

Supreme Court of Florida

No. AOSC08-32

IN RE: COMMISSION ON TRIAL COURT
 PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

The Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability was established in 2002 for the purpose of proposing policies and procedures on matters related to the efficient and effective functioning of Florida's trial courts, through the development of comprehensive performance measurement, resource management, and accountability programs. This charge responds to mandates that emanate from section 19, Article III, Constitution of the State of Florida; Chapter 216, Florida Statutes; and the judicial branch's long-range strategic plan.

As a result of the economic challenges currently facing the nation and the State of Florida, our state government has experienced a substantial revenue shortfall. As a result of the decline in state financial resources, the Florida State Courts System has sustained significant reductions in operating funds and staff positions during Fiscal Years 2007/08 and 2008/09. The State of Florida may face additional reductions in state government, which may impact the courts as well.

During these demanding fiscal times, there is still a need for the important work of the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability to proceed. The progress of the Commission's work will, however, be impacted by the reduced operational funds and staffing that are available. The Commission is therefore directed to make every effort to conserve resources by: prioritizing its work and considering a gradual, phased-in approach within available resources; using discretion in the establishment of subcommittees that require operating funds and staff support; limiting the number of in-person meetings; and utilizing such options as telephone conference calls, videoconferencing, and other electronic meeting options as appropriate.

During the next two years, the Commission is expected to perform the following tasks:

1. Continue with the development and implementation of standards of operation and best practices for the major elements of the trial courts, with a specific focus on implementation of standards and best practices for court reporting and alternative dispute resolution services. The Commission should collaborate with the Trial Court Budget Commission, the Florida Court Education Council, and the Dispute Resolution Center as necessary.

2. Direct the Court Statistics and Workload Committee to address the remaining tasks outlined in the Continuing Development section of the Judicial Resource Study Final Report. Additionally, as directed in In Re: Amended Certification of the Need for Additional Judges, 980 So. 2d 1045 (Fla. April 15, 2008), the Committee should investigate the inclusion of senior judge resources as a permanent component of the judicial weighted workload model. The Commission shall submit a report to the Supreme Court with related recommendations on or before September 24, 2008.

3. Direct the Court Statistics and Workload Committee to work collaboratively with the Florida Court Technology Commission, and any other applicable court committees, to develop long term plans for technology to address trial court information needs. Initial work should focus on management information needs and explore the feasibility of the use of existing reporting mechanisms, data sets, and data collection systems to meet these needs. The Committee's assistance may also be requested in addressing the administrative recommendations of the Supreme Court's Task Force on Management of Cases Involving Complex Litigation.

4. Work collaboratively with the Commission on District Court of Appeal Performance and Accountability and the Steering Committee on Families and Children in the Court to monitor the processing of post-conviction, dependency, and termination of parental rights cases.
5. Continue to propose judicial branch responses to any statutory requirements and requests by the Florida Legislature and the Office of the Governor that relate to trial court performance and accountability.

The following individuals are appointed to serve on the Commission for terms that expire on June 30, 2010.

The Honorable Robert B. Bennett, Jr.
Judge, Twelfth Judicial Circuit

Mr. Mike Bridenback
Court Administrator, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Brian J. Davis
Judge, Fourth Judicial Circuit

Ms. Gay Inskeep
Court Administrator, Sixth Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Thomas M. Jaworski
Judge, Alachua County

The Honorable Kathleen J. Kroll
Chief Judge, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Peter R. Lopez
Judge, Eleventh Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Peter F. Marshall
Judge, Volusia County

The Honorable Ellen Sly Masters
Judge, Tenth Judicial Circuit

Ms. Carol Lee Ortman
Court Administrator, Seventeenth Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Jonathan Sjostrom
Judge, Second Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Terry D. Terrell
Judge, First Judicial Circuit

The Honorable William L. Wright
Judge, Fourteenth Judicial Circuit

The Commission should submit its reports to the Chief Justice through the State Courts Administrator.

The Commission is authorized to propose amendments to rules of court procedure on issues involving trial court performance and accountability, for consideration by the Court. Should the Commission recommend amendments to the rules of court procedure or forms, it shall file such recommendations in petition form with the Clerk of the Florida Supreme Court. The Honorable Lisa Davidson shall serve as the liaison between the Commission and The Florida Bar Rules of Judicial Administration Committee.

Should the Commission make recommendations that require additional funding or resources to implement, the Commission is directed to establish the

necessary liaison relationship with the District Court of Appeal Budget Commission or the Trial Court Budget Commission, as appropriate. At a minimum, the Commission shall provide the chair of the respective budget commission with copies of Commission reports and recommendations that reference the need for additional court funding or resources.

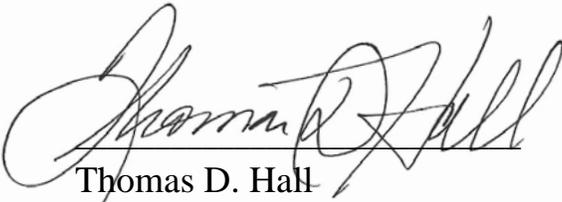
Judge Robert B. Bennett, Jr., shall serve as chair through June 30, 2010. Justice Kenneth B. Bell shall continue to serve as the Supreme Court's liaison to the Commission. Staff support will be provided by the Office of the State Courts Administrator.

DONE AND ORDERED AT Tallahassee, Florida, on August 15, 2008.



Chief Justice Peggy A. Quince

ATTEST:



Thomas D. Hall
Clerk, Supreme Court

