



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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Chief Judge Announces Amended Rules Addressing Audio-Visual Coverage of Court Proceedings

NEW YORK — Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman today announced approval by the Administrative Board of the Courts of rule changes that will make the process for requesting audio-visual coverage of court proceedings easier to navigate by judges, members of the media and the public. These proposed rule amendments — to Part 29 of the Rules of the Chief Judge (22 NYCRR Part 29) and Part 131 of the Rules of the Chief Administrative Judge (22 NYCRR Part 131) — were issued for public comment earlier this year. In light of the Board’s approval, Part 131 will become effective on February 15, 2016; Part 29 will be presented to the Court of Appeals for approval early next year.

The Rules of the Chief Judge (22 NYCRR Part 29) and Chief Administrative Judge (22 NYCRR Part 131) addressing camera coverage of court proceedings in the Unified Court System were last amended in the 1990’s, when the Legislature temporarily permitted broad use of cameras in New York courts. Consequently, they had become antiquated in several significant aspects, failing adequately to articulate the court system’s policy of encouraging open access to court proceedings where permitted by law, lacking clarity with respect to the statutory prohibition against broadcasting witness testimony and dictating the use of long-outdated equipment.

Remedying these anachronisms and ambiguities, the amendments of Parts 29 and 131 insure conformity with current law and court practices, confirming the court system's policy of facilitating audio-visual coverage of court proceedings to the fullest extent permissible by law; reaffirming the statutory prohibition (set forth in Section 52 of the Civil Rights Law) against coverage of proceedings involving testimony of parties or witnesses; and confirming the discretion of the presiding trial judge to determine broadcast-related issues in the courtroom and the authority of administrative judges to address such issues elsewhere in the courthouse.

“The old rules, which were promulgated in the late 1980's, were based on New York's experimental law regarding the use of cameras in the court. With that legislation expiring almost 20 years ago, change was long overdue. The new rules offer more informed guidance to the court with regard to audio-visual coverage and will enhance public access to judicial proceedings,” said Judge Lippman.

The amended rules are available at <http://www.nycourts.gov/rules/comments/index.shtml>.

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