephen M. Feiler, Director Judicial Education Department