



OHIO CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION COMMISSION

REVISED MINUTES OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE COMMITTEE FOR THE MEETING HELD THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2014

Call to Order:

Chair Janet Abaray called the meeting of the Judicial Branch and Administration of Justice Committee to order at 10:28 a.m.

Members Present:

A quorum was present with Chair Abaray, Vice-chair Fischer, and committee members Curtin, Kurfess, Mulvihill, Sapphire, Skindell, and Wagoner in attendance.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the April 10, 2014 meeting of the committee were reviewed and approved.

Discussion:

Written material was distributed to the committee that included:

- Legislative language to provide for judicial retention elections;
- Judges For All, 2013, "Reducing judicial campaign fundraising and increasing voter participation with the Retention Ballot";
- A letter from Darke County Judge Jonathan P. Hein regarding proposed election reform for judicial offices;
- American Constitution Society: "Justice At Risk: An Empirical Analysis of Campaign Contributions and Judicial Decisions";
- Joint Resolution language from Senator Larry Obhof to repeal Article IV, Section 22 of the Ohio Constitution;
- Joint Resolution language from Sen. Obhof to repeal Article IV, Section 19 of the Ohio Constitution;
- *New York Times*, May 5, 2014: "Outside Spending Enters Arena of Judicial Races";

- *Huffington Post*, May 7, 2014: “Wide Majorities Losing Faith In John Roberts’ Supreme Court, Want Term Limits.”

Steven C. Hollon, executive director of the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission, formally introduced himself in his new role and explained to the committee how he plans to assist in that capacity.

Chair Abaray asked for committee discussion on how to address the matter of selecting or electing members of the judiciary. The committee discussed Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor’s recent speech about judicial reforms in which she advocated moving elections to odd numbered years and removing party labels from the ballot. A suggestion was made to have the chief justice address a joint meeting of the committee with the Bill of Rights and Voting committee.

Senior Policy Advisor Steven H. Steinglass discussed the Missouri Plan with the committee. A suggestion was made to create a commission that will make recommendations to the governor for judicial appointments.

Mr. Hollon reported statistics requested by the committee pertaining to the makeup of the Ohio judiciary.

Committee member Dennis Mulvihill was asked to look into election reform options. Committee member Richard Saphire was asked to look into selection reform options.

Adjournment:

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

Approval:

The minutes of the May 8, 2014 meeting of the Judicial Branch and Administration of Justice Committee were approved at the June 12, 2014 meeting of the committee.

/s/ Janet Gilligan Abaray
Janet Gilligan Abaray, Chair

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