



THEsouthernscoop

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A New Chief Judge for the Bankruptcy Court



On November 7, 2017, the Honorable Susan D. Barrett passed the gavel to the Honorable Edward J. Coleman, III, who was sworn in as the new Chief Bankruptcy Judge for the Southern District of Georgia. Pictured from left to right are Judge Barrett, Chief Judge Coleman, and Judge Kim.

COURTHOUSE LOCATIONS

*AUGUSTA	*BRUNSWICK	DUBLIN	*SAVANNAH	STATESBORO	WAYCROSS
600 James Brown Blvd Augusta, GA 30901	801 Gloucester St Brunswick, GA 31520	100 N Franklin St Dublin, GA 31021	125 Bull St Savannah, GA 31401	52 N Main St Statesboro, GA 30458	601 Tebeau St Waycross, GA 31501
(706) 823-6000	(912) 280-1376	<i>unstaffed</i>	(912) 650-4100	<i>unstaffed</i>	<i>unstaffed</i>

* Clerk's Office Hours Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm



ART AND ESSAY CONTEST HONOREES

In honor of Constitution Day, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia held an art contest for local K-3rd graders and an essay contest for 4th and 5th graders. Students were asked to create a piece of art or write an essay regarding why they value particular freedoms set out in the U.S. Constitution.

Participation was overwhelming! Entries were received from over 125 students representing six different schools. The winners were chosen by six court officials, and the winning entries are currently on display on the second floor of the Tomochichi Federal Courthouse.

The students, pictured below with Chief Judge Edward J. Coleman, III were invited to the courthouse where they were presented with pocket-sized guides to the U.S. Constitution, medals, and framed certificates of achievement.

Due to the success of this community outreach we look forward to making this an annual event.



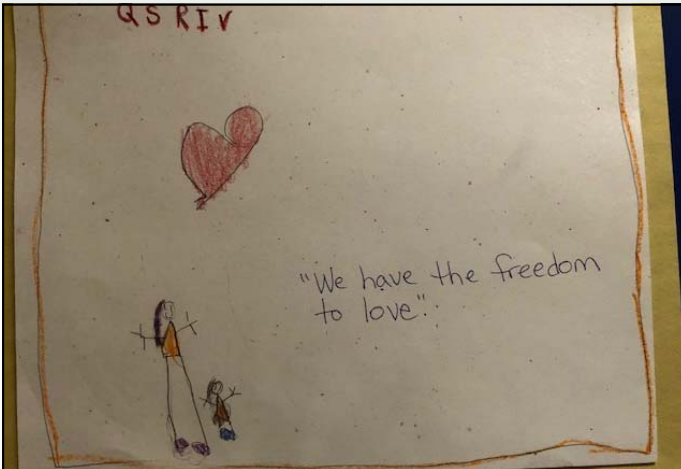
Pictured from left to right are Hadden Dart, Siri Wright, David Diogo, Chief Judge Coleman, Vic Derola, Zachary Maxwell, Jr., and Jakayla Deloach.

