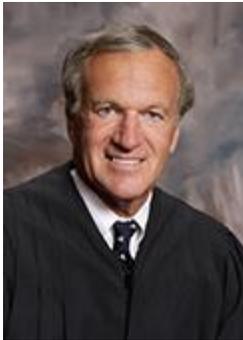


# Supreme Court Justice James Johnson out with 'unexpected' illness

## Pro tem justices have filled in, will continue through court's winter term

By Peter Callaghan

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Justice James Johnson (courtesy Washington State Supreme Court) COURT HANDOUT

Washington State Supreme Court Justice **James Johnson** has been missing from oral arguments for the past two weeks and isn't expected back on the bench for the remainder of the court's winter term.

Wendy Ferrell, a spokeswoman for court, said Johnson is facing "unexpected health concerns."

"He is continuing to work on cases as possible and plans to be in the office next week, according to the Chief Justice," Ferrell said by e-mail. "He is, however, scheduled to be out for the remainder of the Court's current term." The court's Chief Justice is **Barbara Madsen**.

Ferrell said that pro tem justices filled in for oral arguments on Feb. 13, 25 and 27 and Johnson expected to miss oral arguments on March 13, 18 and 20. Pro tems are usually drawn for the court of appeals or from among retired court of appeals judges.

Johnson was first elected to the court in 2004 on his second attempt. He was reelected in 2010. Before joining the court, Johnson was a long-serving assistant attorney general and had a private practice in constitutional law. The Seattle native attended Harvard University and the University of Washington school of law.