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6 December 2011

9:30 a.m.

Annapolis, MD

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION MEETING

Judge Serrette conducted the meeting, serving in lieu of Judge Raker and Chief Judge Clyburn, who were unable to attend

1. Legislative Initiatives Update.

- a. **Civil Right to Counsel Task Force Bill.** The Judiciary will be submitting proposed legislation to create a task force on a civil right to counsel. If the bill passes, the task force would be staffed by the Commission and would be required to produce a report.
- b. **Fee-Shifting Statute.** The bill will not be included in this year's legislative package. The Commission will send the issue back to the Committee to work on the proposal.

2. **Fee Waiver Proposal.** Fee waiver rules changes were proposed and discussed with the circuit court judges, clerks and court administrators. They were supportive and even suggested that if the rule changes, we make an effort to education courts and the public on this often confusing issue. The proposal was unanimously endorsed, and will be forwarded to the Rules Committee.

3. **Class Action Residual Funds (Cy Pres) Proposal.** Proposed rule changes were discussed. The proposal was unanimously endorsed and will be forwarded to the Rules Committee.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. **Self-Represented Litigant Committee.**

- i. LIMITED SCOPE RULES. The draft rules are still pending with the subcommittee.
- ii. DISTRICT COURT SELF-HELP CENTER. *Walk-In Service*. The Center has served over 11,000 walk-in clients since opening its doors in December, 2009. *Live Chat*. Since the launch of the Virtual Self-Help Center less than three months ago, attorneys have assisted over 1900 individuals via live chat. *Phone*. The Center has assisted over 1,000 users via phone in two months.
- iii. NON-ATTORNEY SERVICE MODELS. At its last meeting, the committee held a discussion about service delivery models that use non-lawyers. There were a number of concerns expressed by the committee regarding these models including concerns about supervision and unauthorized practice of law. It is an issue that will come up again and may require further consideration.

b. **Public Education Committee.** The Commission's posters are now available in Spanish. The *Maryland Courts* video is now posted and can be viewed from the Maryland Judiciary web page. Commission staff are working on other educational projects with the Office of Communications & Public Affairs including short multimedia projects.

c. **Definitions, Standards and Awards.** The Commission will distribute the award information and request nominations beginning December 15.

d. **Critical Barriers Committee.** The Critical Barriers Committee has met with representatives from critical populations that use the courts and legal services, including the incarcerated, seniors, and persons with disabilities. The Commission has now posted maps of accessible entrances and parking for all court and commissioner locations on the Judiciary's website.

- i. *Printed Version of PLL for Prisons*. The Committee proposed producing a printed version of the content of the People's Law Library for distribution to prisons and detention centers. The proposal to provide a written version of PLL was unanimously endorsed by the Commission.

e. **Access & Delivery of Legal Services.** A donation page has been created and will be included in the next pro bono and IOLTA reporting process.