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Press Release

June 23, 2014

Texas Criminal Justice Integrity Unit Moves Forward

AUSTIN — On May 1, 2014, the Texas Criminal Justice Integrity Unit (“TCJIU” or “the Unit”) held a meeting of stakeholders of the criminal justice system to discuss *Brady* issues and a state-wide system to for notifying people in the wake of an irregularity in a criminal case.

The TCJIU is pleased to make the following announcements:

- The TCJIU has partnered with the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (“TCOLE”), the State agency tasked with designing and enforcing standards for law-enforcement, corrections, and telecommunications personnel, and TCOLE will use the *Brady* video produced by the TCJIU for its law-enforcement constituents as part of its teaching curriculum.
- The TCJIU is in the process of updating its law-enforcement training video to include updated information about the Michael Morton Act.
- The Unit is moving forward with the filming of a training video for the forensic scientists to assist in providing training to understand their duties as members of “State’s team” under *Brady* and under the new Michael Morton Act. This training video is the result of collaboration with the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas Forensic Science Commission.
- The Unit is partnering with the State Fire Marshal’s Office of Texas to teach participants in the criminal justice system (e.g., judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys) about the basics of “fire” science and how it may be used in a court room. This project is currently in the preliminary stages of planning with live training events to follow. The resulting training will be made available at no cost.
- The TCJIU will hold a meeting this fall with all stakeholders regarding the Michael Morton Act. Stakeholders at the meeting will discuss the Act, its impact on the various stakeholders in the Texas criminal justice system, and how to assist participants in the criminal justice system to allocate the necessary resources to comply with the Act.
- Following up on the successful May 1 meeting, stakeholders are providing “best practices” for disclosure with respect to notifying interested parties when an irregularity has occurred in a criminal case or cases. Once the TCJIU has worked

with stakeholders to identify “best practices,” it will produce a white paper to provide a blueprint for statewide notification in an effort to prevent insufficient piecemeal solutions that could result in people “falling through the cracks.”

About the TCJIU

The TCJIU is an ad hoc committee created by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in June 2008. The TCJIU held its first formal meeting in August 2008. The TCJIU was created to review the strengths and weaknesses of the Texas criminal justice system. Furthermore, the TCJIU’s purpose is to bring about meaningful reform through education, training, and legislative recommendations. It is not a forum for any particular group, nor does it embrace the plan of one particular political party.

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