



**Walker, Beth**

**From:** Walker, Beth  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 20, 2017 1:25 PM  
**To:** Davis, Robin; Loughry, Allen; Workman, Margaret; Ketchum, Menis  
**Subject:** RE: Proposal

I have heard from almost everyone about this proposed statement and offer an amended version below for everyone's consideration.

Here are my current thoughts about the statement:

1. If we can reach agreement, I propose that the statement be issued as soon as possible.
2. I am not as concerned about the media coverage generated by issuance of the statement itself but rather about having the statement in place that we can refer back to it in response to future media inquiries.
3. Once this statement is issued, I propose that we consult with Jennifer Bundy to develop a strategy for additional statements/press releases/etc. highlighting the specific improvements we have made and continue to make.
3. The reason I continue to advocate for this proposed statement is my concern about the Court's reputation and credibility moving forward. I understand that there is a lot going on right now, but I think it would be beneficial to have this in place before January 1. That being said, I understand that I am but one vote.

Thank you for your consideration.

Proposed Statement by Supreme Court of Appeals (Draft 12/20/17)

In recent weeks, there has been tremendous media coverage of expenditures by the Supreme Court. West Virginia taxpayers are justifiably concerned about spending relating to the offices of the Justices and other items. We unanimously agree that the expenditures over the past decade were ill-advised, excessive and in many instances needed greater oversight. The Court is resolved to making sure this kind of spending never happens again. The people of West Virginia rightfully demand and deserve this action and it is one of our highest priorities.

The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia is responsible for fairly administering justice for the people of our state. It is the role of the Court to oversee the entire judicial branch of government to ensure that this obligation is met. The judicial branch includes nearly 1500 employees including circuit judges in every county, family court judges, magistrates, circuit clerks, probation officers and the staffs in each of these offices. Simply stated, the West Virginia Supreme Court administers a large and very important branch of government – the judiciary.

The administration of the judicial branch of government is the job of the Supreme Court and the buck stops with us. As such, we take full responsibility for the expenditures in question and pledge to the citizens of this state to correct the issues related to oversight, procurement and personnel. Every Justice is firmly committed to regaining and maintaining the public's trust.

In recent months, we have instituted significant cost-saving and accountability measures and other procedures to enhance efficiency and transparency. These changes have already saved millions of

taxpayer dollars. Looking ahead, the Court will work closely with the legislature and executive branch as appropriate under the Constitution to continue to improve its administration of the Court system.

---

**From:** Davis, Robin

**Sent:** Thursday, December 14, 2017 8:22 AM

**To:** Walker, Beth <Beth.Walker@courtswv.gov>; Loughry, Allen <Allen.Loughry@courtswv.gov>; Workman, Margaret <Margaret.Workman@courtswv.gov>; Ketchum, Menis <Menis.Ketchum@courtswv.gov>

**Subject:** RE: Proposal

I have reviewed your proposed statement by the Supreme Court of Appeals. I agree that any statement should try to be a unanimous statement. As such, I propose your last paragraph be modified as follows:

The Court is currently in the process of instituting significant cost/saving and accountability measures and other procedures to enhance efficiency and transparency. Looking ahead, the Court will work closely with the Legislature and executive branch as appropriate under the Constitution to continue to improve its administration of the Court system.

I suggest this proposed change as there has not been a unanimous agreement among the Court since January 2017 regarding personnel changes.

Finally, while I agree that a statement needs to be made, it may be difficult to come to a consensus as we are all not in Charleston and may be unable to meet prior to the first of the year to discuss these important issues.

---

**From:** Walker, Beth

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2017 12:19 PM

**To:** Loughry, Allen; Davis, Robin; Workman, Margaret; Ketchum, Menis

**Subject:** Proposal

Colleagues,

As indicated during our meeting on Monday, I strongly believe that we need to develop a definite plan to restore the reputation of the Court. As a practical matter, many steps have already been taken to curb spending and improve accountability and transparency (removal of Canterbury, new procurement process, enforcement of spending authority limitation, new organizational chart, etc.).

To that end, I have drafted the following proposed public statement by the Court. I think it would be optimal if the statement would go out before the next round of FOIA responses are finalized. As expressed during the meeting, I think it is crucial that we publicly (and unanimously, in my opinion), take responsibility and commit to future action. This is a discussion draft. I welcome all comments, suggestions, criticisms, etc. I understand that Justice Ketchum has limited access to email right now and I am not suggesting that this be rushed.

Thanks for your consideration of this proposal.

Proposed Statement by Supreme Court of Appeals (Draft 12/13/17)

In recent weeks, there has been tremendous media coverage of expenditures by the Supreme Court. West Virginia taxpayers are justifiably concerned about spending relating to the offices of the Justices and other items. We unanimously agree that the expenditures over the past decade were ill-advised, excessive and in many instances needed greater oversight. The Court is resolved to making sure this kind of spending never happens again. The people of West Virginia rightfully demand and deserve this action and it is one of our highest priorities.

The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia is responsible for fairly administering justice for the people of our state. It is the role of the Court to oversee the entire judicial branch of government to ensure that this obligation is met. The judicial branch includes nearly 1500 employees including circuit judges in every county, family court judges, magistrates, circuit clerks, probation officers and the staffs in each of these offices. Simply stated, the West Virginia Supreme Court administers a large and very important branch of government – the judiciary.

The administration of the judicial branch of government is the job of the Supreme Court and the buck stops with us. As such, we take full responsibility for the expenditures in question and pledge to the citizens of this state to correct the issues related to oversight, procurement and personnel. Every Justice is firmly committed to regaining and maintaining the public's trust.

Starting in January of 2017, the Court started to correct the issues that contributed to unreasonable use of taxpayers' money. First, the Court made notable personnel changes by hiring a new Court Administrator. Since then we have instituted significant cost-saving and accountability measures and other procedures to enhance efficiency and transparency. Looking ahead, the Court will work closely with the legislature and executive branch as appropriate under the Constitution to continue to improve its administration of the Court system.