



Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts PACER Service Center

Free Written Opinions

In the spirit of the E-Government Act of 2002, modifications have been made to the District Court CM/ECF system to provide PACER customers with access to written opinions free of charge. The modifications also allow PACER customers to search for written opinions using a new report that is free of charge. Written opinions have been defined by the Judicial Conference as "any document issued by a judge or judges of the court sitting in that capacity, that sets forth a reasoned explanation for a court's decision." The responsibility for determining which documents meet this definition rests with the authoring judge.

This functionality will only be available in courts that have installed District Court CM/ECF version 2.4 or higher, and will only provide free access to opinions filed after the court is actively using version 2.4. There may still be a charge to access opinions that pre-date the court's use of version 2.4. The new report is available under the Reports menu. PACER customers can also access opinions via existing reports and queries, such as the docket report, and will not be billed for accessing the written opinion document itself, but will be billed for the report or query used to identify the document. For example, if a PACER customer runs a docket report, the customer will be charged for the docket report. If the customer then clicks on the document number hyperlink for a written opinion document, the customer will not be charged for viewing the document. Future versions of Bankruptcy CM/ECF will have similar functionality.

If you have any questions, please contact the PACER Service Center at pacer@psc.uscourts.gov.

| [Top of Page](#) |

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