

**MEDIA COVERAGE PLAN**  
**OF THE SUPREME COURT OF ALABAMA**

**ADOPTED MARCH 15, 2007,**  
**PURSUANT TO CANON 3A. (7) AND (7B) OF**  
**THE ALABAMA CANONS OF JUDICIAL ETHICS**

1. Proceedings of the Supreme Court of Alabama held in the courtroom of the Judicial Building in Montgomery may be broadcast by television or radio, and may be recorded electronically or photographed, if done in compliance with the provisions of this Plan, and with Canon 3A (7B), of the Canons of Judicial Ethics.

2. No broadcasting, recording, or photographing shall distract from the dignity of the court proceedings.

3. Persons desiring to broadcast, record, or photograph official court proceedings must first obtain written consent to media coverage from the parties and attorneys involved in the proceeding and then make a timely written request to the Clerk of the Supreme Court at least three (3) days before the date of the hearing, trial, or event, specifying the particular case, hearing, or event for which coverage is requested.

4. Written consent from parties and attorneys shall be obtained on a form provided by and filed with the Clerk of the Alabama Supreme Court. When a party or attorney's written

consent to media coverage has been filed with the Clerk, duplicate consent forms for that party or attorney shall not be required for the same court proceeding.

5. Court consent to cover a proceeding shall be granted pursuant to this Plan without partiality or preference to any person, media outlet, or type of coverage. Consent to cover a proceeding may not be given, refused, or withdrawn as to one type of coverage, or as to any particular media outlet, and given, refused, or withdrawn to another type or another media outlet.

6. No more than four (4) still photographers and two (2) television cameras will be permitted in the courtroom for coverage at any time while a trial or hearing is in session. However, the Marshal shall allow all photographers and television stations to participate either by pooling, or by dividing the time so that all will be allowed to participate. The positioning and removal of cameras shall be done as quietly as possible and in no event shall disturb the proceedings of the Court, and shall be done under the supervision of the Marshal.

7. The Court, upon request, will permit persons to obtain audio from the Court's recording system on a "first come, first served" basis, if the systems are compatible. The

Marshal, in his discretion, may allow microphones and wiring to be placed at the counsel's lectern and limited locations on the bench. Microphones shall be placed in advance of the trial or hearing, and shall be unobtrusive or hidden. All wiring shall be located on the floor next to the wall or along the bottom of the bench, where possible. Otherwise, the wires must be placed where they will not interfere with anyone or constitute a hazard. The Marshal shall inspect the location of any wires and microphones to see that they shall comply with the Plan. Wiring cannot be removed while the Court is in session, except during a recess.

8. Overhead lights, when provided, shall be switched on and off by the Marshal. No other lights, flashbulbs, flashes, or sudden light changes may be used except with the express, advance authorization of the Marshal or the Court.

9. Every person desiring to cover a proceeding will furnish his or her own equipment.

10. Television cameras or still cameras which produce distracting noise or sound cannot be used.

11. During sessions of the Court, photographers using still cameras may sit anywhere in the courtroom designated for use by the public, and may take pictures; however, the Marshal, upon request of a party, attorney, witness, or

justice, may require photographers to take photographs only while standing behind the back row of public seats or in the balcony. If a photographer wants to take pictures while standing, he or she must take them from the area behind the back row of public seats.

12. Television personnel shall be limited in their movements to the area behind the back row of public seats.

13. The Marshall may allow wireless recording devices to be operated in the courtroom if they are not too bulky and if they do not make a disturbing sound. The operator may sit or stand. If he or she stands, he or she must be behind the back row of public seats. Whether sitting or standing, the operator must keep the recording device with him or her.

14. All media persons covering a hearing, event, or trial will avoid activity which might distract, and will remain within any restricted areas designated by the Court or by the Marshal.

15. In a trial where testimony is taken, any party, witness, attorney, or Justice may request a cessation of coverage by notifying the Court, in which event the Court will require the recording and broadcasting to cease

16. Attorneys must observe Rule 3.6, Ala. R. Prof. Cond. (Trial Publicity), which covers the conduct of all attorneys with respect to trial publicity.

17. This Plan shall not preclude the coverage of a trial, event, or hearing by a news reporter or other person who is not using a camera or electronic equipment, but who is taking notes or making sketches.

18. All persons who request and are granted permission to cover a hearing, event, or trial are subject to this Plan and must agree to observe the rules and objectives set out in it.

19. In the event the Court is in session at a place other than the courtroom of the Judicial Building in Montgomery, this Plan shall be followed to the extent possible. Details regarding coverage of sessions held outside Montgomery must be cleared with the Marshal at least three (3) days before the scheduled event.

20. The restrictions under this Plan are not applicable to the coverage of investitures and ceremonial or non-judicial proceedings.

Attachments:

Request for Media Coverage

Consent of Participating Parties to Media Coverage

**REQUEST FOR MEDIA COVERAGE  
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF ALABAMA**

Name of media: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Event to be covered (date, time, and place): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of coverage requested: Audio Recording: \_\_\_ Video Recording: \_\_\_ Radio: \_\_\_  
Television: \_\_\_ Still Cameras: \_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_

Reporters and technicians (please identify all personnel who will be involved):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of requested coverage (i.e., instructional, educational, local news, network news, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understood the "Alabama Supreme Court Plan For Media Coverage." In requesting permission to cover the above-described event, I agree that all media personnel identified above will abide by all applicable provisions of the Plan. I certify that I will obtain all consents required by the Plan before beginning any interviewing, photographing, recording, or broadcasting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Media Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO  
CLERK, ALABAMA SUPREME  
COURT, 300 DEXTER AVENUE,  
MONTGOMERY, AL 36104-3741**

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

CLERK  
SUPREME COURT OF ALABAMA      DATE

Note: The Clerk shall notify the Judicial Building Marshal of all approved requests.

**CONSENT OF PARTICIPATING PARTIES TO  
MEDIA COVERAGE  
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF ALABAMA**

**RE:** *[Insert Supreme Court case number and name]*

Pursuant to the Supreme Court of Alabama Plan for Media Coverage, consent is hereby given by the undersigned to broadcast, electronically record, or photograph the proceedings in the above-styled case in the Alabama Supreme Court.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of:

Attorney \_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_

Party \_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_