

THE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY'S ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR

2025
2026



45th Annual Discipline Report

Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Board of Professional Responsibility

Board of Professional Responsibility Organization and Composition

The Tennessee Supreme Court regulates and supervises the practice of law in Tennessee pursuant to Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 9. The Court appoints twelve members to the Board of Professional Responsibility (the Board) to effectuate Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 9 and the Court's disciplinary enforcement.

The Board consists of nine (9) attorneys and three (3) public (non-attorney) members who serve three-year terms and geographically represent the entire state. In 2025-2026, Board members volunteered 1198.6 hours and received no compensation for their service. Members of the Board include:

R. Culver Schmid (Chair)
Ginger Wilson Buchanan (Vice-Chair)
Richard Briggs (Lay Member)
Jimmy Dunn
Jef Feibelman
Charles K. Grant
Christopher Jay Ingrum
Dr. Carol Johnson-Dean (Lay Member)
Jim Maddux (Lay Member)
Barbara Medley
Kirk Moore
Jonathan Steen

The Court appoints a Chief Disciplinary Counsel who reports to the Board. The Board also employs attorneys as Disciplinary Counsel and support staff to assist with attorney registration; consumer assistance; investigation and litigation. A staff directory is attached as Exhibit A.

District Committee Members

The Tennessee Supreme Court appoints attorneys to serve as district committee members from each disciplinary district in the state. In 2025-2026, 206 attorneys assisted the Court and the Board as district committee members reviewing Disciplinary Counsel's recommendations on investigative files and sitting on hearing panels conducting formal disciplinary charges. Of the 206 members, 171 reported volunteering 2,277.5 hours in 2025-2026 for which they received no compensation for their services. A roster of current district committee members is attached as Exhibit B.

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Tennessee Attorney Information

The Board of Professional Responsibility provides an easy-to-use online registration system that allows lawyers to fulfill their annual registration requirements. Public registration information is displayed on the Board's website to allow the judiciary, lawyers and the public to access licensing, registration and contact information about lawyers.

Active Attorneys by Disciplinary District: 25,457*



Disciplinary District 1: 1,082 Active TN attorneys

Disciplinary District 2: 2,779 Active TN attorneys

Disciplinary District 3: 1,654 Active TN attorneys

Disciplinary District 4: 1,469 Active TN attorneys

Disciplinary District 5: 6,630 Active TN attorneys

Disciplinary District 6: 2,800 Active TN attorneys

Disciplinary District 7: 504 Active TN attorneys

Disciplinary District 8: 282 Active TN attorneys

Disciplinary District 9: 3,402 Active TN attorneys

*4,744 Out of State Active TN attorneys

Active Attorney Statistics:

■ Years Licensed:	<5 yrs:	18%	• Age:	21-29 yrs:	5%
	6-15 yrs:	27%		30-39 yrs:	20%
	16-25 yrs:	24%		40-49 yrs:	25%
	26-35 yrs:	15%		50-59 yrs:	22%
	36-45 yrs:	10%		60-69 yrs:	16%
	46+ yrs:	6%		70+ yrs:	12%
■ Gender:	Male:	60%	• In-state Attorneys:	80%	
	Female:	39%		• Out-of-state Attorneys:	18%
	Unreported:	1%		• Undisclosed:	2%

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Inactive Attorneys

Pursuant to Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 10.3, inactive attorneys include attorneys serving as justice, judge or magistrate of a court of the United States of America or who serve in any federal office in which the attorney is prohibited by federal law from engaging in the practice of law; retired attorneys; attorneys on temporary duty with the armed forces; faculty members of Tennessee law schools who do not practice law; and attorneys not engaged in the practice of law in Tennessee. In 2025-2026, 6,672 attorneys on inactive status were registered with the Board of Professional Responsibility.

- **Non-disciplinary/Administrative Suspensions:**

Pursuant to Supreme Court Rules, the Supreme Court suspends attorneys who fail to pay their annual fee (Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 9 § 10.6); fail to complete annual continuing legal education requirements (Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 21 § 7); fail to comply with Interest on Lawyers Trust Account requirements (Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 43 § 15); fail to pay the Tennessee professional privilege tax (Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 9 § 26); or default on student loans (Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 9 § 37). No attorney suspended pursuant to these Rules may resume practice until reinstated by Order of the Supreme Court. Attorneys were administratively suspended during fiscal year 2025-2026 as follows:

Non-payment of Annual Fee:	172
Continuing Legal Education non-compliance:	73
Interest on Lawyer's Trust Accounts non-compliance:	128
Professional Privilege Tax non-compliance:	72
Default on a Student Loan:	0
Total:	<u>445</u>

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Assistance, Investigation and Prosecution

▪ Trust Account Overdraft Notifications

Pursuant to Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 35.1(b), financial institutions report to the Board whenever any properly payable instrument is presented against an attorney trust account containing insufficient funds. After receiving notification of an overdraft, Board Staff request financial information and explanation from the attorney.

Notifications Pending from Previous Fiscal Year:	13
Notifications Received:	67
Referred to Investigations:	10
Resolved Without Investigation:	67
Pending at End of Fiscal Year:	3

• Consumer Assistance Program (CAP)

Requests for assistance are referred to the Board's Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) for assistance or opened and assigned to Disciplinary Counsel for investigation if needed. CAP answers questions, provides information, informally mediates disputes, and refers matters to Disciplinary Counsel for investigation.

A. Requests for Assistance Received/Pending from Previous Fiscal Year

Pending Requests from Previous Fiscal Year:	2
Complaints transferred to CAP	726
Requests Received	1,917

B. Requests for Assistance Dispositions

Resolved in CAP:	1,913
Transferred to Investigations:	108
Pending at end of Fiscal Year:	2

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- **Complaints and Investigation**

Disciplinary Counsel investigate complaints against attorneys alleging unethical conduct. After investigation, Disciplinary Counsel recommend dismissal of the complaint if there is insufficient proof of a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct. If the investigated complaint reflects a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct, Disciplinary Counsel recommend diversion, private informal admonition, private reprimand, public censure, or the filing of formal disciplinary charges. A district committee member reviews and approves or disapproves Disciplinary Counsel's recommendation for dismissal, diversion, and private informal admonition. The Board of Professional Responsibility reviews and approves or disapproves Disciplinary Counsel's recommendation for private reprimand, public censure, and the filing of formal disciplinary charges.

