



OHIO CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION COMMISSION

REVISED MINUTES OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE COMMITTEE FOR THE MEETING HELD THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2013

Call to Order:

Chair Janet Abaray called the meeting of the Judicial Branch and Administration of Justice Committee to order at 9:36 a.m.

Members Present:

A quorum was present with Chair Abaray, Vice-chair Fischer, and committee members French, Murray, Obhof, Saphire, and Walinski in attendance.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the June 13, 2013 meeting of the committee were reviewed and approved.

Presentations and Discussion:

Committee member Richard Walinski suggested that notes should be more detailed since the meeting was not being recorded.

Chair Abaray called on William Weisenberg, assistant executive director of the Ohio State Bar Association, to resume his presentation to the committee regarding proposals put forth by the 1970s Constitutional Revision Commission. Mr. Weisenberg advised he would give a more detailed outline on paper to the committee at a future date.

Mr. Weisenberg suggested that a speaker from the National Center for State Courts present to the committee on the efficiency of the courts.

Committee member Richard Saphire asked if there were any rules regarding budgeting of local courts. John VanNorman, senior policy research counsel for the Ohio Supreme Court, who was present in the audience, advised that the Court has not received much information regarding local funding. He said the Court recently sent out a survey to see how different localities fund their courts.

Senator Larry Obhof inquired about public funding of elections. Mr. Weisenberg observed that public funding would not prohibit financing of advertisements by outside groups.

Mr. Weisenberg discussed the issue of having voter guides to provide background information about candidates. Committee member Judith French asked if the Ohio State Bar Association would be willing to be a central place for posting voter guides of judicial candidates online. It was noted that voter guides could be seen as having political ramifications and may not be appropriate for posting on the Ohio Supreme Court website.

Mr. Saphire asked for clarity on how local courts are funded. Jo Ellen Cline, government relations counsel for the Ohio Supreme Court, who was in the audience, responded to his inquiry, stating that court funding includes a combination of state and local funding.

Justice French suggested the committee hear a presentation regarding the basic overview of the structure of the court system in Ohio by staff from the Supreme Court.

Ms. Cline suggested the committee have a panel discussion about organization of the courts. Chairwoman Abaray was receptive to this idea. Chair Abaray further suggested putting together questions for public input.

Mr. Saphire suggested a set of protocols for all committees to follow regarding public input so there is uniformity. Justice French suggested that the committee take testimony in certain areas on certain days.

Vice-chair Patrick Fischer requested information on how other states are funding their courts and if they either elect or appoint their judges.

Representative Dennis Murray suggested the committee needed some input from the full Commission on issues to review.

Adjournment:

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Approval:

The minutes of the July 11, 2013 meeting of the Judicial Branch and Administration of Justice Committee were approved at the August 8, 2013 meeting of the committee.

/s/ Janet Gilligan Abaray
Janet Gilligan Abaray, Chair

/s/ Patrick F. Fischer
Justice Patrick F. Fischer, Vice-chair