

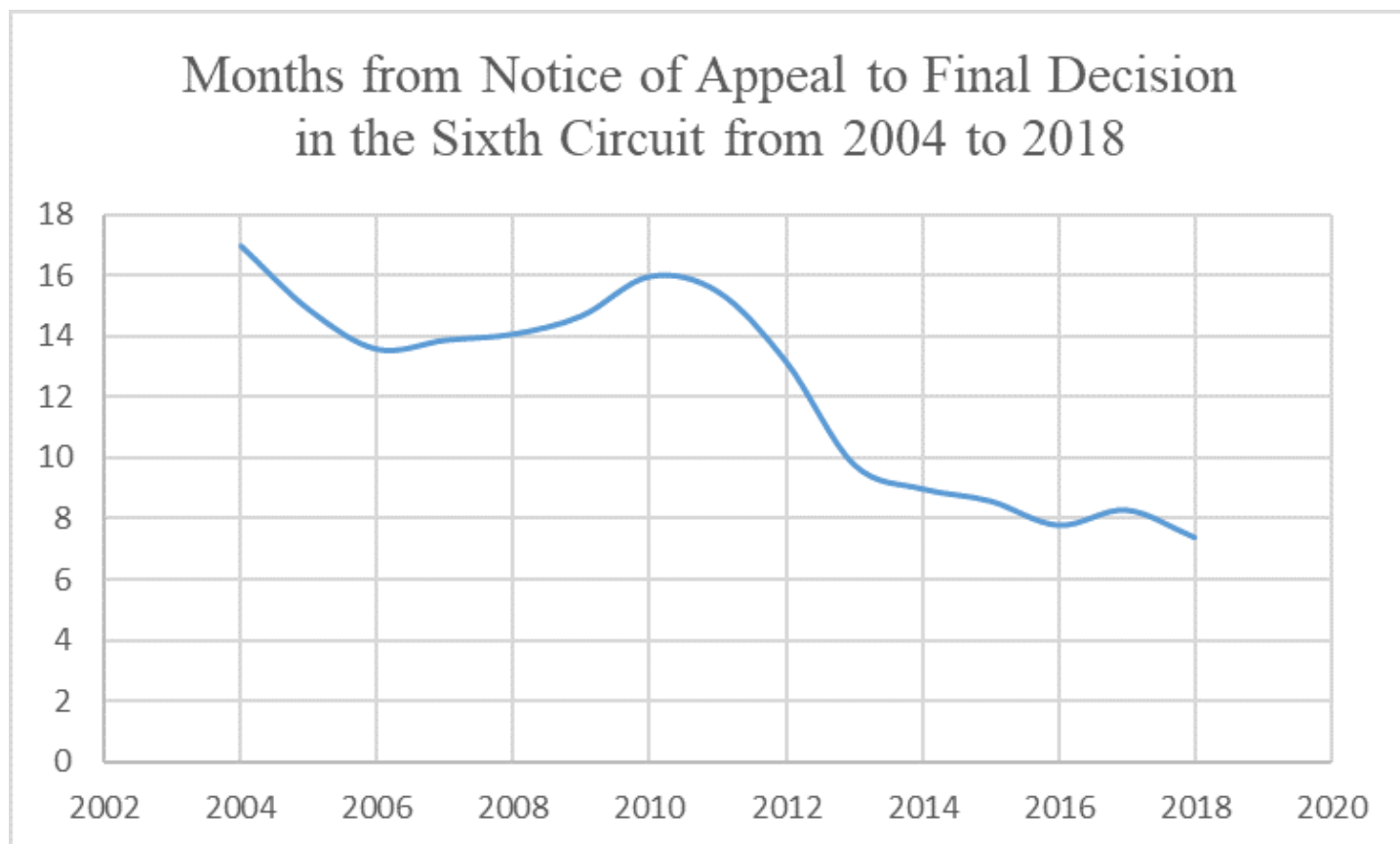
Trends in the Sixth Circuit – Time to a Decision

Article By:

Colter Paulson

Benjamin Beaton

“How long will my appeal take?” A question clients always ask and lawyers often resist (and which always depend heavily on the individual facts of the case). But the data also shows that the average has continued to decline in the Sixth Circuit. In 2011, the average Sixth Circuit appeal [took 15.5 months](#) from the notice of appeal to the final decision. Under the [leadership](#) of Sixth Circuit Clerk Deborah Hunt and Chief Judges Batchelder and Cole, the Circuit made a [concerted effort](#) to reduce the time it takes to decide an appeal. The circuit now decides the average case in just 7.4 months—less than half the time it took in 2011. Here’s a chart showing the changes over time:



For many years, the circuit was tied with the Ninth Circuit as the slowest circuit to move cases along

and render its decisions. Every circuit has made changes to improve the speed of their decisions over the past ten years—the circuits have, on average, sped up decisions about three months. But while the current laggard is the First Circuit, at 13.4 months, the Sixth Circuit at 7.4 months has dramatically improved its position and [is now the third-fastest circuit](#).

This increase in speed is undoubtedly a positive development. Individuals who seek relief or repose, businesses that depend on certainty, prisoners waiting to hear their fate or freedom—everyone benefits when the wheels of justice grind a little faster. That’s especially so when (as our experience suggests is the case in the Sixth Circuit) courts manage to increase speed without sacrificing accuracy and [while increasing transparency](#). Statistics we discussed recently on this blog suggest that the circuit’s faster pace has not diminished the number of [written decisions or rate of reversal](#).

© Copyright 2025 Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP

National Law Review, Volume IX, Number 128

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/trends-sixth-circuit-time-to-decision>