U.S. Constitution Day Winning Drawings

SIRI WRIGHT

KINDERGARTEN

OTIS J. BROCK, III ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



JAKAYLA DELOACH

1st GRADE

OTIS J. BROCK, III ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

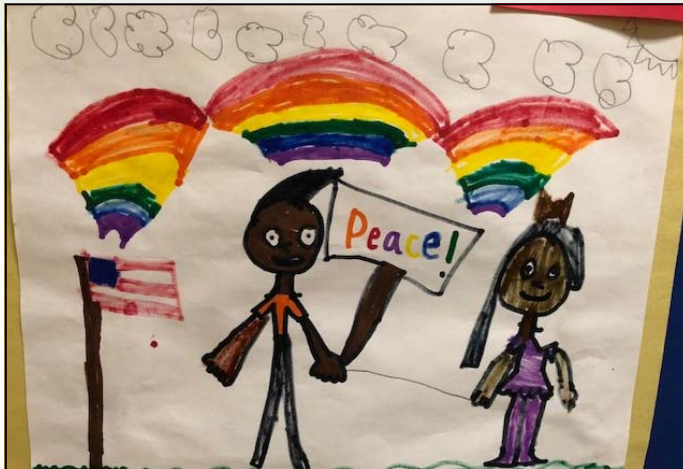


U.S. Constitution Day Winning Drawings

DAVID DIOGO

2nd GRADE

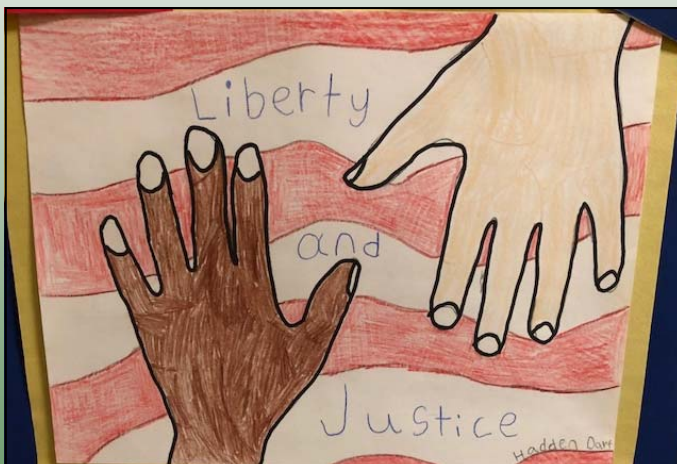
SOUTHWEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



