

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FILED

MAY 05 2025

**Clerk, U.S. District & Bankruptcy
Courts for the District of Columbia**

**IN RE: PILOT PROGRAM TO
INCREASE UTILIZATION OF
MAGISTRATE JUDGES**

Standing Order No. 25-21 (JEB)

Chief Judge James E. Boasberg

ORDER

This Order governs a pilot program, approved by the Court's Executive Session, concerning the random assignment of civil cases to Magistrate Judges in this District. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(c) and Local Civil Rule 73.1, the Magistrate Judges have authority upon the consent of the parties to exercise full or plenary judicial authority in civil cases, including deciding dispositive motions, conducting nonjury or jury trials, and entering final judgment. The Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judges System of the Judicial Conference of the United States recommends the full utilization of Magistrate Judges, including by encouraging civil litigants to consent to their plenary jurisdiction. Accordingly, on March 4, 2025, the Court approved a one-year pilot program to increase the utilization of the Magistrate Judges, thereby expanding the availability of civil trials and improving the efficient operation of the Court as a whole. Pursuant to that pilot program, the Magistrate Judges will be randomly assigned at the time of case initiation to employment-discrimination cases on the same basis as active District Judges and as the sole presiding judge for all proceedings concerning the matter, subject to the affirmative consent of the parties. Employment-discrimination cases were chosen for the pilot program because of the proficiency the Magistrate Judges have demonstrated adjudicating them

and because employment-discrimination cases go to trial more frequently than many other types of civil matters. Accordingly, it is

ORDERED that, beginning on May 6, 2025, the Clerk of the Court shall modify the automated case assignment system to allow for the random assignment of employment-discrimination cases to each Magistrate Judge, in an equal share as active District Judges receive, to act as sole presiding judge on the matter at the time of case initiation. It is further

ORDERED that for the assigned Magistrate Judge to remain the presiding judge over the case, all parties must affirmatively consent in writing to the jurisdiction of the Magistrate Judge no later than twenty-one (21) days following the date on which the last defendant to respond to the Complaint files an Answer or motion under Rule 12, or, in a removal case, twenty-one (21) days following removal, unless the time is extended by the assigned Magistrate Judge. The assigned Magistrate Judge should not extend time for more than one additional twenty-one (21) day period. Any party is free to withhold its consent and request reassignment of the case to a District Judge without any adverse substantive consequences. It is further

ORDERED that, to facilitate the process of obtaining the parties' decisions regarding consent, when a case is assigned to a Magistrate Judge pursuant to the pilot program, the Clerk of the Court shall enter on the public docket of the case a Notice of Assignment of Case to United States Magistrate Judge ("Notice"), and a Consent or Declination to Magistrate Judge Jurisdiction Form ("Consent or Declination Form"). The plaintiff shall be instructed to serve a copy of the Notice and Consent or Declination Form, along with the summons, upon all other parties in the action. Within the timeframe indicated above, each party shall be required to execute the Consent or Declination Form and file it on the docket as directed by the Clerk's Office in a manner that prevents it from being publicly viewable, including by the Judges of this

Court, or, in the case of an unrepresented party, by mailing or emailing it to Clerk's Office. It is further

ORDERED, that if one or more parties fails to consent in writing within the timeframe required and no party has yet affirmatively declined consent, the Clerk of the Court shall communicate with the parties to direct that the Consent or Declination Form be promptly filed on the docket as directed by the Clerk's Office in a manner that prevents it from being publicly viewable, including by the Judges of this Court, or, in the case of an unrepresented party, mailed or emailed to the Clerk's Office. Thereafter, if any party does not submit a written Consent or Declination Form, the Clerk's Office shall deem that party to have declined consent to the jurisdiction of the Magistrate Judge. It is further

ORDERED that if any party does not affirmatively consent in writing to the jurisdiction of the assigned Magistrate Judge, then the Clerk of the Court shall promptly reassign the case randomly to a District Judge to serve as the presiding judge, shall notate the non-consent of the parties in the case reassignment event on the docket, and shall remove the assignment of the Magistrate Judge from the case. The Clerk shall not identify the non-consenting party or parties on the docket and shall withhold the identity of any non-consenting party from the assigned Magistrate Judge and the District Judge to whom the case is reassigned. Following reassignment to the District Judge, any scheduling orders initially set by the Magistrate Judge will remain in place, unless the assigned District Judge orders otherwise. It is further

ORDERED that, alternatively, when the Clerk of Court has received a written confirmation of consent from all parties, the Clerk shall docket a staff note notifying chambers of the Magistrate Judge that all parties have consented to the plenary jurisdiction of the assigned Magistrate Judge and shall make public the parties' executed Consent or Declination Forms on

the docket. In that case, the assigned Magistrate Judge is expressly authorized pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(c) and Local Civil Rule 73.1 to conduct all further proceedings in the matter—deciding dispositive motions, conducting nonjury or jury trials, and entering final judgment—and without need for further Order of referral by the Court. It is further

ORDERED, that pending the parties' decisions regarding consent to the jurisdiction of the Magistrate Judge, the assigned Magistrate Judge is empowered to act in the case with respect to all non-dispositive pretrial motions and matters pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(A) and Local Civil Rule 72.2 without need for further Order of referral by the Court. It is further

ORDERED that this pilot project shall continue for a period of one year from its effective date of May 6, 2025, unless extended by the Court. It is further

ORDERED that the Clerk of Court shall post a copy of this Standing Order on the Court's website and shall distribute copies as appropriate.

SO ORDERED.

Date: May 5, 2025



James E. Boasberg
Chief Judge