

# IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

Misc. Docket No. 04 - 9264

---

## ORDER ESTABLISHING TASKFORCE TO EXPAND LEGAL SERVICES DELIVERY

---

At the request of the Court, the Texas Access to Justice Commission reported on the status of civil legal services to the poor in Texas in September 2004. In its report, the Commission identified various problems facing access to justice in Texas. Although every Texas county is served by a federally funded legal services program, some areas in the state remain chronically underserved, especially the rural counties. Remote distances, fewer satellite offices, and lack of transportation complicate access for poor people in rural counties.

The Supreme Court recognizes that access to justice requires special attention to the expansion of legal services to the underserved areas of Texas. Upon the recommendation of the Texas Access to Justice Commission, the Court agrees that a special Taskforce would assist in the successful expansion of legal services to underserved areas of Texas.

The Court **HEREBY ORDERS:**

The appointment and creation of a Supreme Court Taskforce to Expand Legal Services Delivery. The Supreme Court Taskforce to Expand Legal Services Delivery will:

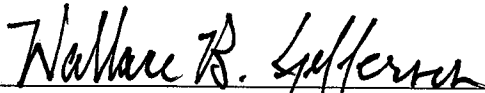
1. Coordinate a statewide effort with existing legal service providers to expand civil legal services to underserved areas of the state;
2. Report its findings, recommendations and results directly to the Texas Access to Justice Commission;
3. Draft an initial report to the Commission, due no later than six months from the creation of the Taskforce. The report should include:
  - minutes from each Taskforce meeting;
  - findings, plans and recommendations to better coordinate and expand delivery of legal services to the underserved areas of the state;
  - results of actions taken;
  - recommendation for Commission action to provide access to justice in these underserved areas; and
  - other relevant information.

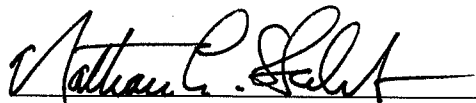
4. Taskforce member Paul Furrh, Jr., will convene the first meeting and serve as temporary chair, at which time the Taskforce will select its permanent chair.
5. The following members are hereby appointed to the Taskforce:


Pamela Baron, Chair, Appellate Section of the State Bar of Texas  
Daniel Bishop, Chair-Elect, Litigation Section of the State Bar of Texas  
J. Dennis Chambers, Texas Association of Defense Counsel, Inc.  
Paul Furrh, Jr., Chief Executive Officer, Lone Star Legal Aid  
Jesse L. Gaines, Chief Executive Officer, Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas  
David Hall, Executive Director, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid  
Steven James, Chair-Elect, Consumer Law Section of the State Bar of Texas  
Mark Murdock, Chair-Elect, Corporate Counsel Section of the State Bar of Texas  
Lee Ann Reno, President-Elect, Texas Young Lawyers Association  
Tom Vick, Chair, Family Law Section of the State Bar of Texas  
John Eddie Williams, President, Texas Trial Lawyers Association

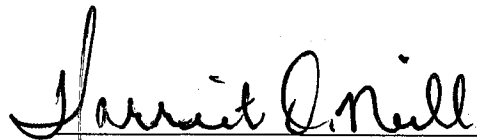
Justice Harriet O'Neill, Supreme Court Liaison

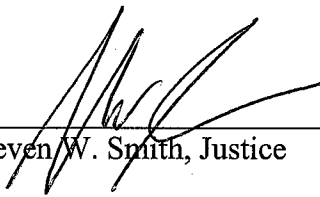
IN CHAMBERS, this 1st day of November, 2004.

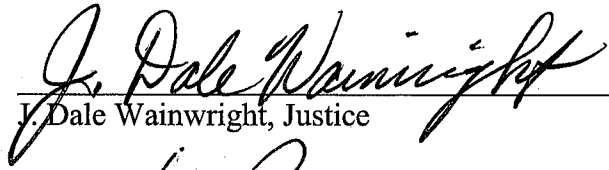
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Wallace B. Jefferson, Chief Justice

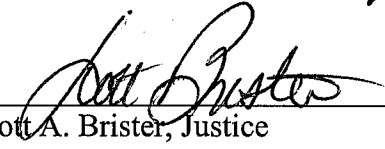
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nathan L. Hecht, Justice

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Priscilla R. Owen, Justice

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Harriet O'Neill, Justice

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven W. Smith, Justice

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
J. Dale Wainwright, Justice

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott A. Brister, Justice