



BANKRUPTCY AND MARITIME LAW

30th Annual David W. Robertson
Admiralty and Maritime Law Conference

OCTOBER 15, 2021

Judge Chris López

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Bankruptcy Courts

U.S. Const. art. I § 8: “The Congress shall have the power to . . . establish . . . uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States.”

Article I v. Article III Judges. Bankruptcy courts function as a unit of the district courts—bankruptcy cases are automatically referred to bankruptcy courts.

Appeals generally go first to the District Court then to the Fifth Circuit.

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Bankruptcy Judges in the S.D. Texas

- Chief Judge David R. Jones
 - Houston, Corpus Christi, Laredo
- Judge Marvin Isgur
 - Houston, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, McAllen
- Judge Jeffrey P. Norman
 - Houston, Galveston
- Judge Eduardo V. Rodriguez
 - McAllen, Brownsville, Houston
- Judge Christopher M. López
 - Houston, Victoria

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Bankruptcy Courts During COVID

- Bankruptcy courts throughout the state transitioned to virtual hearings very early during the pandemic.
- Some courts have opened with hybrid (virtual and in-person) hearings and others remain closed.
- Bankruptcy courts in the S.D. Texas anticipate returning to in-person hearings in early November 2021.

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Hybrid Bankruptcy Court Hearings

- In a single hearing, you could have:
 - Witnesses appearing virtually.
 - Witnesses appearing in person.
 - Lawyers examining witnesses in person.
 - Lawyers examining witnesses virtually.
 - Virtual arguments.
 - In-person arguments.

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Types of Maritime Bankruptcy Cases

Maritime bankruptcy cases may arise under 3 chapters of the Bankruptcy Code:

- Chapter 7
- Chapter 11
- Chapter 15

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"Insolvencies Topic: Intersection of Admiralty and Bankruptcy"