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**Comment from Superior Court Judge Kay Walcott-Henderson (Mercer)**

As the judge who is assigned to handle name changes, I find little evidence that the general newspaper publication requirement is effective, necessary or helpful. In other words, the failure of a party to produce proof of publication is a barrier and a hindrance to the application, but conversely, I have never had anyone present opposition who was notified by publication. Indeed, I have only had two persons come to court to oppose a minor name change application and in both cases, it was a parent who was notified via direct mail. Therefore, I see little support for such a requirement given the statute. Accordingly, I wholeheartedly agree with the position of the SCCDICE: removing such an onerous and ineffective requirement.

October 16, 2020