



OHIO CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION COMMISSION

REVISED MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

FOR THE MEETING HELD
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2013

Call to Order:

Chair Chad Readler called the meeting of the Education, Public Institutions, and Local Government Committee to order at 10:30 a.m.

Members Present:

A quorum was present with Chair Readler, Vice-chair Gilbert, and committee members Beckett, Brooks, Clyde, Huffman, Macon, Sykes, and Taft in attendance.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the August 8, 2013 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Discussion:

Chair Readler summarized the work of the committee over the previous months, asking committee members for their opinions regarding topics for future committee meetings. Vice-chair Ed Gilbert noted that the committee has two paths: one path involving discussion and handling of soft topics versus a path that addresses hard topics.

Committee member Larry Macon asked about the difference between a soft topic and a hard topic. Mr. Gilbert elaborated that the soft topics may include casinos, in which there is passed legislation and where the law has both been vetted and defined. He said the committee work with regards to casinos would be slight by way of recommendations to the full Commission. He said the hard topics would include education, a topic that stirs dissension among key players.

Committee member Paula Brooks stated that education should be the focus of the committee moving forward. She added it is in the best interest of the children of Ohio to consider early learning initiatives and to pay attention to factors that include demographic issues surrounding

learning. Representative Vernon Sykes agreed with Ms. Brooks that the significance of education, namely early childhood learning, is invaluable.

Chair Readler inquired about the most effective and efficient means to address the issues of education, public institutions, and local governments. Governor Bob Taft noted there is no urgency in examining a constitutional amendment, and suggested that the committee hear from local government representatives to identify key priorities. Ms. Brooks added there is a Local Government Commission which could share findings with the committee.

Chair Readler suggested each committee meeting be allotted for a topic; with the three categories of topics being education, local government, and public institutions. Ms. Brooks suggested inviting James Heckman, professor at the Center for the Economics of Human Development at the University of Chicago, to present to the Committee his work on early childhood learning.

Chair Readler asked committee members' opinions on the order for future meetings. Committee member Roger Beckett noted that presentations from past committee meetings have not given him a grasp on constitutional topics or suggested a priority. He suggested a helpful course of action would be to have more focus placed on the constitutional problems of the three categories of topics. Ms. Brooks inquired whether Mr. Beckett was referring to the constitutional problems or challenges. Mr. Beckett stated to identify the problems within the constitution would be a helpful course of action.

Mr. Gilbert noted that the charge of the committee is to examine the hard issues and gather recommendations. He suggested setting the committee topic priorities as being, first, education, second, public institutions, and third, local governments. Committee members accepted this suggestion.

Representative Kathleen Clyde added that, while the committee is examining education, it should also assess higher education issues surrounding student loan debt, thus ensuring a robust discussion of education from early childhood through K-12 as well as higher education.

Chair Readler mentioned that there are obsolete portions of the constitution that require examination, asking whether the committee wants to examine the obsolete portions first and transition to education. Ms. Brooks suggested that a subcommittee of the Education Committee to address obsolete "deadwood" portions of the constitution.

Mr. Gilbert agreed with Ms. Brooks, adding that most of the obsolete sections are not to be addressed by this committee. He suggested that the a subcommittee address obsolete portions, allowing the full committee to move forward on the topic of education. The committee agreed with this suggestion.

Mr. Beckett stated that Article VII, Section 1 of the constitution was not addressed. Ms. Brooks added this portion of the constitution is worth addressing as it contains offensive language. Mr. Gilbert agreed with Ms. Brooks and Mr. Beckett, stating that Senior Policy Advisor Steven H. Steinglass has outlined these provisions. Rep. Sykes added that the committee should submit a request to Mr. Steinglass to report on these provisions.

Gov. Taft said the committee should bring in experts on state constitutions to provide testimony. Ms. Brooks agreed with this suggestion. Chair Readler suggested Mr. Steinglass provide testimony. Rep. Sykes noted the importance of providing the public an opportunity to contribute.

Ms. Brooks asked whether the committee meetings will be video recorded. Chair Readler stated that video recordings are not yet made available to the committee. Mr. Beckett added that video recordings of committee meetings is still under discussion and, according to Ohio Government Television rules, only committees chaired by members of the General Assembly are approved for video recordings. He said it is his understanding this topic will be addressed by the General Assembly.

Mr. Macon asked if persons slated to present to the committee can submit a synopsis version of their presentation in advance, stating that having some background information before the committee meeting is helpful. Ms. Brooks asked whether appearances before the committee should be regarded as presentations or testimonies, suggesting that, as they are not sworn in, "presentation" may be a more appropriate term. Mr. Gilbert noted the term "presentation" over "testimony" is indeed less intimidating. Mr. Macon noted the term "presentation," rather than "testimony," is used at meetings of the full Commission.

Adjournment:

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

Approval:

The minutes of the September 12, 2013 meeting of the Education, Public Institutions, and Local Government Committee were approved at the November 14, 2013 meeting of the committee.

/s/ Chad A. Readler

Chad A. Readler, Chair

Edward L. Gilbert

Edward L. Gilbert, Vice-chair