



Galveston County
600 59th Street, Suite 2305
Galveston, Texas 77551-4180

September 30, 2014

Honorable Mark Henry
Honorable Ryan Dennard
Honorable Kevin O'Brien
Honorable Stephen Holmes
Honorable Ken Clark
County Judge and County Commissioners Court
722 Moody
Galveston Texas 77550

Re: Justice Administrator

Dear County Judge and County Commissioners,

The District, County and Probate Judges of Galveston County are requesting to meet with the County Judge and Commissioners Court to discuss the position of Justice Administrator. As you are aware from recent events, there is a difference of opinion as to who has the legal authority to interview, hire, supervise and fire the justice administrator. We are aware that the Commissioners Court is considering hiring outside counsel to pursue a mandamus action to challenge the legality of the Administrative Judge's Order of September 24, 2014 directing that the process of interviewing "finalists" for the position "cease and desist."

An Attorney General's Opinion has been requested regarding the authority of a constitutional county judge or commissioners court to appoint and terminate staff assigned to perform judicial functions for the district and statutory county courts in the county. We believe, on the basis of historical fact, the State Constitution and from State statutes, that this authority is vested in the judges.

We recognize that reasonable minds can differ on legal interpretations and believe that a wise course of action would be for all of us to meet together and explore a reasonable resolution of this issue. Negotiation may save the taxpayers of Galveston County significant expense which might be expected from related litigation (prosecuting and defending a mandamus proceeding, and potential suits from the past justice administrator and/or from any future justice administrator, depending on the outcome of the AG's opinion.)

Thank you in advance for your prompt response to this request. We will do our best to be available to meet at the earliest possible convenience. Please contact Kay Henson, 56th Judicial District Court Coordinator, to facilitate setting up the meeting.

Very truly yours,

Lonnie Cox

Lonnie Cox, 56th Judicial District
Administrative District Judge

Kerry Neves

Kerry Neves, 10th Judicial District

John Ellisor

John Ellisor, 122nd Judicial District

Bret Griffin

Bret Griffin, 212th Judicial District

Janis Yarbrough

Janis Yarbrough, 306th Judicial District

Michelle Slaughter

Michelle Slaughter, 405th Judicial District

Barbara E. Roberts

Barbara Roberts, County Court at Law No.2
Administrative County Judge

John Grady

John Grady, County Court at Law No. 1

Kerri Foley

Kerri Foley, County Court at Law No. 3

Kimberly Sullivan

Kimberly Sullivan, Probate Court
Administrative Probate Judge