HADDEN DART

3rd GRADE

HESSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

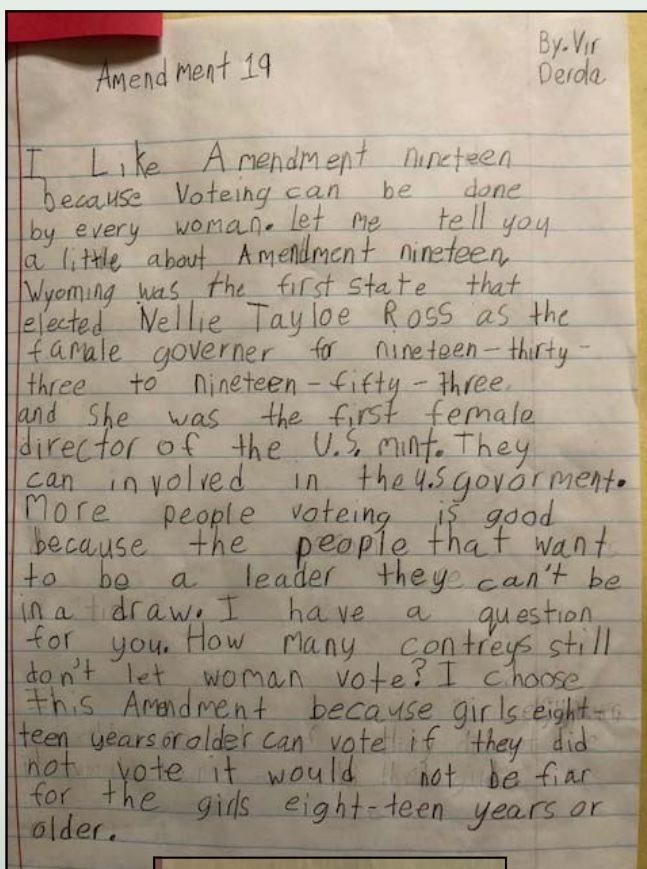


U.S. Constitution Day Winning Essays

VIC DEROLA

4th GRADE

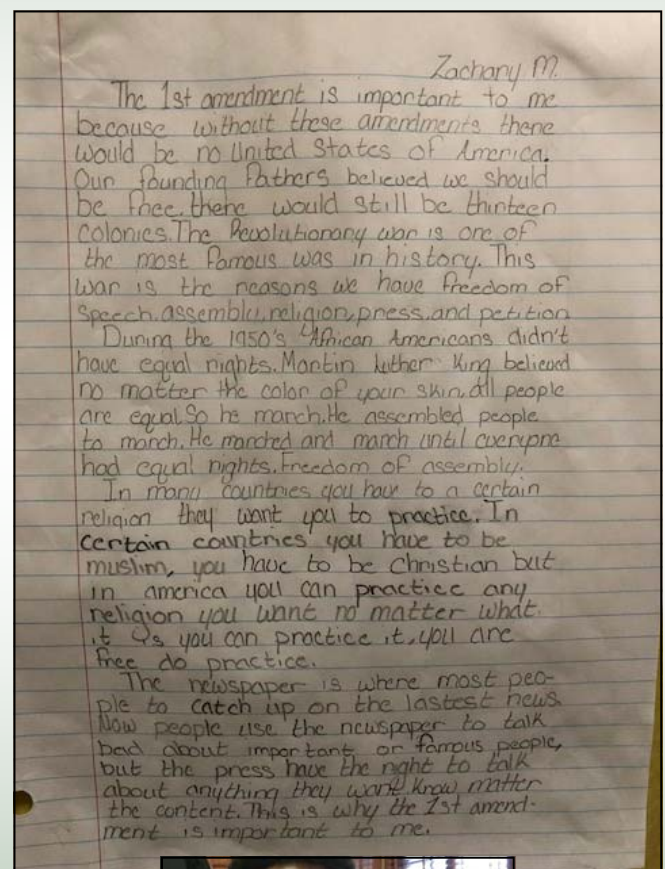
GODLEY STATION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



ZACHARY MAXWELL JR

5th GRADE

GODLEY STATION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Best Wishes to Carol Covington on Her Retirement

Carol Covington, Case Administrator, retired from the Clerk's Office on December 29, 2017, after 27 years of service in the Savannah Division. The Clerk's Office greatly benefitted from Carol's hard work, dedication, and wealth of knowledge as a Case Administrator.

When discussing her career, Carol recalled the bustling intake counter in the Savannah Division during the days of paper filing. "I really enjoyed meeting the attorneys and working at the counter during those days," said Carol. She remembered checking to ensure all required documents were filed in paper, issuing paper receipts, and creating manila folders for new cases. Carol was also responsible for mailing court notices in Chapter 7 and 13 cases in the Savannah, Brunswick and Waycross Divisions. Carol saw the progression that technology offered through the years, as she witnessed the transition from paper to electronic filing and how it radically transformed the Clerk's Office.

During her tenure, Carol participated in a pilot project to train Case Administrators on all aspects of case management. She also wrote a number of standard operating procedures that are used by the Clerk's Office today.

As a retiree, Carol looks forward to spending time with her grandchildren, traveling, exercising, and tackling new hobbies such as painting and line dancing. The court will miss Carol, and we wish her a very happy retirement!



Welcome Judge Kim's Law Clerk in Brunswick

On September 25, 2017, Kaylin Oldham began her two-year term as a law clerk to the Honorable Michele J. Kim in the Brunswick Division.

Kaylin is a recent graduate from the University of Alabama School of Law. While in law school, she completed an externship with the Honorable Jennifer H. Henderson, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

Please help us welcome Kaylin to the court!



Judge/Trustee Assignment (JTA)

Functionality is now available within CM/ECF for debtors' attorneys to run the judge/trustee assignment (JTA) when they file new cases. Running JTA manually in this manner will allow an attorney filer to immediately download a mailing matrix that includes the assigned case trustee. Note: This functionality does not affect the random judge/trustee assignment used by the Clerk's Office; rather, it just allows the assignment to occur faster. Attorneys should ensure creditors have been uploaded in the case before using the matrix as part of their Certificate of Service for the Chapter 13 Plan.

For attorneys who do not opt to run the JTA assignment manually, the Court will continue to run JTA at the top and half of every hour.

Requirements for running JTA:

- A petition must be filed before JTA can run.
- The same login that files the case must run JTA. Any other login trying to run JTA will receive an error message.

How to run JTA:

- Click on the **Bankruptcy** hyperlink on the CM/ECF blue main menu bar.
- The Bankruptcy events screen displays.
- Click on the **Judge/Trustee Assignment** hyperlink.
- The 341 Judge and Trustee screen displays.

This may take a few minutes. Please be patient. A confirmation screen will appear.

