

August 12, 2025

The Honorable John Freudenberg, Chairperson  
Judicial Resources Commission  
P.O. Box 98901  
State Capital Building  
Lincoln, NE 68509-8910

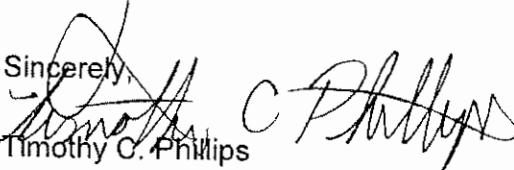
Re: Judicial Resources Commission Hearing, August 15, 2025

Dear Justice Freudenberg:

The Lancaster County Court judges request the Judicial Resource Commission find that a judicial vacancy exists in the office of the County Court of the 3rd Judicial District, as a result of the retirement of the Honorable Laurie J. Yardley. We further request that the Judicial Resources Commission make a recommendation that the position remain in the 3rd Judicial District.

Please find twenty (20) copies of a memorandum to be distributed to the members of the Judicial Resources Commission prior to the upcoming hearing. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Timothy C. Phillips

Lancaster County Court Presiding Judge

Enclosures:

Cc: Judges Matthew Acton, Holly Parsley, Thomas Zimmerman, Rodney Reuter and Joseph Dalton

EXHIBIT 11

To: Nebraska Judicial Resources Commission  
% The Honorable John Freudenberg, Chairperson  
From: Timothy C. Phillips, Lancaster County Court Presiding Judge  
Date: August 11, 2025 (Amended Memorandum)  
Re: Nebraska Judicial Resources Commission Hearing – August 15, 2025

### History of the Court

From 1985 through 2011, the Lancaster County Court operated with six judges even though the caseload grew from 44,000 cases in 1985 to 63,905 cases in 2011. In 2011, the Weighted Caseload Report indicated that Lancaster County should have 7.93 judges to handle its caseload. Accordingly, in 2011 the Commission made a recommendation (and in 2012 legislation was passed) to transfer a county judicial position from the Fifth Judicial District to the Third, giving the Lancaster County Court seven judges. Since that time, the weighted caseload studies continue to show that Lancaster County needs at least seven judges. Nine of the past 11 years Lancaster County's Judicial Need has been anywhere between 6.16 to 7.84 judges. COVID recovery years of 2022 and 2023 are the two outlier years during the last 11 years.

### Current Caseload Statistics

The Fiscal Year 2024 County Court Annual Caseload Report shows that Lancaster County had 46,363 cases filed in the 2024 Fiscal Year. That figure includes 440 District Court domestic and/or protection order cases also handled by the Lancaster County Court (See attached Exhibit A). The most recent Weighted Caseload Report (FY 2025 July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025) shows that Lancaster County Court had 46,355 cases filed with that number including 414 domestic and/or protection order cases also handled by the Lancaster County Court (See attached Exhibit A). The latest weighted caseload report indicates that Lancaster County needs 6.44 judges and has 7 judges currently assigned. (See attached Exhibit B). The latest Caseload Report shows that the number of filings is steadily increasing as we become further removed from the COVID pandemic. We anticipate that the number of filings will continue to increase as we move further away from the 2022 and 2023 fiscal years. The number of cases filed in the Lancaster County Court through July of 2025 would indicate that we are on track to have about 1400 more cases filed by this calendar year's end than were filed in the last calendar year. (See attached Exhibit C).

