

**REESTABLISHMENT PLAN
THIRTY-SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURTS 37-3-01, 37-4-01, 37-2-01, 37-4-03, 37-4-93
WARREN COUNTY AND FOREST COUNTY**

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania mandates a review of the existence of and boundaries for magisterial district courts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. President Judges have the duty to review the caseload, workload, and overall scope of the magisterial districts. A President Judge must make a recommendation to reestablish, realign or eliminate magisterial districts.

Some of the considerations regarding reestablishment require an examination of statistics other than the weighted caseload for example Warren County has weekly Central Court sessions where a Magisterial District Judge (hereinafter "MDJ") sits at the Courthouse in a specially designated courtroom located in the lower level of the Courthouse. The MDJs share this responsibility on a rotating basis. It should be noted that all scheduling and rescheduling of Central Court cases are done strictly by the 37-4-01 MDJ office.

Through the years, MDJs have also been active in several of the Court of Common Pleas initiatives involving problem solving courts. They actively participate with our high school students in a Youth Court for juvenile offenders. This court has been running since 2005. Warren County was one of the first rural counties to implement this program and is pleased with the demonstrated success we have had with this program. The MDJs have also actively implemented initiatives involving truancy which include utilizing an MDJ to develop weekly accountability for truant children as well as parents of truant children or parents with drug and alcohol issues who have no criminal charges. MDJs have been utilized for Treatment Court, a problem solving court where parties with drug and alcohol issues, mental health issues, and veterans who have criminal charges (who have failed previous efforts at rehabilitation) agree to be seen weekly by the court. While the treatment court is primarily the responsibility of the Court of Common Pleas, there are inevitably scheduling conflicts that require the assistance of an MDJ. Thus, utilizing MDJs to assist with the cases is necessary and of importance to our rural community.

As Warren County is 889 square miles, it is important to have at least one MDJ office located outside of the city of Warren. MDJ office 37-2-01 is located in the city and 37-3-01 is located within a mile from the city. The 37-4-01 office which is located in Youngsville remains a good central location. When the Court examined staffing in all three MDJ offices in Warren County, the Court recognized that all three offices have two full-time staff. In order to reduce the number of MDJs and run efficiently, the Court observed that most offices would need three full-time staff per office site. Evaluating the two current facilities utilized by the MDJs in Warren and North Warren, neither office could house a third staff member or be reconfigured in a way to house a third staff member. The Warren County

Commissioners have not been able to locate alternate spaces for housing the offices. A preliminary investigation in Warren County finds no suitable office space at this time.

The Court examined the availability of internet services to Warren County and found that the majority of the county does not have what the FCC considers as broadband. Warren County has historically lagged behind other counties when it comes to the availability of reliable technology. Attached is a map that shows that the citizens of the county lack the ability to connect to the internet in most areas. As a result, the majority of the public would need to physically visit the MDJ offices. Due to the large geographical area that the county covers and lack of public transportation, closing any office would cause hardship to Warren County citizens.

The Court also analyzed the historical implications of realignment by referring to the last three realignment plans for the court. In 1992, the Honorable Robert L. Wolfe consolidated a number of satellite MDJ offices to address the efficiency of the system. In 2002, the Honorable Paul H. Millin reduced the number of MDJs in Warren County by eliminating the Sheffield office and consolidating the satellite office in Tidioute with the Youngsville office. Ultimately, the Sheffield office closed in 2008 and the consolidation of the Tidioute office took place in 2011 when the Youngsville office was relocated. In the last reestablishment, the Youngsville office had the smallest weighted caseload according to the statewide statistical information, the Court achieved a better distribution of cases by increasing its township responsibilities by adding Pleasant Township to its caseload. The Court recognizes that the caseload is as evenly distributed as possible given the geography of the county.

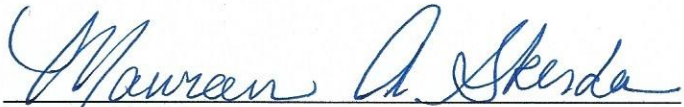
Magisterial District Courts 37-4-03 and 37-4-93 have one Magisterial District Judge serving all of Forest County, which covers 430 square miles. Magisterial District Court 37-4-03 is located in the Forest County Courthouse which is centrally located in the county. Magisterial District Court 37-4-93 is located in the southeast corner of the county in Jenks Township which is the most populated area. Both offices are essential to the district in order to serve the public in this rural community which lacks sufficient public transportation and has a poverty level of 14.1%.

For the above reasons, I recommend that District Court 37-2-01 be reestablished to serve all of Warren County, encompassing Cherry Grove Township, Sheffield Township, and the City of Warren.

I recommend that District Court 37-3-01 be reestablished to serve all of Warren County, encompassing Clarendon Borough, Pine Grove Township, Conewango Township, Sugar Grove Borough, Sugar Grove Township, Farmington Township, Glade Township, Elk Township, and Mead Township.

I recommend that District Court 37-4-01 be reestablished to serve all of Warren County, encompassing Bear Lake Borough, Brokenstraw Township, Columbus Township, Deerfield Township, Eldred Township, Freehold Township, Limestone Township, Pittsfield Township, Pleasant Township, Southwest Township, Spring Creek Township, Tidioute Borough, Triumph Township, Watson Township, and Youngsville Borough.

I recommend that District Court 37-4-03 and its satellite office 37-4-93 be reestablished to serve all of Forest County, encompassing Barnett Township, Green Township, Harmony Township, Hickory Township, Howe Township, Jenks Township, Kingsley Township, Tionesta Township, Tionesta Borough.



Honorable Maureen A. Skerda, President Judge
37th Judicial District of Pennsylvania
Warren and Forest Counties