

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

Misc. Docket No. 07-9194

ORDER CREATING TASK FORCE TO ENSURE JUDICIAL READINESS IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have heightened the need to establish a coordinated plan when disaster strikes. Just as hurricanes pose challenges for our coastal region, terrorist events, technical failures, or a health crisis could similarly threaten the operation of our justice system in other parts of the state.

The Judiciary must have the capability to perform essential functions without interruption under all circumstances. Vulnerable children rely on the courts for protection and care. The incarcerated must be supervised and our courts must have the means to adjudicate criminal cases even when a disaster compromises the social order. Landlords may need to take possession of properties for repair or demolition. Disputes may arise about insurance coverage or property damage. In short, Texas courts must remain open to its citizens in times of crisis.

A recent survey conducted by the Office of Court Administration reveals that most of our courts do not have a disaster response plan. Therefore, the Supreme Court hereby creates a Task Force to Ensure Judicial Readiness in Times of Emergency.

I. Membership

Mr. Clay Cossey of Houston
Ms. Denise Davis of Austin
Ms. Elene Harger of Sweetwater
J. A. "Andy" Harwell of Waco

Hon. Adele Hedges of Houston
Ms. Elaine Jefferson of Houston
Hon. F.B. "Bob" McGregor of Hillsboro
Hon. Kelly G. Moore of Brownfield

Hon. Lana Myers of Dallas
Hon. Kathleen H. Olivares of El Paso
Hon. Michael P. Peden
Hon. Mario Ramirez of Edinburg

Mr. David Slayton of Lubbock
Hon. Olen Underwood of Conroe
Hon. Sue Walker of Fort Worth
Hon. Jimmy White of Mt. Pleasant

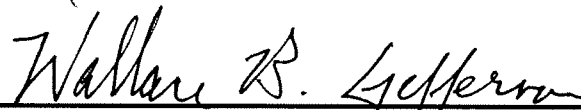
Ms. Davis will chair the Task Force. Justice Don Willett will serve as the Court's liaison.

II. Charge

Appointing this Task Force is an important first step to designing and implementing a full service emergency management program that helps courts at every level prevent, prepare for, and respond to a broad array of disruptions. To this end, the Task Force shall:

- identify existing gaps in court security, continuity of operations and other preparedness and response policies, procedures, and programs within the Texas judiciary;
- develop an interim plan to fill immediately identifiable gaps;
- design emergency management program elements, oversee the program, and facilitate outreach to internal and external stakeholders;
- develop templates of response plans for adoption by individual courts— including continuity of operations plans which should include an annex for a pandemic; evacuation and critical incident plans including but not limited to shelter-in-place, bomb threats, mail handling procedures, acts of violence plans; and IT disaster recovery plans; and
- identify resources and procedures needed to ensure that response plans adopted are consistent with regional and statewide procedures, to test plans and procedures, train staff and emergency response teams, conduct or participate in disaster simulated exercises, and update and modify existing plans and procedures.

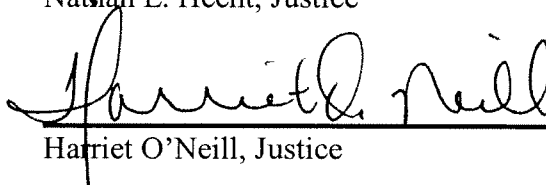
SO ORDERED, in Chambers, this 19th day of November, 2007.



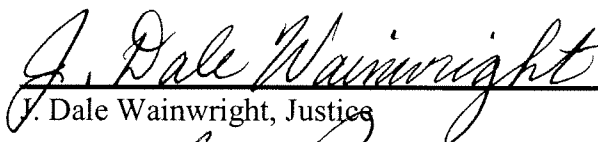
Wallace B. Jefferson, Chief Justice



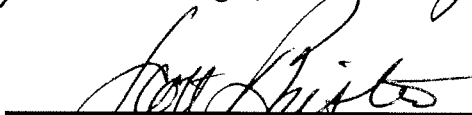
Nathan L. Hecht, Justice



Harriet O'Neill, Justice



J. Dale Wainwright, Justice



Scott Brister, Justice

David M. Medina, Justice



Paul W. Green, Justice



Phil Johnson, Justice



Don R. Willett, Justice