This matter is before the Court on the parties' Stipulation and Order to Stay Case Pending Settlement Conference (#131, #132), filed on October 15, 2010, in which the parties state they have agreed to conduct a settlement conference with Magistrate Judge Leen and are in the process of attempting to schedule a settlement conference date with her chambers. Magistrate judges are not generally available to conduct settlement conferences in cases on which another magistrate judge is assigned. The reference of a case to a magistrate judge, other than the one assigned to the case, for purposes of conducting an early settlement conference must be made by the district judge assigned to the case. The undersigned has reviewed the docket and confirmed that the district judge has not referred this case to Magistrate Judge Leen to conduct an early settlement conference. The undersigned has also confirmed with Judge Leen's chambers that she has not otherwise agreed to conduct a settlement conference in this case.

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The Court is aware that attorneys are often unaware of the restrictions on requesting a magistrate judge to conduct a settlement conference in a case on which the magistrate judge is not assigned. Should the parties wish to stay this action for purposes of pursuing settlement negotiations and/or a private mediation, the Court will be willing to consider a joint motion to stay on that basis. However, based on the foregoing,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the proposed Stipulations and Order to Stay Case Pending Settlement Conference (#131, #132) are **denied**, without prejudice.

DATED this 18th day of October, 2010.

GEORGE FOLEY, JR. U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE