

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA

IN RE: )  
GENERAL ORDER FOR REFERRAL OF CIVIL )  
MATTERS TO THE UNITED STATES )  
MAGISTRATE JUDGES OF THE )  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA )

The policy of this Court is to promote the efficient utilization of magistrate judges and to avoid the unnecessary duplication of judicial action. To further that policy, the Court adopts the following civil case assignment plan.

The Clerk shall assign ordinary civil cases blindly and at random by means of an automated system approved by the judges of the Court. The full-time magistrate judges of this District shall be included in the civil case assignment system in the same manner as active district judges. In each case assigned at filing to a magistrate judge, the Clerk shall enter a "Notice of Assignment of Case to a United States Magistrate Judge." The Notice shall indicate that upon written consent of all parties, the magistrate judge shall conduct all proceedings including a jury or bench trial and shall order the entry of a final judgment in the case in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 636(c) and Fed. R. Civ. P. 73. The Clerk shall provide a consent form to each party. The consent form shall give each party the option to voluntarily consent to or decline dispositive jurisdiction by the magistrate judge. Each party must complete the form and submit it to the Court. If any party

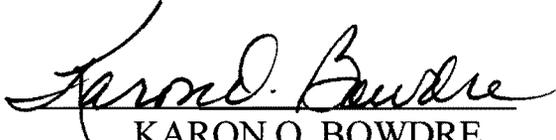
declines magistrate judge jurisdiction, then the Clerk shall reassign the case to a district court judge. If all parties have not provided written consent to magistrate judge jurisdiction within 45 days after either (1) the last served defendant has filed an answer, (2) a defendant has filed a motion to dismiss, or (3) a plaintiff has filed a motion to remand, whichever occurs first, then the Clerk shall reassign the case to a district judge.

Excluded from the civil cases assigned to magistrate judges pursuant this Order are bankruptcy matters, including motions to withdraw the reference, and any case in which a temporary restraining order or other emergency relief is sought. Consistent with current practice, magistrate judges shall continue to be referred all pro se prisoner cases assigned to district judges and all §§ 2241 and 2254 habeas corpus petitions other than § 2254 death penalty petitions. Consistent with current practice, in Social Security cases in which the parties do not consent unanimously to dispositive jurisdiction by the magistrate judge to whom the case is assigned initially, the magistrate judge shall prepare a report and recommendation. After the period for objections to the report and recommendation expires, the Clerk shall assign by random draw a district judge to review the report and recommendation.

This Order supersedes the General Order for Referral of Civil Matters to the United States Magistrate Judges entered on January 14, 2013. Except as provided

herein, all other local rules and standing orders dealing with the assignment of cases remain unchanged. The procedure described in this Order applies only to cases filed on or after January 2, 2015.

DONE and ORDERED this the 2nd day of January, 2015.

  
KARON O. BOWDRE  
CHIEF JUDGE