

**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.)

www.txcourts.gov/tcjs

Texas Commission on Judicial Selection Meeting Minutes

Date: March 6, 2020

Convene: 10:00 AM

Attendance: *Megan LaVoie*

Mr. David Beck
Sen. Brian Birdwell
Sen Robert Nichols
Rep. Todd Hunter
Rep. Brooks Landgraf
Rep. Ina Minjarez
Rep. Carl Sherman
Mr. Charles Babcock
Ms. Martha Hill Jamison
Mr. Wallace Jefferson
Ms. Lynne Liberato
Mr. David Oliveira
Mr. Thomas Phillips

Members attending by phone:

Sen. Juan Hinojosa

Members not in attendance:

Sen. Joan Huffman

Minutes from Previous Meeting

The February 11, 2020 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Working Group Updates:

a. Elections- *Martha Jamison*

Judge Jamison discussed the Elections Working Group's memo focusing on partisan versus non-partisan Judicial Selection options.

b. Appointments and Confirmations - *Wallace Jefferson*

Chief Justice Jefferson presented for the working group and discussed his working group's memo that was previously presented to the Commission.

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

Ms. Liberato discussed her working group's mission to look at judicial qualifications and the use of citizens panels. The working group also made recommendations on a survey presented to the Commission.

Invited Testimony

a. Dick Trabulsi and Lee Parsley - Texans for Lawsuit Reform

b. Lisa Kaufman and George Christian - Texas Civil Justice League

Mr. Trabulsi introduced the Texans for Lawsuit Reform and Texas Civil Justice League represented and presented their detailed joint proposal for judicial selection.

The proposal included:

1. Appointment of judges by the Governor to all state courts for a term of 12 years.
2. Review of nominees by an impartial, bipartisan and diverse advisory panel that would include lawyers, non-lawyers, and House members to review and evaluate the nominations rating them as unqualified, qualified, or highly qualified.
3. Confirmation of nominees by a majority of Senate.
4. Ratification vote by the people within a few years of assuming office.
5. Enhanced qualifications for judicial office.
6. Clarify and enhance various methods for removing judges.

The Commissioners asked questions, made comments, and expressed concerns with the proposal, including diversity, qualification requirements, and the role of the House of Representatives in the proposal.

Discussion on Hearings in other Texas Cities - David Beck

Chairman Beck stressed the importance of reaching out to the public for their view, and requested that several members of the Commission attend each such meeting.

The following cities were discussed:

Houston

Dallas

Fort Worth

Midland

Corpus Christi

El Paso

Tyler

Lubbock/Amarillo

San Antonio

Waco, Eastland, Cameron County and Hidalgo County were also suggested by Commissioners.

Next Meeting - April 3, 2020¹

Adjourn - 12:03 pm

¹ *The April 3, 2020 and May 1, 2020 meetings were cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Next meeting scheduled June 5, 2020.*