



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Commission gets new chairman, expands its mission, releases annual report

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Adjudicated Juvenile Rehabilitation Review Commission approved its annual report and appointed a new chairman at its quarterly meeting this week. Supreme Court Justice Margaret Workman, who established the commission when she was Chief Justice in 2011, stepped down as chairwoman and appointed Ninth Judicial Circuit (Mercer County) Judge Omar Aboulhosn as chairman.

The commission also changed its name to the Juvenile Justice Commission and expanded its mission to include all out-of-home placements for troubled juveniles, not just those in the custody of the Division of Juvenile Services. Its mission will be focused on systemic improvement in the West Virginia juvenile justice system.

Juvenile Justice Monitor Cindy Largent-Hill's title was changed to Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission.

Justice Workman said she was pleased the commission has accomplished so much. "Now that the commission has been appointed to monitor compliance under an agreed circuit court order (*State ex rel. D.L. and K.P. v. Stephanie Bond*, which involved juvenile facilities), this is the time for me to limit my involvement to a strictly administrative role," she said at the meeting on Tuesday.

Supreme Court Administrative Director Steve Canterbury said, "Justice Workman showed extraordinary sensitivity and foresight sculpted into beneficial public actions for the least-represented citizens of our state – juveniles in the adjudication process.

"Make no mistake, the establishment of the commission by Justice Workman is the fundamental reason the entire state is analyzing changing the way we handle juveniles in trouble in West Virginia," said Director Canterbury, who was responsible for construction of six of West Virginia's juvenile detention facilities when he was director of the Regional Jail and Correctional Facility Authority.

"I am looking forward to working on the commission again," Judge Aboulhosn said. "Juvenile justice is an important topic, not just for the juveniles involved in the system, but also to everyone who works within the system. It is my hope and desire that through the commission's work, in collaboration with all three branches of government, we will be able to improve the lives of juveniles, correctional officers within the system, and the community as a whole."

In rejoining the commission, Judge Aboulhoshn said he will not preside if any further litigation ensues from the *D.L. and K.P. v. Bond* case. A final order was released in that case on January 21.

A link to the commission's 2013 report is available on the West Virginia Judiciary website at <http://www.courtswv.gov/court-administration/juvenile-justice-commission/juvenile-justice-commission.html>.

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