### Other Data to Consider

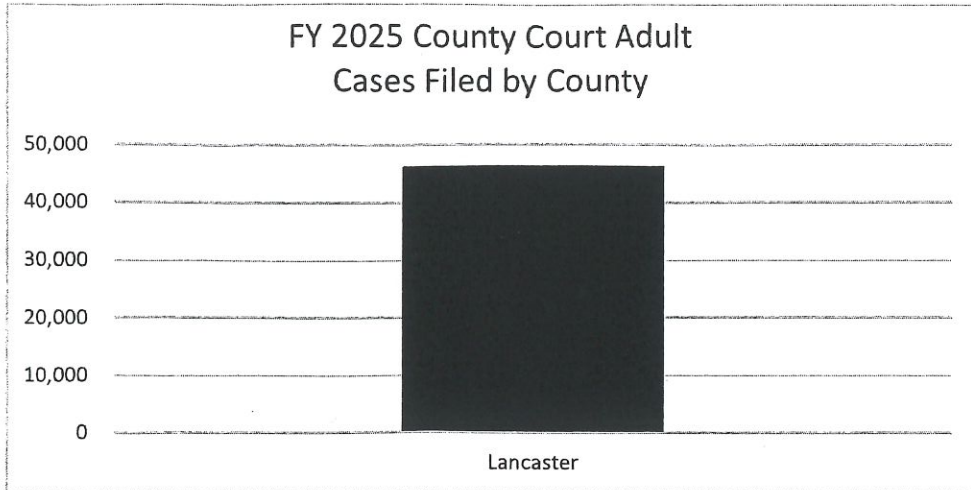
The County Judges in Lancaster County reviewed and signed 762 search warrants and the supporting affidavits during the 2024 calendar year. This number is also continuing to rise since 2021 when 663 search warrants were reviewed and signed by Lancaster County Court Judges. The 2025 calendar year, as of August 7, 2025, has seen 502 search warrants and the supporting affidavits reviewed and signed by Lancaster County Judges. This would put the County Court on pace to sign and review approximately 850 search warrants and supporting affidavits by 2025 year's end.

### Request for Recommendation

We request that the open position in the 3rd District because of the retirement of the Honorable Laurie J. Yardley be filled, and that the position again be assigned to Lancaster County. The statistics cited above show that Lancaster County still has the need for seven (7) judges and that the Court should be allowed to maintain the status quo. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions and discuss this matter in further detail at the Commission hearing. Thank you for your time and consideration.

# Annual Fiscal Year Caseload Report

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District – County Court Adult Cases Filed



Historical Cases Filed	
Year	# Cases
FY 2021	40,329
FY 2022	35,050
FY 2023	38,450
FY 2024	46,363
FY 2025	46,355

### Fiscal Year 2025 Adult Court Cases Filed by Category and County

	Protection Orders	Felony	Felony 4	Misd.	Adult PSC	Traffic	Civil	Probate	Guardianship / Conservatorship	Small Claims	Adoption	Domestic Relations	Total Cases
Lancaster	414	2,225	0	11,928	0	14,643	15,500	816	355	406	68	0	46,355



# Weighted Caseload Report

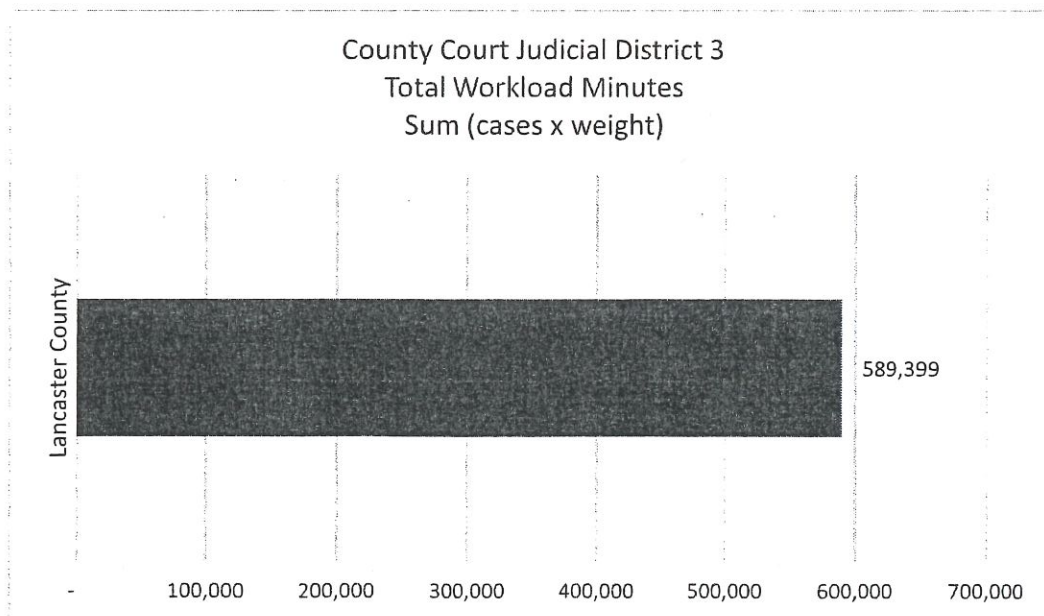
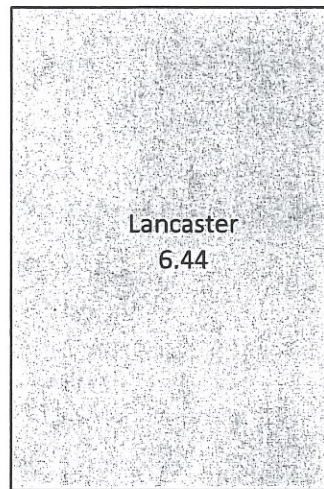
## 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District –County Court

County court need for judges: 6.44  
 Current number of judges: 7  
 Workload per judge: 0.92

Predicted judicial resources need by county

### Judges Serving the 3rd District

Acton  
 Dalton  
 Parsley  
 Phillips  
 Reuter  
 Yardley  
 Zimmerman



**2025 Cases Filed**  
Lancaster County Court

	misd/ord traffic	misd/ord nontraffic	Felony	Civil	Small Claims	Probate/ Inher Tax	Guard Cons	Adoption	Paternity	TOTALS	Protection Orders	
JAN	1126	1008	166	1260	30	67	24	8	0	3689	29	
FEB	1257	886	133	1229	29	63	26	10	0	3633	19	
MAR	1201	899	196	1219	33	74	29	10	0	3661	23	
APR	1155	921	203	1566	33	78	23	18	0	3997	39	
MAY	1349	1188	180	1091	35	86	21	11	0	3961	32	
JUN	1282	1173	209	1518	33	71	28	16	0	4330	36	
JUL	1416	1171	247	1307	42	64	26	11		4284	45	
AUG										0		
SEP										0		
OCT										0		
NOV										0		
DEC										0		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8786</b>	<b>7246</b>	<b>1334</b>	<b>9190</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27555</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>27778</b>
											<b>223</b>	<b>27778</b>
2024 Total:	14211	11639	2417	15730	387	835	407	149	1	45776	440	46216
	-38.17%	-37.74%	-44.81%	-41.58%	-39.28%	-39.76%	-56.51%	-43.62%		-39.80%	-49.32%	-39.90%



Lancaster County Court  
Cases Filed Report  
For the Month of July , 2025

Page: 1  
Date: 8/ 9/2025  
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Cases Filed	Prior Pending	New Filings	Reopened Cases	Disposed Cases	Current Pending	Appealed Cases
<b>Criminal</b>						
Felony	1295	247	6	230	1318	0
Misdemeanor	5742	1128	53	1100	5823	4
Game & Parks	25	37	1	44	19	0
Extradition	1	6	0	5	2	0
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Total Criminal	7063	1418	60	1379	7162	4
<b>Traffic</b>						
Statute	1211	416	0	493	1134	0
Ordinance	1420	980	2	978	1424	0
Overweight	14	19	0	26	7	0
Parking	2	1	0	2	1	0
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Total Traffic	2647	1416	2	1499	2566	0
<b>Civil</b>						
Tort	100	9	0	12	97	0
Contract	4001	1050	0	1052	3999	0
Real Property	449	232	0	161	520	0
Miscellaneous	115	16	0	23	108	0
Small Claims	125	42	0	25	142	0
Condemnation	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Total Civil	4790	1349	0	1273	4866	0
<b>Domestic Relations</b>						
Paternity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adoption	24	11	0	14	21	0
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Total Domestic Relations	24	11	0	14	21	0
<b>Juvenile</b>						
Misdemeanor/Infraction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Felony	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neglected/Dependent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Status Offender	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentally Ill and Dangerous	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parental	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Total Juvenile	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Probate</b>						
Estate	699	40	2	41	700	0
Inheritance Tax	19	24	0	20	23	0
Guardianship/Conservatorship	140	26	0	26	140	0
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Total Probate	858	90	2	87	863	0
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Total Cases Filed	15382	4284	64	4252	15478	4