



Supreme Court of Appeals
Charleston, West Virginia

Elizabeth D. Walker
Chief Justice

September 25, 2019

Chairman Henry C. Johnson, Jr.
Ranking Member Martha Roby
United States House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet
Sent Via Electronic Mail

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Roby:

As your Subcommittee considers measures that would expand broadcast access to federal courts, I write as the Chief Justice of a state supreme court that offers live video streaming of its proceedings to express my support for these measures.

The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia is the sole appellate court in our State. We hear appeals from all state courts and administrative agencies as a matter of right. I am proud that our Court was one of the first appellate courts in the country to live stream oral arguments. Since 2001, members of the public have been able to watch video of our oral arguments live. For at least 15 years prior to that (since the 1980s), folks could listen to live audio of the arguments simply by calling a telephone number. I am not aware of any negative consequences of this access during these past 30 years.

There are many benefits to our live streaming, which is currently available on the West Virginia Judiciary YouTube Channel. The transparency made possible by modern technology makes our courts accessible to citizens no matter where they are. Live streaming also enables the public to see our proceedings in real time and demonstrates our commitment to accountability to the rule of law. And, our broadcasts are used regularly in classrooms across West Virginia to educate students about how our state courts work.

Ultimately, transparency increases public confidence in the integrity of our courts. I look forward to your Subcommittee's continued work in this critical area and hope that it brings together bipartisan support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth D. Walker".