341 Judge and Trustee

Case	Case Title	Chapter	341 Meeting	Judge Name	Trustee Name
18-10001	Alice Anderson	13	<i>blank</i>	Barrett, Susan B	Huon Le
18-10002	Bob Browning	13	<i>blank</i>	Barrett, Susan B	Huon Le

Once the above screen appears, the process is complete.

For questions regarding this functionality, please call the Clerk's Office in Savannah at 912-650-4100 and request Lainie Saul.

Reminder Regarding Payment of Filing Fees

There is a wide variety of detailed information regarding the payment of filing fees available on the Court's website (www.gasb.uscourts.gov). As a quick reminder, to avoid overpayment of the filing fee or exceeding the four installments limit as set out in General Order 2015-5, please use the following resources:

- **Installment Fee Tracking Report** - this report is available in CM/ECF under the Reports menu. This report shows the case number, case name, chapter, trustee, debtor's attorney, fee amount, balance owing, number of installments made, due date for final payment, and the original confirmation hearing date. The report can be sorted by any of the header columns to rearrange the data. New cases are added to the report upon the entry of an Order Approving Payment of Filing Fees in Installments. Cases are deleted from the report upon the entry of an Order Confirming Plan (Chapter 13) or case closing. Chapter 7 cases will be deleted from the report once they are closed.
- **Filing Fee menu under Query** - this link shows a summary of the installments paid and a balance due (if any).

Remember, if you overpay filing fees you may file with the Court a Motion for Refund to have the funds credited to the credit card with which you made the initial payment. Alternatively, you can request that the funds be sent to the Chapter 13 Trustee towards the Debtor's plan payment. Your motion and proposed order must specify who is to receive payment.

Clerk's Office staff are available Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., to assist you with filing fee questions. You may call the main Clerk's Office number in Savannah at (912) 650-4100, or contact the Budget/Finance Analyst directly at (912) 650-4139.

Court Website Redesigned

On November 16, 2017, the Court launched a redesigned website. Information on doing business with the Court can now be viewed and obtained through a variety of easy-to-navigate and interactive tools. The redesign was initiated to make more Court information available, make it easier to explore and search, and to make it mobile-friendly. Whether in the office or on the go, be sure to check it out by visiting, www.gasb.uscourts.gov from your smart phone or tablet.



Certified Bankruptcy Assistant Seminar

The Association of Bankruptcy Judicial Assistants (“ABJA”) is sponsoring a Certified Bankruptcy Assistant Seminar and Exam on October 16 & 17, 2018, along with two Professional Skills Seminars on October 18 & 19, 2018, at the Crowne Plaza Downtown Union Station, Indianapolis, Indiana.

This is an ideal opportunity for you to become “certified” as a bankruptcy assistant. The Certified Bankruptcy Assistant (“CBA”) program is aimed specifically toward secretaries, administrative assistants, paralegals, and other support personnel who work in or have day-to-day contact with the bankruptcy courts. The two-day certification program includes a one and one-half day preparatory training workshop with the exam being administered the afternoon of the second day. The training and exam cover topics such as grammar usage and writing, the Bankruptcy Code and Rules, ethics, and research and proper legal citation. The instructors this year are top-notch, including U.S. Bankruptcy Judges, legal practitioners and administrators from the Federal Administrative Offices. A study guide developed by The University of New Orleans, numerous professors, judges, and practitioners in the bankruptcy field, in conjunction with the ABJA, is provided to participants in advance of the program. To see if you meet the criteria to participate in this program and/or for more information on the CBA program, please visit the ABJA’s website at <http://www.abja.org>.

After obtaining certification, there is a responsibility to maintain a high degree of knowledge and proficiency in the bankruptcy field by obtaining a minimum of .6 Continuing Education Units (“CEUs”), which is equivalent to 6 classroom hours, every two years.

The ABJA is also offering two Professional Skills seminars on October 18 and 19. If you need to satisfy your CEU requirements, or you are just interested in enhancing your professional development, these seminars are your opportunity to join judicial assistants/secretaries, other court personnel, and paralegals from around the country for classes taught by Judges and Clerks, among others.



