

## 9th Circuit Court makes right call in broadcasting proceedings

**Live broadcasts of hearings will allow people to see what goes on in court and better understand how justices arrive at their decisions.**

By [Editorial Board](#)

- As of Thursday, December 26, 2013

From Congress to the White House to the federal court system, officials almost universally claim to be committed to open and transparent government.

Perhaps. But the efforts fall short from time to time. It's not that officials are purposely trying to keep the public in the dark, it's that they don't go out of their way to do the people's work in front of the people,

A giant step was taken in 1979 when Congress agreed to have its proceedings put on television. Yet, even 35 years later, much more needs to be done — particularly in regard to the judicial branch of government.

Last week a big step forward was taken.

The federal appeals court for the West Coast, the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court, started streaming some of its hearings live on the Internet.

Let's hope this spurs other courts to use technology to show the people exactly what occurs in the courtroom. TV's Law & Order series, while interesting, isn't like being in a real court proceeding.

Court spokesman David Madden said the 9th Circuit plans to broadcast its en banc proceedings — a case is heard before all the judges of the court. The 9th Circuit hears about 20 such cases a year. The webcasts this month are believed to be the first time a federal appellate court broadcast live video of a proceeding.

“The Ninth Circuit has a long history of using advances in technology to make the court more accessible and transparent,” 9th Circuit Chief Judge Alex Kozinski said in a statement. “Video streaming is a way to open the court's doors even wider so that more people can see and hear what transpires in the courtroom, particularly in regard to some of our most important cases.”

The 9th Circuit has been a leader in this area, posting video of its en banc proceedings online at some point after the hearings. In addition, To this point recordings of the en banc proceedings were posted online following the hearing. It is also one of just two federal appellate courts to allow news cameras in the courtroom. The court has granted more than 350 media requests for video and photo coverage since the early 1990s, according to a news release.

What's being done in San Francisco is something other courts — including the U.S. Supreme Court — should emulate. It does not hurt the quest for justice and it allows the people to see what

goes on in the chambers so they can better understand how the court operates and how it arrives at its decisions.