

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

Misc. Docket No. 05- **9056**

ORDER ESTABLISHING TASK FORCE
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 the Commission 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 and respond to specific recommendations as directed by the Commission to develop new and innovative programs;

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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. The Taskforce will select its own chair from members appointed to the Taskforce.
5. The following members are hereby appointed to the Taskforce for terms as indicated:

Two-year terms:

Pamela Baron, Chair-Elect, Appellate Section of the State Bar of Texas
Daniel Bishop, Chair-Elect, Litigation Section of the State Bar of Texas
Tom Vick, Chair, Family Law Section of the State Bar of Texas
John Eddie Williams, President, Texas Trial Lawyers Association
Ellen Lockwood, Chair-Elect, Legal Assistants Division, State Bar of Texas

One-year terms:

J. Dennis Chambers, President, Texas Association of Defense Counsel, Inc.
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

Upon expiration of each term deemed to have commenced June 1, 2004, the member whose term expires will be replaced by the Chair-elect or President-elect, as indicated, of the member's organization. Subsequent terms will be for two years with such term to commence June 1 of the year the term begins.

The Executive Directors/CEOs of the three LSC funded programs in Texas shall serve as permanent Taskforce members. The following members who currently hold those positions are appointed to the Taskforce:

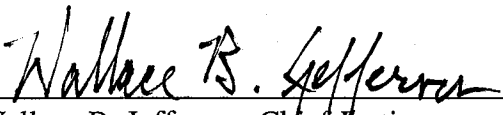
Paul Furrh, Jr., Chief Executive Officer, Lone Star Legal Aid
Jesse L. Gaines, Chief Executive Officer, Legal Aid of North West Texas
David Hall, Executive Director, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

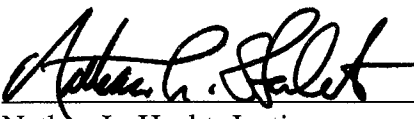
The chair of the Pro Bono Committee of the Texas Court Reporters Association shall serve as a permanent Taskforce member. The following member who currently holds that position is appointed to the Taskforce:

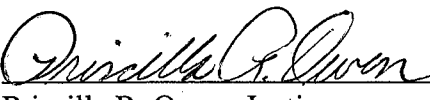
Debbie Saenz, Chair, Pro Bono Committee, Texas Court Reporters Association
Justice Harriet O'Neill, Supreme Court Liaison

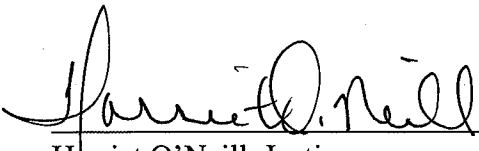
6. Miscellaneous Docket Order No. 04-9264 is hereby withdrawn.

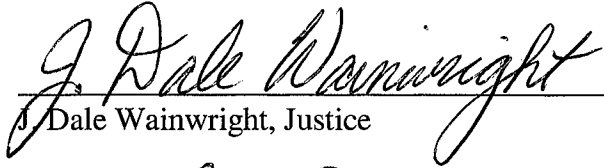
IN CHAMBERS, this 23 day of March, 2005.

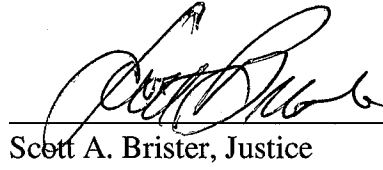

Wallace B. Jefferson, Chief Justice

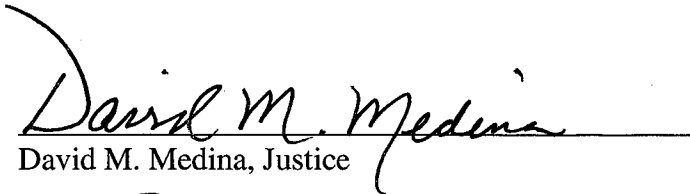

Nathan L. Hecht, Justice

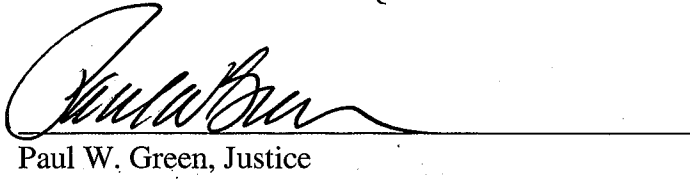

Priscilla R. Owen, Justice


Harriet O'Neill, Justice


J. Dale Wainwright, Justice


Scott A. Brister, Justice


David M. Medina, Justice


Paul W. Green, Justice