

Judiciary Committee
Habeas Corpus Matters Task Force
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, June 25, 2019
3:00 PM in Room 2B of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 3:16 PM by Co-Chairs, Merit Lajoie and Kenneth Rosenthal, Esq.

The following task force members were present:

Representative Maria Horn, 064; Judge Thomas Bishop; Judge William Bright; Judge Carl Schuman; Kevin Kane; Co-Chair Merit Lajoie; Nancy Kase O'Brasky (for DOC Commissioner Rollin Cook); Chief Public Defender Christine Rapillo; Charles Ray; Co-Chair Kenneth Rosenthal

Absent were:

Senator John A. Kissel, S7; Judge Samuel Sferrazza; Professor Tim Everett

After convening and introduction, the task force discussed: *S.A. 18-18, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Promote Efficiencies in the Filing of Habeas Corpus Matters*. The chief goals noted were to expedite litigation with respect to the habeas process. Several members voiced concerns over the large amount of habeas petitions being filed in order to provide context for the task force.

Discussion included:

- The task force established a regular meeting schedule; each meeting will henceforth be on the third Wednesday of each month.

- Members established that the first presentation will be from affiliates of the Rockville Superior Court. Presentation will include successful habeas petitions, court transcripts, filing dates and other data gauging the process' current efficiency.
- Task force discussed which data will be presented and by whom to ensure complete understanding and potential modifications to the habeas process. Members proposed presentations by the Rockville habeas judge and clerk. Judicial reports may support the same data.
- The task force discussed the screening process for habeas cases and how faulty screening and mishandling can hinder the process for filing for a petition.
- The task force hopes to overview multiple levels of case and petition screening.
- First regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 17th, 2019.

After concluding the subject of data collection and presentations, members agreed to meet on the third Wednesday of each month and that no meeting should exceed two hours.

Member of the public, Ms. Marianne Heffernan, made a public comment regarding the habeas process and its implications for the rights of victims and their families. Ms. Heffernan noted the lack of a “notification aspect of the habeas process... with regards to the victims’ families.”

The task force then discussed what aspects of the filing system within the Department of Corrections should be examined to measure its efficiency and overall affect towards the habeas process.

A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 PM.