



Supreme Court of Tennessee

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INDIGENT REPRESENTATION TASK FORCE MEETING AT NEW TIME

Nashville, Tenn. – In deference to funeral arrangements for the late Sen. Fred Thompson, the Supreme Court-appointed Indigent Representation Task Force has pushed back the start time of their Friday meeting to noon.

The Indigent Representation Task Force has been charged with reviewing practices regarding how attorneys are compensated for work with defendants who are unable to afford legal counsel.

The task force will review the current indigent representation system, including indigency determinations, the delivery of services, and the administration of the indigent representation fund. Their charge is to guarantee that the system is addressing the needs of its recipients as well as benefiting the taxpayers of Tennessee.

Currently, the judicial system's budget provides for an expenditure of approximately \$19 million in criminal indigent representation, \$12.5 million in child welfare and child support representation, and several more million for judicial hospitalizations, as well as experts and investigators who work on the criminal cases. That's about \$36 million each year.

Chief Justice Lee said the task force is a necessary step in reviewing Tennessee's current indigent representation system. She announced the creation of the task force in an address last month to the Knoxville Bar Association.

"We must not accept anything less than the most qualified representation in our courts, but we must also be sure that those receiving indigent representation qualify for those services and that the lawyers who perform the services are adequately compensated," she said.

Dean of Nashville School of Law and retired Tennessee Supreme Court Justice William C. Koch, Jr. will chair the task force.

"It's imperative that Tennessee meet the constitutional obligation owed to all criminal defendants. But, there is also the necessity to do so in the most accountable, efficient, and effective manner possible," said Koch. "I look forward to undertaking this important task."

The first meeting of the task force will start at noon on Friday, November 6 in Legislative Plaza Room LP12, 301 6th Ave N, Nashville. This is adjusted from the original start time of 9:30 a.m. Members of the task force are:

- William C. Koch, Jr., retired Tennessee Supreme Court Justice and current Dean of Nashville School of Law, Task Force Chairman
- Lela Hollabaugh, partner, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP
- Judge Deanna Bell Johnson, Circuit Court Judge, 21st Judicial District
- Susan L. Kay, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Clinical Professor of Law, Vanderbilt Law School
- Rep. William Lamberth, State House District 44
- Susan Mattson, Principle Legislative Research Analyst, Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury Office
- Mark A. Mesler, II, Attorney, Rosenblum and Reisman in Memphis
- Judge Loyce Lambert Ryan, Shelby County General Sessions Court
- Judge Vicki S. Snyder, Henry County General Sessions Court
- Judge Barry A. Steelman, Criminal Court Judge, 11th Judicial District
- Dwight Tarwater, General Counsel, office of Governor Bill Haslam
- Sen. John Stevens, State District 24
- DarKenya Waller, Managing Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands

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