



CHAIR:
The Honorable Sharon Keller
Presiding Judge
Court of Criminal Appeals

September 5, 2017

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS:
Honorable Sharon Keller
Honorable Nathan Hecht
Honorable John Whitmire
Honorable Brandon Creighton
Honorable Joseph "Joe" Moody
Honorable Andrew Murr
Honorable Sherry Radack
Honorable Linda Rodriguez

The Honorable Ramon Garcia
Hidalgo County Judge
100 E. Cano St. 2nd Floor
Edinburg, TX 78539

MEMBERS APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR:
Mr. Alex Bunin
Honorable Jon Burrows
Honorable Richard Evans
Mr. Don Hase
Honorable Missy Medary

Re: Completion of Texas Indigent Defense Commission
Monitoring Review

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
James D. Bethke

Dear Judge Garcia:

This letter is to inform you that the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (Commission) passed a motion at its August 24, 2017 meeting to close its policy monitoring review of Hidalgo County's indigent defense practices. The entire Commission and its staff congratulate the Hidalgo County Judiciary, Commissioners Court, and various other criminal justice stakeholders, including the Indigent Defense Services Department and the Public Defender Office, for their efforts toward improving the county's indigent defense practices.

Beginning in 2009, the Hidalgo County Judiciary struggled with the requirement to ensure a fair, neutral, and nondiscriminatory distribution of attorney appointments. More recently, uneven distributions of attorney appointments in juvenile cases led the Commission to request regular updates of appointment data. We are encouraged by recent data reports. In particular, from the beginning of this calendar year until early August, distributions of appointments to attorney wheels fell within the legal threshold for presuming a fair, neutral, and nondiscriminatory appointment system. We have also seen that the public defender has been regularly utilized in juvenile cases. These developments should help ensure quality representation and stabilize expected expenses.

Please feel free to call on our agency if you have any inquiries or need assistance. Congratulations on your successful efforts to improve the delivery of indigent defense services in Hidalgo County.

Sincerely,



Jim Bethke

Executive Director

Texas Indigent Defense Commission

cc: Texas Indigent Defense Commission
The Honorable Mario Ramirez, Local Administrative District Judge
and Juvenile Board Chair
The Honorable Rodolfo Gonzalez, Local Administrative Statutory County Judge
The Honorable Renee Rodriguez-Betancourt, 449th District Court Judge
The Honorable David L. Fuentes, Commissioner, Precinct 1
The Honorable Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu, Commissioner, Precinct 2
The Honorable Joe M. Flores, Commissioner, Precinct 3
The Honorable Joseph Palacios, Commissioner, Precinct 4
Mr. Raymundo Eufrazio, Hidalgo County Auditor
Mr. Jimmy Gonzalez, Hidalgo County Chief Public Defender
Mr. Isidro Sepulveda, Jr, Hidalgo County Indigent Defense Services Manager
The Honorable Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, State Senator, District 20
The Honorable Mary "Missy" Medary, Presiding Judge, Fifth Administrative Region