

**Minutes of Citizens Advisory Committee on Jury Selection**  
**Friday, September 25, 2009**  
**Brookens Administrative Center, Jennifer Putman Meeting Room**  
**1776 E. Washington St., Urbana, Illinois**

**Call to Order:** Chair Ammons called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Seven members appointed from the General Public were present: Aaron Ammons, Tricia Avery, Bill Brown, Brian Dolinar, Barbara Kessel, Joan Miller, Jennifer Putman. Three members appointed from the General Public were absent: Lorraine Cowart, Patrick Thompson, Ken Turner (excused). Two Elected Officials were present: Justice & Social Services Committee Chair Matt Gladney, County Board Chair C. Pius Weibel. One Court Official was present: Judge Thomas Difanis. Two Court Officials were excused: Court Administrator Roger Holland, Public Defender Randy Rosenbaum.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of August 21 and September 11 were approved as circulated.

**Public Participation:** Chair Ammons reported on communications with UIUC Professor Will Patterson, Associate Director of the Bruce Nesbitt African American Cultural Center and founder of the Youth Media Workshop (YMW), and Kimberlie Kranich, Director of Community Outreach for Illinois Public Media and Co-Director of the YMW. They discussed avenues by which the YMW and the possible award of a grant from the UIUC Chancellor's Civic Engagement Initiative could boost CACJS's public education campaign.

**Census Tract Mapping (Discussion of Bill Brown's Research):** Brown took questions remaining from his August presentation. He pointed out that, despite wide speculation, we do not have empirical knowledge of the reasons that recipients of Juror Questionnaires and Summonses decline to respond to these official Court documents. Brown commented on the "stale" nature of the pool of names that prospective jurors are drawn from. Names continue to be drawn from a pool that has not been replenished in three years, he said, increasing the likelihood of choosing names of persons who have moved. Brown asked whether it would be possible to draw "all new names" once a year. Judge Difanis stated he will give full consideration to annually drawing all new names, and mentioned a juror software system (available for about \$34,000) with the potential to delete "stale" data.

**Review of Revisions to Juror Questionnaire:** Judge Difanis reported that Courts Administrator Holland will complete the compilation of Questionnaire revisions for the CACJS to review at the next meeting. Meanwhile, the judge requested feedback on three documents: (1) the Juror Summons published by the Jury Selection Commission of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania; (2) the Juror Summons published by the Jury Selection Commission of Lawrence County, Pennsylvania; and (3) the Illinois Petit Juror Handbook, furnished by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts.

The CACJS discussed at length the boxed text on the Pennsylvania counties' summonses headed "Failure of Juror to Appear," which is similar to the boxed language on Champaign County's summons, headed "Failure to Appear for Jury Service Is a Criminal Offense." Difanis stressed his wish to avoid seeming to "sentence" citizens to jury duty; the CACJS agreed it would be counterproductive to seem to threaten prospective jurors, and not wise to use Sheriff's Office resources to follow up on citizens who fail to respond to summonses.

Difanis asked members to review Question 13 on the Montgomery County summons, which asks respondents to voluntarily identify their racial background. CACJS members unanimously favored use of some form of this inquiry for jurors in Champaign County. Putman pointed out the similarity of Question 13 to the race- and ethnicity-related questions on the voluntary Jury Representation Survey produced by Paula Hannaford-Agor for the National Center for Jury Studies (and used for a period in Champaign County courts). Regarding appropriate terminology to categorize different "races," Weibel volunteered to seek advice from the professional staff currently conducting the U.S. Census.

**New Business.** Using/Raising Funds for Promotional Video: Avery suggested the Illinois Disciples Foundation as a possible sponsor for CACJS's public education campaign. Dolinar stated there may be an opportunity to submit a grant proposal to the Office of the UIUC Chancellor, which promotes Civic Engagement Initiatives. Dolinar will report back regarding Chancellor's Office grant submission deadlines. Jury Commission Excuse Codes, Invitation: Avery distributed the list of excuses that Champaign County Jury Commissioners are authorized to grant. Avery extended Commissioner Wanda Adams's invitation to observe the commission's next session, which will convene in the Putman Meeting Room on October 14, 2009. Justice & Social Services Committee Meeting: Chair Gladney stated his intention to include a CACJS progress report on the agenda for the October 5 meeting of the County Board's J&SS Committee. Chair and Vice-Chair Ammons and Avery will make the presentation, and all CACJS members are welcome to participate. Regional Office of Education: Chair Gladney will confer with Ford-Champaign County Superintendent of Education Jane Quinlan regarding her interest in making available to public school teachers in her jurisdiction any educational materials produced by CACJS.

**Adjournment:** Chair Ammons adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Putman  
CACJS Secretary