



OHIO CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION COMMISSION

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

FOR THE MEETING HELD
THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2014

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 not present with Chair Readler and committee members Clyde, Coley, Macon, and Taft in attendance.

Approval of Minutes:

There being no quorum, the minutes of the December 12, 2013 meeting were not approved.

Discussion:

Chair Readler proposed that the committee have a general business meeting to discuss the agenda and schedule for upcoming meetings and to lay out the priorities for the committee. Two handouts were given to committee members to review. The first was a copy of a section of an article from the Michigan Constitution and the second was a proposal given by Bill Phillis addressing the issue of education reform.

Governor Bob Taft suggested it would be helpful to hear from major associations that represent the different types of local government in Ohio to see if there are changes to the constitution that they would propose. Chair Readler agreed and said that the committee would first work through Article VI relating to education before turning to local government topics later in the year.

Senator Bill Coley commented that technology has changed the concept of education and that the committee should look at the constitution to see if there is a need to focus on the education of individuals or on the reform of governmental institutions. Chair Readler agreed, mentioning that

some of the language in this Article of the constitution has been around for over one hundred years.

Committee member Larry Macon asked about the Michigan Constitution, saying its education provision was so distinguished compared to Ohio's. Chair Readler referred to Article VIII, Section 2 of the Michigan Constitution and the subject of the appropriateness of leaving the decisions in the hands of judges or the hands of legislators. He said the provision suggests policy decisions should not be made in the court. Committee members also acknowledged the lack of compliance with the *DeRolph v. State of Ohio* case.

Sen. Coley shared his desire to make sure to build in the flexibility for districts to make these decisions for themselves, citing the city of Cincinnati and the creation of their own charter schools.

Chair Readler reiterated the point that the committee should ensure that the constitution is keeping up with the evolution that has occurred in some school districts and the different types of schools that there are in Ohio.

Mr. Macon added that he believes it is necessary to include wording about discrimination in order to emphasize the equability of the education system in the amendment. Chair Readler said he believes how that is done should be left to policy makers.

Gov. Taft asked committee members if they find any provisions of the education article to be obsolete or outdated.

Chair Readler responded that he does not think there are any provisions that everyone would agree are obsolete. He mentioned that he feels Article VI, Section 4, which refers to the State Board of Education and the order for selecting members, should be changed. He also proposed a change regarding early childhood education, and the constitutional right to early childhood education.

Committee member Paula Brooks had a clarifying question about the early childhood proposal in the handout and wanted to make sure to talk about the funding component for this if the committee is going to make it a requirement in the constitution.

Chair Readler encouraged formal proposals to be submitted so that the committee can start talking about these issues in further detail and conduct hearings.

Gov. Taft commented on the growing consensus and support for more opportunity for early childhood education, indicating that the debate lies on whether to provide funding for all children or just low income children. He said, if the committee does move toward an amendment, he said he feels that it should at least allow for state funding of early childhood education but not require it.

Sen. Coley noted that the problem is the distribution system, indicating if the state is still looking at education as buildings and structures then it should rethink the way funds are distributed.

Gov. Taft noted that the language in the constitution can have unintended consequences and there is always the danger of how the court will interpret the language.

Chair Readler suggested that the committee work with current language to modernize it and again encouraged the submission of formal proposals.

Ms. Brooks offered to collaborate with Gov. Taft to work on the early childhood education piece.

Chair Readler re-emphasized that during this calendar year the committee would be committed to the education portion of the constitution.

Ms. Brooks expressed her concern about the workforce of tomorrow and how the current education system is structured to meet the needs of employers. She suggested that the committee take time to hear from the business committee so that they have the opportunity to give their input.

Adjournment:

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Approval:

The minutes of the March 13, 2014 meeting of the Education, Public Institutions, and Local Government Committee were approved at the April 10, 2014 meeting of the committee.

/s/ Chad A. Readler

Chad A. Readler, Chair

Edward L. Gilbert

Edward L. Gilbert, Vice-chair