Association of Bankruptcy Judicial Assistants

Docketing a Chapter 13 Plan / Amended Chapter 13 Plan



With the recent adoption of our new local Chapter 13 Plan that conforms to the requirements of new Fed. R. Bankr. P. 3015, docketing the plan has become more involved, and accuracy during docketing is now more important than ever.

When you are filing a Chapter 13 Plan, the Court wants to know three things.

1. Which embedded motions, if any, are included in the plan?
2. How many of each embedded motions are included in the plan?
3. Are you including a Certificate of Service?

These questions are presented in a very simple and straightforward way during docketing. The docket event will provide you the paragraph number in the plan where the embedded motion information is located. Having a copy of the plan in hand during docketing will help you quickly and correctly answer these questions.

When filing an Amended Chapter 13 Plan Before Confirmation, the Court needs to know if any new requests are included in the amended plan that were not included in the previous plan. Again, with a copy of the amended plan in hand, make the appropriate selections when prompted.

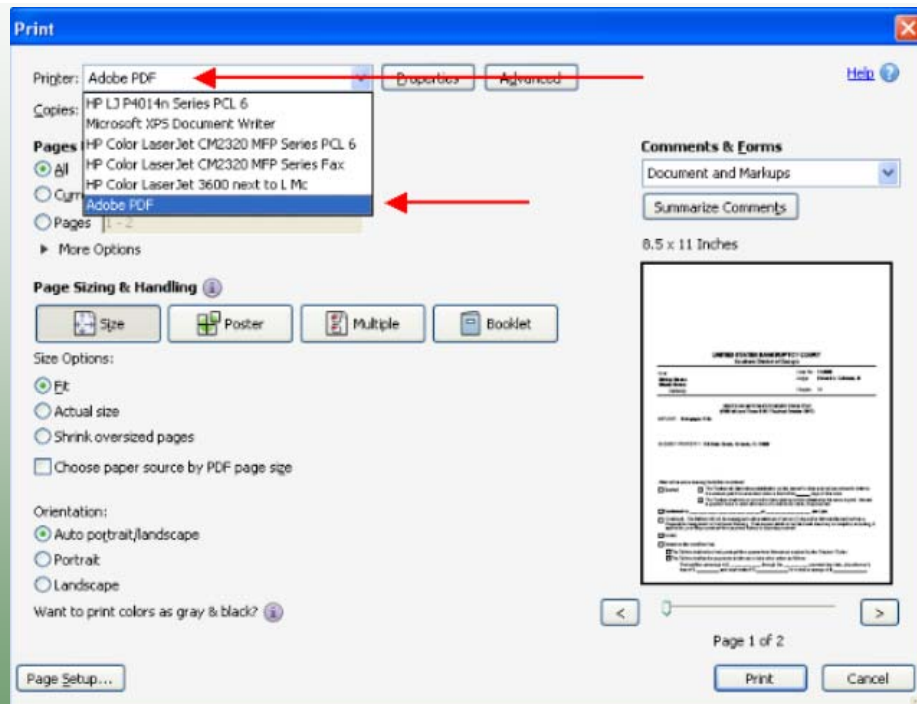
The selections you make while docketing a plan or amended plan set wheels in motion behind the scenes of the events to capture these matters for statistical reporting to the AO. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is that the proper selections to these various prompts are made. Docketing instructions are located on the courts website, <http://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/news/general-orders-2017-3-and-2017-4-regarding-chapter-13-plan>. Please contact Clerk's Office with any questions.

Requirement to Flatten PDF Files

Fillable forms are true time savers in the world of preparing bankruptcy filings. These forms can be completed, printed, saved and/or emailed with very little effort on the part of the user. However, as “user friendly” as the fillable forms are, they are known to be problematic when electronically filed through CM/ECF or uploaded into the eOrders module. A fillable form in CM/ECF may not display the header properly. An eOrder left in a fillable format may not be able to be signed by the judge, resulting in the rejection of and request for resubmission of the order. The single largest disadvantage of a fillable form is that it remains fillable until steps are taken to remove the interactive fields. If these fields remain interactive, other users may be able to manipulate or edit the data contained in the form. To best preserve a PDF, these fillable fields must be removed prior to filing through CM/ECF in a process called “flattening.” An added benefit of flattening a PDF is that file size can be reduced by up to 90%, thus conserving valuable resources for the Court.

