



Federal Bar Association

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Federal Bar Association to Warn Congress About The Impact of Budget Cuts on the Federal Courts

On Tuesday, July 23, W. West Allen, Chair of the Government Relations Committee of the Federal Bar Association, will warn in Congressional testimony that automatic budget cuts threaten to cause a Constitutional crisis in the ability of the federal courts to promptly resolve disputes. Mr. Allen will testify on Tuesday before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Bankruptcy and the Courts during a hearing, entitled: "Sequestering Justice: How the Budget Crisis Is Undermining Our Courts."

Mr. Allen, in his prepared hearing testimony, will warn: "Our Founding Fathers wisely recognized the compelling need for a strong Federal Judiciary, established as a separate, co-equal branch of government, sufficiently independent to assure the rule of law. But independence and promptness of decision-making are imperiled when the Federal Judiciary lacks the resources to properly discharge its Constitutional responsibilities."

The automatic budget cuts of sequestration have caused a \$300 million shortfall in federal court funding in the current fiscal year. The Federal Judiciary has requested a \$73 million emergency supplemental appropriation to temper the impact of the shortfall and permit federal courts to operate under normal conditions. The Federal Bar Association supports the federal courts' emergency supplemental request.

Mr. Allen also is also expected to caution: "We are aware that the 2011 law establishing sequestration represents a ten-year budget-cutting process. At this point, without a grand bargain reached by the President and the Congress, we see the fault lines of a financial crisis emerging in the federal courts. The crisis has multiple implications. It has freedom-related implications for our rights under the Constitution. It has cost implications for us as taxpayers. And it has profound implications for our nation and its respect for the American Judiciary and the rule of law."