

TEXAS
COMMISSION
ON *JUDICIAL*
SELECTION



CHAIR:

Mr. David J. Beck

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS:

Senator Brian Birdwell
Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
Senator Joan Huffman
Senator Robert Nichols

Representative Todd Hunter
Representative Brooks Landgraf
Representative Ina Minjarez
Representative Carl Sherman

CITIZEN MEMBERS:

Mr. Charles "Chip" Babcock, IV
Hon. Martha Hill Jamison (Ret.)
Hon. Wallace Jefferson (Ret.)
Ms. Lynne Liberato
Mr. David Oliveira
Hon. Thomas Phillips (Ret.)

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Texas Commission on Judicial Selection Meeting Minutes

Date: February 11, 2020

Convene: 9:01 AM

Attendance: *Megan LaVoie*

Mr. David Beck
Sen. Brian Birdwell
Sen. Juan Hinojosa
Sen Robert Nichols
Rep. Todd Hunter
Rep. Brooks Landgraf
Rep. Carl Sherman
Mr. Charles Babcock
Mr. Wallace Jefferson
Ms. Lynne Liberato
Mr. David Oliveira
Mr. Thomas Phillips

Members attending by phone:

Rep. Ina Minjarez
Ms. Martha Hill Jamison

Members not in attendance:

Sen. Joan Huffman

Minutes from Previous Meeting

The January 9, 2020 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Update from the Secretary of State's Office - *Keith Ingram*

Director of Elections, Keith Ingram gave an update on the new voting system which no longer includes straight ticket voting. His office is expecting more voter turnout in this cycle. Mr. Ingram agreed to obtain more statistics for the commission on ballot drop-off, turnover, appointments for appellate and district courts, differences in rural and urban voting, and cost of elections outside of primary.

Working Group Updates:

a. Elections- *Tom Phillips*

The Elections Working Group held a telephonic conference call on February 5th that developed the advantages and disadvantages of partisan and non-partisan elections. The group also discussed its efforts to reach out to other states on their respective judicial selection processes. A survey has been composed to send to other states regarding their judicial elections systems. The deadline for comments and changes to the survey is February 28, 2020. A written report will be forthcoming.

b. Appointments and Confirmations - *Wallace Jefferson*

The Appointments and Confirmations Working Group held a telephonic conference call on February 4th. They discussed the lack of voter information available on judges, and the lack of voter education of the system. Alternative options for appointments and confirmations were also

discussed, including Governor appointment, Senate confirmation, term limits, and enhancing judicial qualifications. A written report will be forthcoming

c. Citizen Panels and Judicial Qualifications - *Lynne Liberato*

In its report, the Working Group discussed the qualifications of Texas Judges and citizens panels in a system with an appointed Judiciary. They also discussed the current qualifications for Appellate Justices and Trial Judges, and explained how they were generally constitutionally and statutorily set.

Discussion on polling and Future Testimony - *David Beck*

Mr. Beck discussed polling options. There have been requests by groups to appear before the Commission, and there was no opposition to granting such requests.

a. Hearings in other Texas cities

The Commission was in favor of holding hearings in other Texas cities, but there was concern that these hearings not only be for the legal community, but also the average citizen.

Next Meeting - March 6, 2020

Adjourn - 11:21 am