

Revising an order

Among this order's ailments: a top-heavy sentence caused by a long compound subject, and odd midsentence semicolons. Joseph Kimble offers a fix in the redlines below.

Original

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the defendants; their officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys; and any other persons who are in active concert or participation with the defendants or their officers, agents, servants, employees, or attorneys; are hereby preliminarily enjoined from enacting or enforcing HB 1523.

SO ORDERED, this the 30th day of June, 2016.

s/ [OMITTED]
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

Revised

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the following persons are preliminarily enjoined from enacting or enforcing HB 1523: the defendants; their officers, agents, employees, and attorneys; and anyone else who actively participates with those persons.

s/ [OMITTED]
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

June 30, 2016

Redlined

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the defendants; their officers, agents, ¹servants, employees, and attorneys; and ^{anyone else}any other persons ^[actively?]participates with those persons. [^] defendants or their officers, agents, servants, employees, or attorneys; ^{2, 3} are hereby preliminarily enjoined from enacting or enforcing HB ⁴1523. ⁵

SO ORDERED, this the 30th day of June, 2016. ⁶

s/ [OMITTED]
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

June 30, 2016

1. This archaic term is presumably covered by *employees*.
2. Try to avoid repeating a string like this. If there's any concern that participating with just one of these persons isn't covered (seems very unlikely), then you could say *any of those persons*.
3. This last semicolon is extraneous. And a list of items — especially if they're separated by semicolons — fits more smoothly at the end of a sentence.
4. Isn't one *hereby* enough? Was the first one even necessary?
5. Notice how long the reader has to wait for the main verb — *are enjoined*. That's because of the long compound subject, which creates a top-heavy sentence.
6. Why not drop this formalism and just put the date with the signature line? Note that *this the 30th day of June* is especially stodgy. Who talks like that (except lawyers)?