

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representatives Lee Terry (R-NE), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), and Adrian Smith (R-NE) today introduced legislation that would create a fourth federal judgeship to ease Nebraska's high caseload, which is one of the heaviest in the nation.

Congressman Terry said, "As a delegation, we are introducing this as our very first bill on the first day of the 110th Congress to send a message that this is a priority and it must be addressed. The burden on our courts should have never risen to this level."

"The court is very pleased that the Congressional delegation is again working to procure replacement of our temporary judgeship," said Chief Judge Joe Bataillon, U. S. District Court of Nebraska. "The court and the litigants in the state of Nebraska continue to labor under a heavy docket. The court wants to thank our Congressional delegation for trying to solve this problem."

Terry added, "Many states - especially Nebraska - are in a dire situation. The combination of the strain on assistance from senior judges, the high number of felony criminal cases, and the heavy weighted caseload emphasizes the true need for four permanent judgeships in the district of Nebraska."

Congressman Fortenberry stated, "The workload of Nebraska 's federal judges continues to increase," Fortenberry said. "An additional permanent judgeship will help promote efficiency and more timely justice for the people of Nebraska ."

Congressman Smith said, "This legislation is of great importance for Nebraska 's federal judicial system. The entire Nebraska delegation is going to work to get this bill passed as soon as possible."

The legislation is the latest effort by the Nebraska delegation to create another permanent federal judge for the state.

Nebraska has three permanent judgeships and three senior judges. An additional temporary judgeship was created in 1990 and lapsed in May 2004 with the retirement of Judge Thomas Shanahan, despite recommendations by the Judicial Conference of the to convert the temporary status to a permanent position. After the lapse, the Judicial Conference has continued to recommend an additional permanent judgeship.

Nationally, federal judges handle an average of 85 felony criminal cases a year. The average is 178 in Nebraska, which ranks 5th in the nation. Weighted filings currently total 590 per judgeship with a national standard of 500 for small courts, making Nebraska the 7th highest total in the nation.

---

[Click here](#) to hear Congressman Terry explain his position on this issue.



