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34th House District



Co-Chair
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69th House District

OHIO CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION COMMISSION

Report of Judicial Branch and Administration of Justice Committee

The committee held a 3 hour meeting on July 11. Bill Weisenberg, Assistant Executive Director for Public Affairs of the Ohio State Bar Association presented on issues concerning judicial election or appointment, as well as issues concerning funding and organization of the courts. In August, the Committee hopes to hear from the Supreme Court regarding an overview of court organization and structure.

The members discussed the issues and recognized that there is in existence a Task Force organized by the Chief Justice concerning funding and organization of the courts, which has recently begun an investigation to develop data concerning court structure and financing. Therefore, the Judicial Branch and Administration of Justice Committee agreed to wait to address any constitutional issues that might arise regarding court organization until such time that data has become available from the Task Force.

In the meantime, the Committee will consider issues concerning judicial election or appointment. The Committee recognizes that Ohio voters are strongly in favor of judicial election according to recent polls and prior attempts to amend the Constitution. Nonetheless, the Committee will entertain presentations on judicial appointment (sometimes referred to as merit selection) from interested parties. The League of Women Voters had a representative present at the July 11, 2013 meeting who indicated she would like to speak in favor of the appointment process. The tentative date for the League of Women Voters to address the Committee is in October.

The Committee has been provided materials prepared by the Chief Justice concerning proposals to revise the system of judicial elections in Ohio. The Committee plans to review the proposal in detail; however, the Committee recognizes that some of these issues are legislative rather than constitutional in scope.

The Committee would like to solicit input from interested parties. There has been a recommendation made to the Committee to wait to solicit input until protocols are developed by the Standing Committee on Public Education and Information.

The Committee projects that hearings throughout 2013 will focus on the judicial election/selection issue, and hopes to consider any recommendations for constitutional revisions by the first quarter of 2014.

The Committee does envision that it may invite speakers from out of state to present, and would like to be able to offer honorariums to cover travel expenses of invited guests. Alternatively, the Committee would like information on the availability of video conferencing presentations.