Instructions to Flatten a PDF File:

- Create a PDF document for filing as usual.
- From the **Print** feature, select *Adobe PDF* as the printer (see print screen).
- Select **Print** button at the bottom of the screen.
- Name the document and select **Save**.
- The now “flattened” PDF may be uploaded into CM/ECF.



2017 End of Year Statistics

In the Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia, there are 1,470 attorneys and 2,706 creditors registered to file in our CM/ECF system. Combined with court staff and case trustees, a whopping 415,209 docket entries were made in CM/ECF in 2017, and over 56,000 proofs of claim were filed. The Court performed quality control on 263,409 pleadings, documents and claims. As evidenced below, it was a very busy year!

CM/ECF Docket Entry Totals	
Court Users	224,603
Attorneys/Trustees/Creditors	190,606
Total Docket Entries	415,209

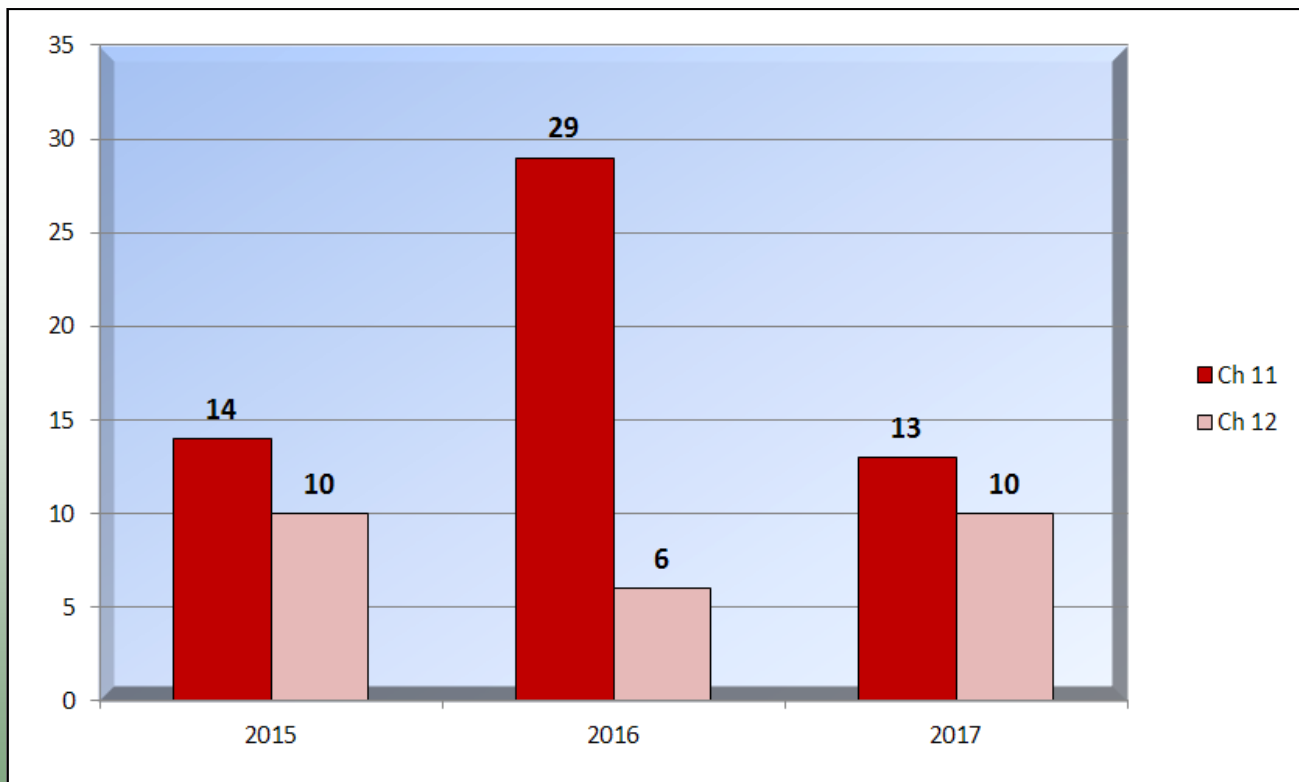
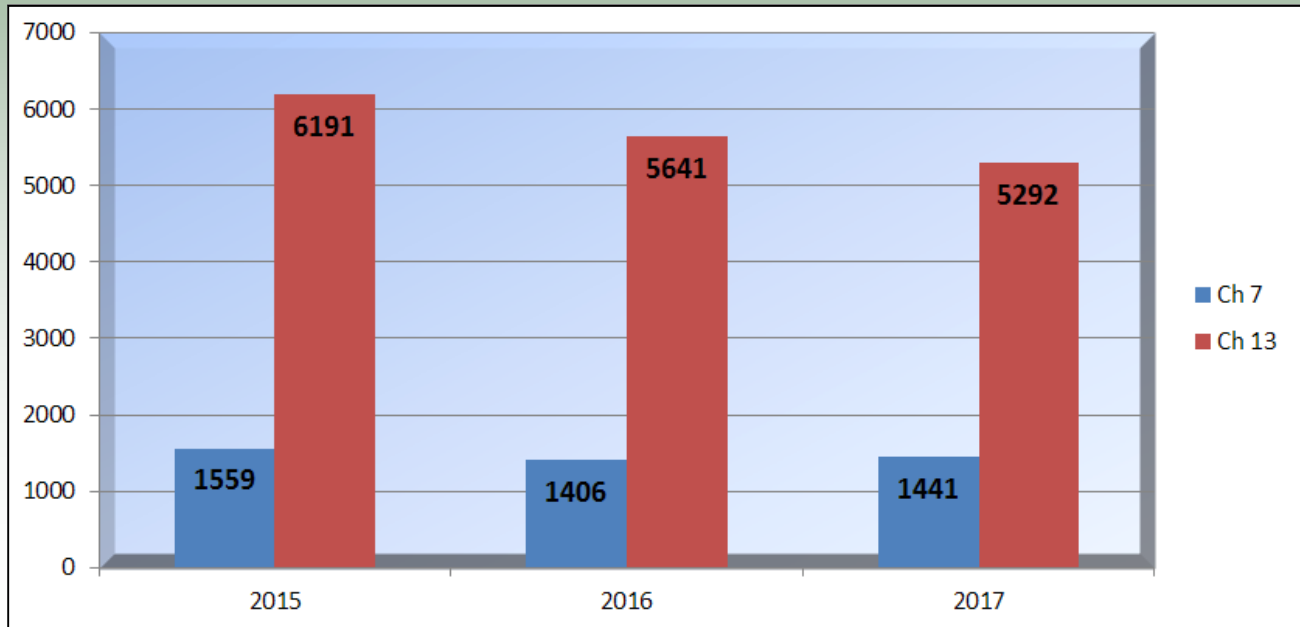
Items QC'd in CM Assist	
Docket Events	207,199
Claims	56,210
Total Items QC'd in CM Assist	263,409