A. Complaints Received/Pending from Previous Fiscal Year

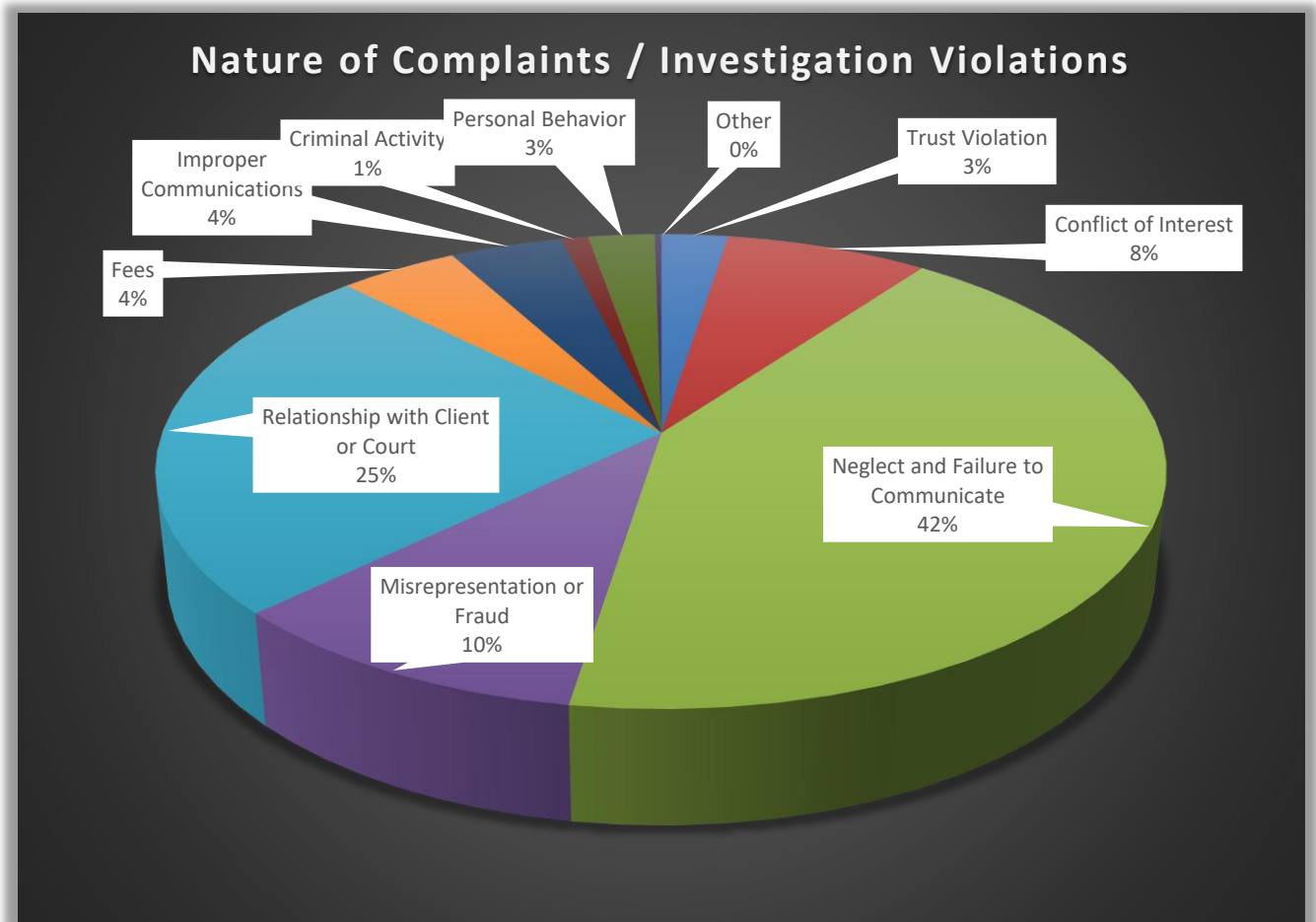
Pending Complaints from Previous Fiscal Year:	38
Complaints Received	2,287

B. Complaints Dispositions

Administratively Dismissed:	736
Opened for Investigation:	822
Transferred to CAP:	726
Pending at end of Fiscal Year:	41

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C. Nature of Complaints



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D. Investigative Caseload:

Pending Investigations from Previous Fiscal Year:	1,481
Investigations Opened:	922

E. Investigative Dispositions:

Dismissed after Investigation	600
Diversion	42
Private Informal Admonition	25
Private Reprimand	30
Public Censure	56
Transferred to Litigation	108
Other ¹ :	108
Pending at End of Fiscal Year:	1,434
Investigations Placed on Retirement:	19

¹ Abated by death; complaint withdrawn; duplicate file, opened in error, or Respondent permanently disbarred.

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- **Formal Disciplinary Proceedings:**

After the Board of Professional Responsibility authorizes Disciplinary Counsel to file formal disciplinary charges (i.e., a petition for discipline) against an attorney, the matter is assigned to three district committee members who constitute a hearing panel. The Hearing Panel sets the disciplinary proceeding for a hearing which is open to the public unless a protective order has been entered. The Tennessee Rules of Evidence and Rules of Civil Procedure apply unless Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 9 provides otherwise.

The Board of Professional Responsibility must prove an attorney's ethical misconduct by a preponderance of the evidence. Hearing Panels may recommend dismissal, public censure, suspension or disbarment.

