

**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: September 18, 2020

Convene: 10:00 AM

Attendance: *Megan LaVoie*

Members in Attendance

Mr. David Beck
Sen. Brian Birdwell
Sen. Juan Hinojosa
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 not in Attendance

Sen Robert Nichols
Sen. Joan Huffman

Minutes from Previous Meeting

The August 7, 2020 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Invited Testimony

Rob Henneke, General Counsel for the Texas Public Policy Foundation, testified that the Foundation does not have a specific method of judicial selection that they endorse, but are in support of pursuing alternative methods for the betterment of Texas. If the system is going to move away from an elected system he testified that there needs to be accountability on elected officials to protect the integrity of the judiciary. Mr. Henneke also provided his written testimony for the Commission.

Judge Robert Schaffer, 152nd District Court in Harris County, voiced concern that any system the Commission chooses will have political implications and involve politics of some kind. Judge Schaffer suggested methods to retain institutional knowledge and judicial retention by extending judicial terms, increasing qualifications, and expanding retention elections, but he did not advocate any specific plan.

Appointment Process

Peggy Venable, Appointments Director, Office of the Governor, and Jeff Oldham, General Counsel, Office of the Governor, explained on the Appointment Office's duties, which appointments the Governor can make, and the overall appointment process. The Appointments office receives applications and supporting documents for open positions, and Ms. Venable and Mr. Oldham went into detail on what is required and how the nominee is vetted considering statutory requirements, qualifications, experience, and interviews.

Jury Selection Survey Results

Megan LaVoie presented to the Commission the jury selection survey results that were sent in July to the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA). The survey consisted of 40 questions and the office received 52 responses. The results of this survey were provided to the Commission.

New Matters

Chairman Beck discussed the outline for the Commission's final report that was previously sent for their review. Rep. Hunter expressed the need to ensure both legislative bodies are involved in the process, and have input on the concepts and recommendations of the Commission.

Next Meeting – October 16, 2020

Adjourn: 11:54 am