



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

Administrative Office
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Bldg. 1, Room E-316
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
(304) 340-2305 Jennifer Bundy
(304) 340-2306 April Harless
(304) 558-4219 / TTY
(304) 558-1212 / FAX
Web Site: <http://www.state.wv.us/wvsca>
Twitter: [WVCourts](https://twitter.com/WVCourts)
Information Services Division
Email: Jennifer.Bundy@courtswv.gov
Email: April.Harless@courtswv.gov

Justices discuss Freedom of Information with delegation from Republic of Georgia For immediate release Monday, April 4, 2011

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – A group from the Republic of Georgia visited the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia today and discussed the Freedom of Information Act with the Justices.

Chief Justice Margaret Workman, along with Justice Robin Jean Davis and Justice Thomas McHugh, talked with representatives of government agencies, non-government organizations and a regional journalist visiting West Virginia for one week to learn about FOIA and how it works on the federal, state and local levels.

“It was a wonderful opportunity for us to discuss how freedom of information works in our state, and to also learn about how the Republic of Georgia’s judicial system operates,” said Chief Justice Workman. “I hope we were able to help the group understand freedom of information under our legal system.”

The main discussion focused on Supreme Court cases dealing with FOIA, costs associated with filing a FOIA, time limits for responding to FOIA requests, and repercussions if someone does not give out public documents.

The group also has meet with members of Sen. Joe Manchin’s staff and Congressman Nick Rahall’s staff. They also met with West Virginia journalists, Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin, Attorney General Darrell McGraw, and a representative from Marshall University. The rest of the week the group is staying in Bluefield and meeting with local government officials there and in Bluefield, Va.

Facilitator Natia Jikia said the goal of the trip to West Virginia is for the Georgians to get experience on how FOIA is implemented here because the Republic of Georgia is now adopting its own law.

“It is good to see the process, take these lessons back from experience,” said Ms. Jikia. “It was extremely helpful to hear how FOIA works in the state, challenges that have come up, how it is dealt with and how it varies from state to state.”

The visit was arranged by Sudhakar R. Jamkhandi, president of the Center for International Understanding in Princeton, Mercer County.

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