A. Formal Disciplinary Caseload

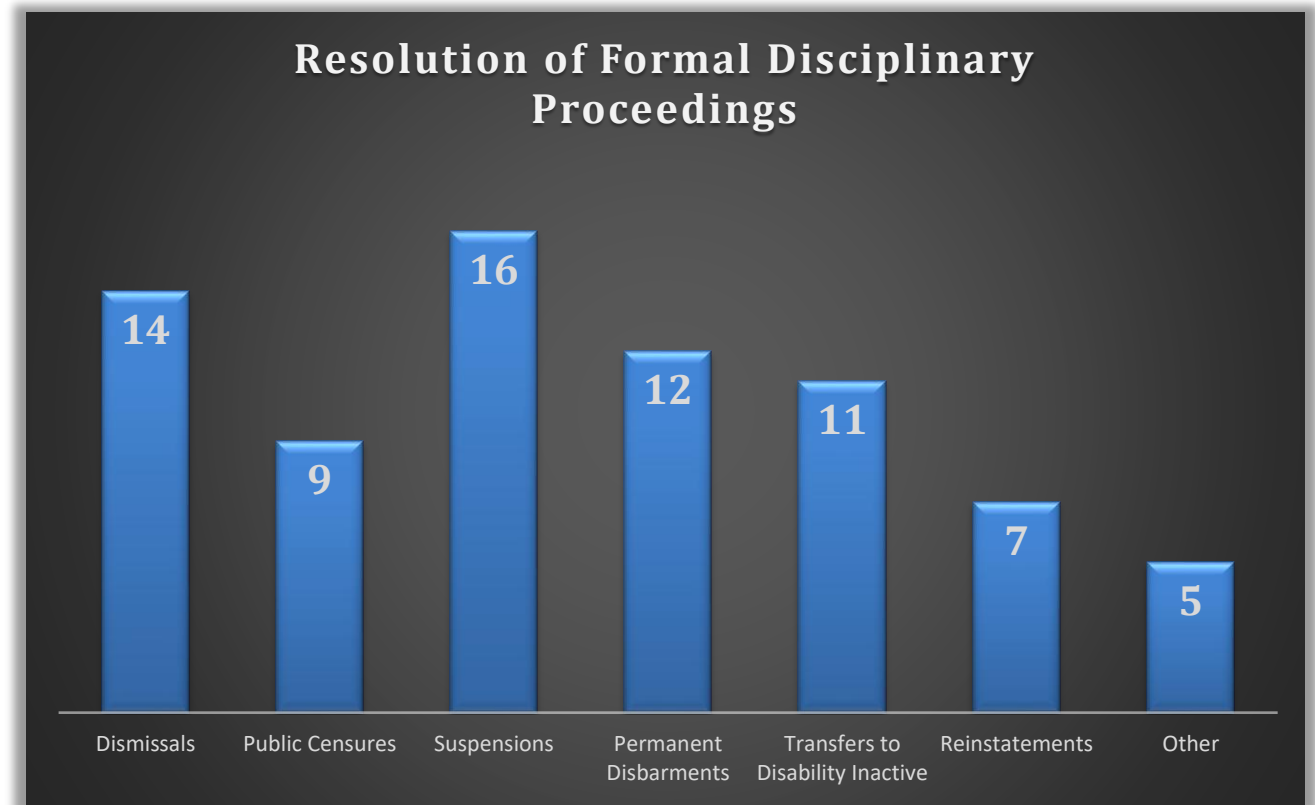
Pending Cases from Previous Fiscal Year:	162
Cases Opened:	116
Public Hearings Conducted:	24
Temporary Suspensions Filed:	18

B. Formal Disciplinary Proceedings Disposition:

Dismissed:	14
Public Censures:	9
Suspensions:	16
Permanent Disbarments:	12
Transfer to Disability Inactive:	11
Reinstatements:	9
Non-Serious Crimes:	7
Serious Crimes	1
Probation Revoked:	1
Reciprocal Discipline	1
Other ² :	5

² Abated by death; voluntary non-suited; withdrawn.

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Pending at End of Fiscal Year:

177

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- **Education and Information:**

The Board issues Formal Ethics Opinions and staff respond to informal ethics questions by phone and internet. Disciplinary Counsel present continuing legal education seminars and workshops, publish *Board Notes*, a bi-annual newsletter, and update the Board's website with rule changes, disciplinary decisions and news for attorneys, judges and the public.

A. Ethics Opinions:

- i. **Informal Opinions**

Ethics Counsel and Disciplinary Counsel responded to a total of 2,093 phone and internet inquiries from attorneys seeking ethical guidance.³

B. Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Presentations:

Between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, Disciplinary Counsel presented thirty-six (36) CLE seminars, attended by approximately 1,800 attorneys.

C. Board Notes:

In 2025 – 2026, the Board emailed both Fall and Spring issues of *Board Notes*, the Board's semi-annual newsletter to all attorneys and judges and published it on the Board's website.

D. Workshops:

- a. The Board of Professional Responsibility hosted its annual Ethics Workshop on November 21, 2025, with 812 attorneys attending both virtually and in person. This year's Ethics Workshop is scheduled for November 13, 2026.

³ Tennessee attorneys may submit ethics inquiries to the Board by calling 615-361-7500, ext. 212, or via the Board's website at www.tbpr.org.

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- b. The Board of Professional Responsibility has offered two Trust Account Workshops on December 3, 2025, and June 3, 2026, with a total of 468 attorneys attending both virtually and in person. The next trust account workshop will be held Wednesday, December 2, 2026.

E. Tennessee's Proactive Management-Based Regulation (Voluntary Self-Assessment):

Tennessee's Proactive Management-Based Regulation (PMBR) program is an interactive law office management self-assessment course offered at no cost to attorneys. The ten self-assessments are designed to mitigate risk, elevate competence, and enhance the quality of legal services delivered to clients. The goal of the program is to prevent problems within a law firm before they arise, enabling attorneys to spend more time on cases. Attorneys receive 3 Dual CLE Credits after completion of the course. The ten self-assessments are as follows:

1. Developing Competent Practices
2. Communicating in an Effective, Timely, Professional Manner
3. Ensuring That Confidentiality Requirements Are Met
4. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest
5. Retaining and Managing Secure Files
6. Managing the Law Firm/Legal Entity and Staff
7. Charging Appropriate Fees and Making Appropriate Disbursements
8. Ensuring the Use of Reliable Trust Account Practices
9. Access To Justice and Client Development
10. Promoting Wellness

Since the implementation of the course in August 2019, 1,751 Tennessee attorneys have completed the ten self-assessments, with 136 completing the course in 2025 – 2026.

Access the Tennessee PMBR program by following this link: <http://tbpr.prolearn.io>.

F. Succession Planning

The Board of Professional Responsibility has developed and made available on the Board's website a one-hour succession planning continuing legal education (CLE) presentation. This CLE is available to all attorneys at no cost and addresses how an attorney protects their own interests as well as interests of their clients and the profession by proactively planning for the transition, closing, or selling of a law practice.

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Since the implementation of the course in approximately August, 2025, 55 attorneys have completed the succession planning CLE. Access the Succession Planning CLE by visiting tbpr.prolearn.io.

Exhibit A

Board of Professional Responsibility Department Directory

Accounts Payable	(615) 361-6395
Accounts Receivable	(615) 915-5124
Consumer Assistance Program (CAP)	(615) 695-0927
Executive Secretary	(615) 361-7501
Investigations	(615) 361-7502
Litigation	(615) 695-0926
Registration	(615) 366-0514

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District Committee Member Roster

Exhibit B

District	First Name	Last Name	City
District 1			
	Dan E.	Armstrong	Greeneville
	Emily	Burnett	Greeneville
	Jeffrey A.	Cobble	Greeneville
	Colby A.	Collins	Morristown
	Erwin (Lynn)	Dougherty	Bristol
	Andrew E.	Farmer	Sevierville
	Jeffery S.	Greene	Newport
	Jaclyn D.	Hardin	Sevierville
	William B.	Marsh	Maryville
	Joseph O.	McAfee	Greeneville
	Bryce	McKenzie	Sevierville
	Nikki C.	Pierce	Greeneville
	William O.	Shults	Newport
	Barry	Staubus	Blountville
	Rolfe	Straussfogel	Sevierville
	Denise S.	Terry	Morristown
	Tonya	Thornton	Newport
District 2			
	Robyn J.	Askew	Knoxville
	David	Ayliffe	Knoxville
	Edward U.	Babb	Knoxville
	Brett	Bell	Knoxville
	Bradley	Burnette	Clinton
	Nicholas W.	Diegel	Knoxville
	Steve	Erdely	Knoxville
	Matthew A.	Grossman	Knoxville
	Andrew M.	Hale	Knoxville
	Rachel	Hurt	Knoxville
	Thomas	Jarvis	Knoxville
	Michael S	Kelley	Knoxville
	Michael J.	King	Knoxville
	Gregory C.	Logue	Knoxville
	Elijah	Lovingfoss	Knoxville
	Mary Elizabeth	Maddox	Knoxville
	Chris	McCarty	Knoxville
	Stephen F.	McStravick	Knoxville
	Robert	Meyer	Knoxville
	Ben	Mullins	Knoxville

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District 2	First Name	Last Name	City
	James F.	Parker	Knoxville
	P. Edward	Pratt	Knoxville
	Wayne A.	Ritchie, II	Knoxville
	E. Shayne	Sexton	Jacksboro
	W. Edward	Shipe	Knoxville
	Marshall W.	Stair	Knoxville
	Russell E.	Stair	Knoxville
	Garrett P.	Swartwood	Knoxville
	Lynn	Tarpy	Knoxville
	Shannon	van Tol	Knoxville
	Alexander O.	Waters	Knoxville
	Carlos A.	Yunsan	Knoxville
District 3			
	Ariel	Anthony	Chattanooga
	Sam D.	Elliott	Chattanooga
	Rachel	Fisher-Queen	Cleveland
	Melissa	Kirby	Chattanooga
	Doris	Matthews	Madisonville
	Laurie Harrod	McNulty	Cleveland
	Timothy L.	Mickel	Chattanooga
	Jennifer A.	Mitchell	Dunlap
	M. Andrew	Pippenger	Nashville
	Lance W.	Pope	Chattanooga
	Leah B.	Sauceman	Athens
	H. Chris	Trew	Athens
	Carmen (Ms.)	Ware	Chattanooga
	Ronald D.	Wells	Chattanooga
	Elizabeth L	Williams	Chattanooga
District 4			
	W. Andrew	Bobo	Shelbyville
	Philip Duane	Burnett	Crossville
	Richard	Cawley	Shelbyville
	Edward Evan	Cope	Murfreesboro
	Blake J.	Fitzpatrick	Cookeville
	Michael R.	Gaiamo	Cookeville
	Theodore W.	Goodman	Murfreesboro
	Terry Dee	Gregory	Tulahoma
	Mary Beth	Hagan	Murfreesboro
	Moody Wesley	Hall, IV	Lewisburg

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District 4	First Name	Last Name	City
	Trisha L.	Henegar	Shelbyville
	Johnny D.	Hill	Fayetteville
	Joey	Johnson	Winchester
	David J.	McKenzie	Lewisburg
	Rachel M.	Moses	Cookeville
	Heather	Parker	Murfreesboro
	Daniel	Rader, IV	Cookeville
	Loren	Sanderson	Murfreesboro
	Amber	Sandoval	Fayetteville
	Ginger Bobo	Shofner	Shelbyville
	Donna S.	Simpson	Cookeville
	Cecilia W.	Spivy	Lewisburg
	Megan K.	Trott	Shelbyville
	Willie F.	Wallace, III	Huntsville AL
District 5			
	Kevin	Alonso	Nashville
	Elaina	Al-Nimri	Nashville
	Taylor J.	Askew	Nashville
	Kevin E.	Baltz	Nashville
	Adam	Barber	Nashville
	Robert E.	Boston	Nashville
	Jeff H.	Gibson	Nashville
	Jesse	Harbison	Nashville
	William Jay	Harbison	Nashville
	Keeda	Haynes	Nashville
	William J.	Haynes	Nashville
	Tricia	Herzfeld	Nashville
	Howard B.	Jackson	Knoxville
	John D.	Kitch	Nashville
	April	Knox	Gallatin
	Raymond	Leathers	Nashville
	Cynthia	Lee	Nashville
	Shundra Crumpton	Manning	Nashville
	Russell B.	Morgan	Nashville
	Anthony (Tony)	Orlandi	Nashville
	Tillman	Payne, III	Nashville
	Julie Bhattacharya	Peak	Brentwood
	Brant	Phillips	Nashville
	Daniel H.	Puryear	Nashville

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District 5	First Name	Last Name	City
	Benjamin	Raybin	Nashville
	Kristina A.	Reliford	Nashville
	Rita	Roberts-Turner	Nashville
	W. Stuart	Scott	Nashville
	Siew-Ling (Sue)	Shea	Nashville
	M. Clark	Spoden	Nashville
	Nelson	Suarez	Nashville
	Darius	Walker	Nashville
	Timothy	Wills	Franklin
	Luther	Wright, Jr.	Nashville
District 6			
	Evan P.	Baddour	Pulaski
	Leonard	Belmares	Dickson
	Jessica N.	Borne	Franklin
	Melanie Totty	Cagle	Centerville
	David	Christensen	Columbia
	C. Diane	Crosier	Franklin
	Marci McClellan	Curry	Franklin
	Ashonti	Davis	Franklin
	Thomas B.	Dean	Gallatin
	Mary Katharine	Evins	Brentwood
	Michael J.	Ford	Franklin
	Cameron R.	Hoffmeyer	Lawrenceburg
	Courtney	King	College Grove
	Trudy	Milliken	Gallatin
	David R.	O'Neil	Brentwood
	Charles Ray	Parks, Jr.	Dover
	John R.	Phillips	Gallatin
	John	Roach	Springfield
	Raymond	Runyon	Clarksville
	Michael L.	Russell	Brentwood
	Margaret F.	Sagi	Ashland City
	Jacob	Thorington	Franklin
	Rodger D.	Waynick	Dickson
	Beverly	White	Saint Joseph
District 7			
	Sara E.	Barnett	Jackson
	Lena	Beal	Lexington

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District 7	First Name	Last Name	City
	Elaina	Bordelon	Jackson
	Shaun	Brown	Jackson
	Lisa	Houston	Jackson
	Lisa	Miller	Selmer
	(William) Josh	Morrow	Jackson
	Hillary	Parham	Jackson
	Ashley	Parker	Selmer
	Ryan K.	Porter	Jackson
	Kate	Rhodes	Paris
	John Colin Graham	Rosser	Somerville
	Craig	Sanders	Jackson
	Michelle Greenway	Sellers	Jackson
	Gordon ("Chip")	Sherrod	Henderson
	Terica	Smith	Jackson
	Neil	Thompson	Huntingdon
	George Robert	Whitfield	Paris
	Deven Nicole	Wilson	Decaturville
District 8			
	Bruce Stephens	Conley	Union City
	Dean	Dedmon	Dyersburg
	Rachele D.	Gibson	Trenton
	Frank	Holbrook	Union City
	Stephen L.	Hughes	Milan
	Will Taylor	Hughes	Alamo
	Jeff	Lay	Dyersburg
	Julie W.	Palmer	Dyersburg
	David A.	Stowers	Covington
	Matthew	Willis	Dyersburg
District 9			
	Jeremy G.	Alpert	Memphis
	Bryce W.	Ashby	Memphis
	Taurus M.	Bailey	Memphis
	Lucie K.	Brackin	Memphis
	William R.	Bradley, Jr.	Memphis
	Christopher S.	Campbell	Memphis
	S. Keenan	Carter	Memphis
	Kevin E.	Childress	Memphis
	Brian	Coleman	Memphis
	David M.	Cook	Memphis

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District 9	First Name	Last Name	City
	Angie	Davis	Memphis
	Amber D.	Floyd	Memphis
	Malcolm B.	Futhey, III	Memphis
	Peter	Gee	Memphis
	Nicole	Grida	Memphis
	Greg	Grisham	Memphis
	Jonathan C.	Hancock	Memphis
	Rebecca	Hinds	Memphis
	Eric	Hudson	Memphis
	Tressa V.	Johnson	Memphis
	John R.	McCann	Memphis
	Debra	Owen	Cordova
	Will	Perry	Memphis
	Brent	Siler	Memphis
	Jennifer	Sink	Memphis
	Robert L.J.	Spence, Jr.	Memphis
	Lauran Glassman	Stimac	Memphis
	LaQuita	Stokes	Memphis
	Frank ("Trey")	Thacher	Memphis
	Mary-Morgan	Whitfield	Memphis
	Emmett L.	Whitwell	Memphis