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May 9, 2017

Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 2266, the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

On behalf of the ABA and its over 400,000 members, I am writing to commend you for taking swift action on H.R. 2266, ABA-supported legislation that would convert 14 existing temporary bankruptcy judgeships to permanent status and authorize four additional permanent judgeships in districts where there are too few judges to handle the persistently high number of bankruptcy filings. The bill is based on a rigorous bankruptcy judgeship needs assessment recently conducted by the Judicial Conference of the United States.

As you well know, continued expedited action on the bill is needed to avoid temporary bankruptcy judgeships from lapsing on May 29. The ABA, like your committee, is concerned that resources already are so strained in the nine bankruptcy courts identified in the bill that the courts will not be able to function effectively if they lose even one of their temporary judgeships. Our concern prompted a contingent of ABA volunteers to spend two days in March explaining the situation to numerous congressional offices and urging Members to take action.

Congress has not created a permanent bankruptcy judgeship since 1992. It has sought to accommodate growth by creating or extending existing temporary judgeships time and again. Last week, Congress once again adopted this piece-meal approach by extending seven of the 14 temporary judgeships addressed in this bill for one year. Instead of relying on appropriators to temporarily avert the next crisis, your bill will restore stability and functionality to the system by addressing the demonstrated need for permanent bankruptcy judgeships in a comprehensive and lasting manner.

We stand ready to assist in whatever way we can to ensure that this legislation is promptly enacted into law. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Denise Cardman at denise.cardman@americanbar.org.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Susman

cc: Members of the House Judiciary Committee