

Paulson v. State

In *Geesa v. State*, the Court of Appeals had held that juries must be provided a definition of reasonable doubt and that failure to do so was automatically reversible error. In a trial for theft, the judge did not provide the instruction and the defense did not request it. Following conviction, the defendant appealed on the grounds of the omitted definition in the jury instruction.

The Court of Appeals reversed its prior decision and determined that the *Geesa* instruction was flawed and not constitutionally mandated. Instead, the court decided that a better practice would be for courts to provide no instruction on reasonable doubt to juries, instead relying upon their own sense of the meaning of the term. However, the court also concluded that if all parties agreed upon an instruction, then including that instruction in the jury charge would not be reversible error.