



Sponsored by the Texas Fair Courts Network and the
Center for Politics and Governance, LBJ School of Public Affairs
November 21, 2013

Money and Justice: Is Texas Ripe for Judicial Reform?

A 2013 Public Policy Evaluation by the Texas Fair Courts Network

- 1:00 – 1:05** **Craig McDonald, Director, Texans for Public Justice**
Welcome
- 1:05 – 1:10** **Sherri Greenberg, Director Center for Politics and Governance,
LBJ School of Public Affairs**
Starting the conversation on judicial reform
- 1:10 – 1:50** **Bert Brandenburg, Justice at Stake**
The New Politics of Judicial Elections:
Threats and trends from around the country (30 m) and Q&A (10 min)
- 1:50 – 2:30** **Panel: Challenges to Fair Courts**
Sherri Greenberg, Moderator (30 m + Q&A 10 m)
- Justice at Risk: Effect of Money & Elections on Opinions & Sentencing
David Lyle, American Constitution Society
 - Pro-Corporate Bias on the Texas Supreme Court: An Analysis of the Last Decade
Ware Wendell, Texas Watch
 - Texas Judicial Elections: A View From the Campaign Trail
Former Harris County District Judge Steven Kirkland
- 2:30 – 2:40** **Break** (10 m)
- 2:40 – 3:00** **Tom “Smitty” Smith, Texas Director, Public Citizen**
Reform Efforts and Prospects for Texas (20 m)
- 3:00 – 3:15** **Diane Miller, Principal, Civic Collaboration**
Civic Engagement Process Overview (15 m)
- 3:15 – 4:55** **Move to breakout circles**
Facilitation Group Discussion (85 m)
Results of Group Discussion (15 m)
- 4:55 – 5:00** **Concluding remarks**

*The Texas Fair Courts Network includes Common Cause Texas, Common Ground for Texans,
Clean Elections Texas, Public Citizen Texas, Texas Civic Engagement Table,
Texas Research Institute, and Texans for Public Justice*



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Presenter Biographies

Sherri Greenberg, Director, Center for Politics & Government at the LBJ School of Public Affairs

In addition to leading the Center and teaching, Sherri Greenberg conducts research specializing in digital transparency, innovative public sector technology, and advancing civic engagement. Greenberg served for 10 years as a member of the Texas House of Representatives, completing her final term in January 2001. She also is a Fellow of the Max Sherman Chair in State and Local Government.

Bert Brandenburg, Exec. Director, Justice at Stake

Bert Brandenburg has been Executive Director of Justice at Stake since 2004. He was the Justice Department's Director of Public Affairs under Attorney General Janet Reno, where he supervised media strategy and press relations for the Justice Department, the FBI, DEA, INS, and 93 U.S. Attorney's offices. He currently serves as President of the Board of Directors of the National Institute on Money in State Politics, on the National Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Judicial Campaign Conduct, and with numerous other organizations. He holds a J.D. and B.A. from the University of Virginia.

David Lyle, Senior Counsel, American Constitution Society

David Lyle joined the American Constitution Society as Senior Counsel for Network Advancement in 2013, having served as the deputy director from 2002-2011. In 2012 he founded the Courts Matter project at Media Matters for America. A graduate of the University of Chicago Law School and the University of Georgia, Lyle also clerked for Judge John C. Godbold of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit.

Ware V. Wendell, Director of Legislative Affairs

Ware advocates on behalf of consumers at the Texas Capitol and before state agencies. Through the Texas Watch Foundation's Court Watch project, he monitors the Texas Supreme Court. