



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
REP. JIMMIE WILSON
CHAIR

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

10:30 AM

Room 307, House Office Building

The House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Judiciary was called to order by the Chair, Representative Wilson.

The Chair requested attendance be called:

Present: Reps. Wilson, Weiss, Brixie, Mentzer, Morgan, Lightner, Cavitt, and Schuette.

Absent: None.

Excused: None.

Representative Lightner moved to adopt the meeting minutes from the meeting held on February 22, 2023. There being no objection, the motion prevailed by unanimous consent.

Jonathan Sacks, Director, State Appellate Defender Office (SADO), and Bradley Hall, Administrator, Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System (MAACS), appeared before the subcommittee to give an overview of SADO and of MAACS. Mr. Sacks described the role and responsibilities of SADO, pursuant to the Michigan Appellate Defender Act. He provided information on the organization of SADO and he briefly discussed FY 2024 budget priorities, the Public Defender Division, overturning wrongful convictions, human and financial costs of sentencing errors, and the Juvenile Lifer Unit. Mr. Hall described the role and responsibilities of MAACS and provided information on standard attorney fee and expense policies, the pre-screening process for assigned counsel, and voucher detail. Also, he discussed the current pressure to pay assigned counsel using Standard 8 Rates approved by the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission. Discussion ensued. Questions and answers followed.

Lynn Helland, Executive Director and General Counsel, Judicial Tenure Commission (JTC), appeared before the subcommittee to discuss the FY 2024 budget request for the JTC. Mr. Helland provided a brief history of the JTC's funding levels, staffing levels, and complaint and investigation caseload. He discussed the dramatic increase in the number of full investigations required over the past 5 years and a corresponding increase in the complexity of cases. Mr. Helland emphasized the need for adequate staff to enable the JTC to eliminate case backlog in order to investigate judicial misconduct and hold judges accountable in a timelier fashion. Discussion ensued. Questions and answers followed.

There being no further business before the subcommittee, Representative Wilson adjourned the meeting at 11:40 AM.

Representative Jimmie Wilson, Chair

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