Miscellaneous Statistics	Totals
Discharges Entered	4,849
Dismissals Entered	2,952
Reopened Cases	124
Cases Closed	8,362
Cases Converted	435
ePOC Filings	9,137
eFinCert Filings	2,022
eOrders Uploaded	28,547
Orders Entered	39,414
New/Revised ECF events & forms	100+

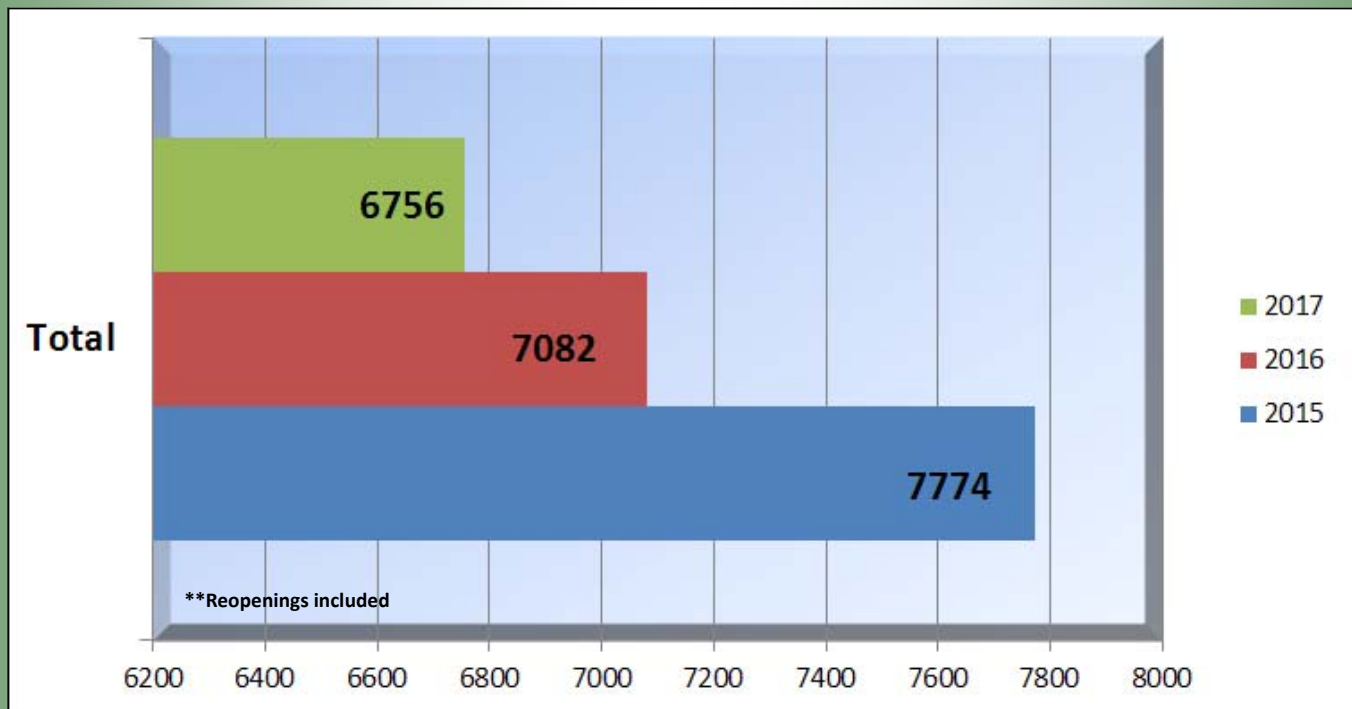
Docketing Events by the Number	
Hearings Held (ALL)	15,991
Change of Address/Employment/Name	6,997
Deficiency Notices	6,646
Trustee's Motion to Dismiss	5,491
Objection to Confirmation of Plan	4,581
Negative Notice Motions	4,266
Repeat Filers	3,908
Transfers of Claim	2,952
Relief from Stay	2,696
Amended Plans Before Confirmation	1,674
Employ/Sell/Settlement	995
Extend/Impose Automatic Stay	831
Filing of POC by Debtor/Trustee	743
Allow/Reconsider Claims	542
Increase Payments or Dismiss	523
Garnishment Orders	450
Motion to Redact	415
Affidavit of Default	368
Case Closed Without Discharge	250



Case Filings by Chapter for 12-Month Period Ending December 31



Total Case Filings for 12-Month Period Ending December 31



Statistical data is available to the public on the Judiciary's website at:

<http://www.uscourts.gov/statistics-reports/caseload-statistics-data-tables>

COURT WILL BE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF THE FOLLOWING 2018 FEDERAL HOLIDAYS

February 19 - - - President's Day - - - Monday
May 28 - - - Memorial Day - - - Monday
July 4 - - Independence Day - - Wednesday
September 3 - - - - Labor Day - - - - Monday
October 8 - - - Columbus Day - - - Monday
November 12 - - - Veteran's Day - - - Monday
November 22 - - - Thanksgiving - - - Thursday
December 25 - - - - Christmas - - - - Tuesday

CM/ECF and PACER will be available during these times
for online filing and access to case information

Got article ideas for *The Southern Scoop*? Please provide them to:

lainie_saul@gas.uscourts.gov