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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **NCRA responds to proposed amendments in North Dakota courts Changes could make courts susceptible to foreign interference and layoffs**

**RESTON, Va., Dec. 5, 2024** —The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), the country’s leading organization representing stenographic court reporters, captioners, and legal videographers, recently responded to a [memo dated November 20, 2024](#), from the North Dakota State Court Administrator addressed to the Clerk of the state's Supreme Court that unveils a wide range of proposals that would result in the elimination of court reporters in the state's judiciary.

“As officers of the court, NCRA certified reporters are bound by professional ethics to maintain neutrality and confidentiality. We like to think of it as judicial integrity,” said NCRA President Keith R. Lemons, FAPR, RPR, CRR, a retired freelance court reporter, official court reporter, and firm owner from Spring Hill, Tenn. “They are trained to handle sensitive information with discretion, something not guaranteed by digital alternatives which can be based overseas.”

NCRA sought to address misinformation published in the proposed amendments to Policy 206 by the North Dakota State Court Administrator through a grassroots campaign that will mobilize more than 12,000 members nationwide. The effort aims to educate the public and advocate for the state’s official court reporters.

“These amendments threaten not only the livelihoods of our hardworking North Dakotans but also the integrity of our judicial system,” said NCRA Executive Director Dave Wenhold, CAE, PLC.

“Court reporting is not only a profession of high skill but also one deeply rooted in community responsibility and constitutional duty to accurately take down the written record. Candidly, I find it shocking that the state of North Dakota is willing to force its citizens to settle for less than the best record possible. If the state wants to skimp on quality and professionalism, I would strongly suggest they find another area that doesn’t threaten the life and liberties of the citizens of the state,” he added.

Court reporters play a crucial role in maintaining the transparency and accuracy of judicial proceedings. Outsourcing this vital function could compromise the security and confidentiality of sensitive information, thus undermining the constitutional rights of individuals to a fair and public trial.



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“If Policy 206 is amended, the State Court Administrator will put the official record of every trial in North Dakota up for sale on the international auction block.” noted NCRA State Government Relations Manager Colin Brehm. “It does not matter if it’s a parking ticket or a parole hearing—court records could be generated with little to no regard and relied on for things like sentencing.”

*The public is invited to learn more about judicial integrity and how to advocate for their community’s stenographic court reporter by visiting the [NCRA Advocacy Action Center](#) and [resource library](#).*

Court reporters and captioners rely on the latest in technology to use stenographic machines to capture the spoken word and translate it into written text in real time. These professionals work both in and out of the courtroom recording legal cases and depositions, providing live captioning of events, and assisting members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities with gaining access to information, entertainment, educational opportunities, and more.

If you’re looking for a career that is on the cutting edge of technology, offers the opportunity for work at home or abroad, like to write, enjoy helping others, and are fast with your fingers, then the fields of court reporting and captioning are careers you can explore at [NCRA/discoversteno.org](http://NCRA/discoversteno.org).

[The NCRA A to Z® Intro to Steno Machine Shorthand](#) program, a free online six-week introductory course, lets participants see if a career in court reporting or captioning would be a good choice for them. The program is an introduction to stenographic theory and provides participants with the opportunity to learn the basics of writing on a steno machine. There is no charge to take the course, but participants are required to have access to a steno machine or an iPad they can use to download the [iStenoPad app](#).

To arrange an interview with a working court reporter, captioner, legal videographer, or a current court reporting student, or to learn more about the lucrative and flexible court reporting or captioning professions and the many job opportunities currently available, contact [pr@ncra.org](mailto:pr@ncra.org).

### [About NCRA](#)

*The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) has been internationally recognized for promoting excellence among those who capture and convert the spoken word to text for more than 125 years. NCRA is committed to supporting its more than 12,000 members in achieving the highest level of professional expertise with educational opportunities and industry-recognized court reporting, educator, and videographer certification programs. NCRA impacts legislative issues and the global marketplace through its actively involved membership.*

*Forbes has named court reporting as one of the best career options that do not require a traditional four-year degree. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the court reporting*



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*field is expected to be one of the fastest areas of projected employment growth across all occupations. According to [247/WallSt.com](http://247/WallSt.com), the court reporting profession ranks sixth out of 25 careers with the lowest unemployment rate, just 0.7 percent. Career information about the court reporting profession—one of the leading career options that do not require a traditional four-year degree — can be found at [NCRA DiscoverSteno.org](http://NCRA.DiscoverSteno.org).*