

League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network

**Judicial Issues Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, September 28, 2011, 9:00-10:30am

612 W Main Street #200, Madison

Present: Melanie Ramey; Margi Kindig (by phone); Katie Mulligan; Diane Martin Liebert; Carol Wichmann; Jearrienne Hayslett; Andrea Kaminski

1. Follow-up from last meeting/minutes:

The committee discussed contacts with current and past members of the Access to Justice Commission and concluded that it would be better to encourage League members to contact the chief judge in their local circuit courts if they wish to serve on a judicial system committee.

Meredith Ross inquired at the UW Law School about whether working with the League could be a student project. This idea was declined. Ross suggested that League hire a work-study student or contact the LaFollette Institute. Kindig will work with Kaminski to develop a proposal for a student project.

2. Supreme Court Open Administrative Conferences (OAC)

Mulligan reported on the September 15 OAC, in which there was much tension among the justices. The Chief Justice suggested opening all court meetings, including deliberations on cases, to the public. This proposal failed on a 5-2 vote, with only Bradley and Abrahamson voting in favor. The Chief proposed bringing in an expert in group dynamics at no cost to the taxpayers (funded by the justices). This proposal was met with much resistance. Court system John Voelcker is to report today as to whether the Supreme Court has done this before. The committee questioned whether this matters. Ramey wrote an op ed following the meeting, which was published online by The Capital Times.

Upcoming OACs: Kindig, Kaminski and possibly Mulligan will attend at least part of 9/28 conference. Mulligan, Kaminski and Martin will attend on October 4.

The committee discussed the agendas for the OACs, which are difficult to follow. Many items are marked "not ready for discussion," making the agendas appear to be more of a to-do list than meeting agendas.

3. Upcoming cases

Kaminski read brief summaries of the cases to have oral arguments heard in October. She will send committee members the schedule with a couple of lines about each case. Mulligan will follow mental health case. Liebert will follow the Hirschhorn case. The committee is interested in the Medicaid case, to be heard 10/7, but no one offered to follow it.

4. Possible state study on judicial issues.

Doing this would require defining the scope of the study and submitting it to the state board by January 27, 2012.

The committee decided to explore a possible state study on Judicial Selection. Before the next meeting, committee members will gather information on the following:

- Influence of campaign contributions, including from law firms – Liebert will check with Justice at Stake and possibly with Jay Heck, Common Cause-WI
- Role of the media – Kaminski will contact Bill Lueders; Hayslett will contact Mike McCabe
- Models in other states – Mulligan will check National Center of State Courts

**5. Next meeting: Thursday, November 10, 1:30-3:00pm**