



Bureau of Administrative Hearings Newsletter

Governor Bruce Rauner

December 2016

Michael Hoffman, Acting Director
Sarah Kerley, Deputy Director

Deputy Director's Note

Pursuant to [Executive Order No. 06 \(2016\)](#), the Pilot Bureau continues to assess the feasibility and efficiency of centralizing some or all of the functions of the State's many administrative law judges who conduct nearly 100,000 administrative hearings for more than 25 agencies. Centralizing administrative hearings is not a new concept, nationally or in Illinois. The General Assembly has proposed centralization no less than 11

technological advances, and customer service they are able to provide in their states. Most impressive was the degree to which the administrative law judges are viewed both internally and externally as truly independent adjudicators respected by litigants, practitioners, and the community at large. One director reflected on the challenge of annually losing an administrative law judge to

On November 1, 2016, I took over as Deputy Director for the Bureau. With more than 12 years of State service including serving as an ALJ, appearing before State administrative agencies, and defending administrative review actions, I look forward to bringing this multi-faceted experience to the Pilot.

times. Approximately 30 states in the U.S., as well as other governments like the City of Chicago and Cook County, have centralized their administrative hearings. In the first days of taking up the mantle of this project, I was able to meet with the directors of numerous states' centralized hearing units. I was amazed to hear about the administrative efficiencies,

an appointment to the constitutional judiciary! I am looking forward to continuing the good work of the Pilot to fully explore ways to improve the professional lives of our ALJs, increase efficiencies, and bolster service to the public that depends on us for timely and just resolution of cases.

~Sarah Kerley

Committees Continue their Work

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Since April, the Bureau has operated three committees on which ALJs and staff from more than 10 agencies participate.

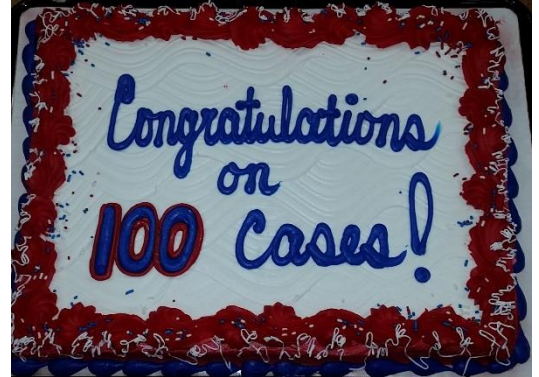
- **Rules Subcommittee** - catalogued and analyzed each administrative rule governing hearings in the State. The Bureau is in the process of drafting model rules to simplify procedures in the State while ensuring quality hearings and protecting due process.
- **IT Subcommittee** - exploring technological solutions to some of the problems facing agencies with administrative hearings, most notably a modern, integrated electronic case management system
- **Professional Development Subcommittee** - creating a Bench Book incorporating best practices from across the State; offering exciting and meaningful training opportunities; and gathering best practices

100+ IDOL Cases heard by Revenue and IDPH ALJs

On October 3, 2016, ALJs from the Departments of Revenue and Public Health began hearing cases pending before the Department of Labor. IDOL gets approximately 8,000 hearing requests per year and hold nearly 2,000 hearings annually. However, despite the efforts of IDOL's hardworking ALJs and support staff, litigants can wait upwards of two years for a hearing.

As part of the Pilot Project, ALJs at the Departments of Revenue and Public Health received training both on IDOL's wage payment cases, but also on the technological solutions coordinated by DoIT. DoIT established share sites that allowed the agencies to securely share files, allowed IDOL to make assignments, and facilitated the Revenue and IDPH ALJs to hold hearings via web-based telephone system that digitally record the proceedings. Within weeks, the ALJs were holding hearings on cases that otherwise would not have been heard for many months.

On November 4, 2016, staff from the three participating agencies and DoIT, as well as the Pilot Bureau subcommittee chairs and representatives from the Governor's office gathered to celebrate the accomplishment of reaching the 100 case milestone. Governor Rauner personally congratulated all on their successes. The agencies continue to coordinate the assignment and handling of IDOL cases. Because of their concerted efforts, litigants are having their "day in court" months earlier than they would have otherwise. And, IDOL's backlog is shrinking, with a total of more than 200 more cases heard by December 15, 2016! All involved are to be commended for their professionalism and commitment to public service!



IDFPR ALJs to hear cases for the Illinois State Police

The Bureau has also coordinated a solution for the needs of the Illinois State Police. When the law changed in 2015 requiring consolidation of 9-1-1 centers, it also placed the Statewide 9-1-1 Coordinator within the jurisdiction of the Illinois State Police. Entities seeking a waiver of the law consolidation obligation are entitled to a hearing. Because ISP does not employ administrative law judges, it looks to the Pilot Bureau for a solution. The Bureau coordinated assignment and training of IDFPR ALJs to hold these hearings. The IDFPR ALJs have stepped up to ensure that the State is able to meet its statutory function. Well done!

Now is a great time to get involved!

If you would like to get more involved in the work of the Pilot Project would like to work on one of the Bureau's Committees, feel free to reach out directly to Dep. Dir. Kerley or any of the three subcommittee co-chairs: IDFPR General Counsel Sadzi Oliva, Rules Subcommittee; DHS General Counsel CoreyAnne Gulkewicz, IT Subcommittee; IDFPR Associate General Counsel Katy Straub, Professional Development Subcommittee.

An easy way for ALJs to help is to RESPOND TO THE SURVEY they received about their professional development. Help us improve initial orientation and coordinate future meaningful training opportunities!

What to Watch for...

- **Website Goes Live**
 - In coming weeks, the Bureau's website is scheduled to go live, providing the State a look at the Pilot Project.
- **December Report to the Governor**
 - The Executive Order requires a progress report before the end of the year.
 - The report will be publicly disclosed and distributed.
- **Finalized Model Rules**
 - The Bureau expects to complete Model Rules to streamline and standardize process of administrative hearings.
- **"Community" Roundtables**
 - I will be meeting with ALJs in the State to answer questions and hear about your needs and suggestions.

ALJ Stories:

each month learn about one of the State's ALJs



Sarah Kerley

I've been working in and around State government since I was in high school, and my entire legal career has been in State government. I spent six years in the Attorney General's Office (General Law –Springfield). There, I appeared before State agencies, defended the decisions of our agencies in State court, and had a general civil defense practice. From there, I spent three years at the OEIG before becoming Deputy General Counsel and ALJ at the Illinois Labor Relations Board. In each of these capacities, I've seen the good and hard work of State employees, especially its lawyers. I'm excited about the prospect of meeting many of you and getting valuable insight into ways to improve your work life.

When I'm not working, I'm chasing around two benevolent dictators I made (Samantha, 7 ½ and Jack, 4 ½), cheering on the St. Louis Cardinals (no apology here!), catching a concert, or spending time with friends and family.

Let me know what you'd like the Pilot Bureau to explore or nominate a co-worker for next month's ALJ Stories!

Sarah Kerley

Deputy Director

Bureau of Administrative Hearings

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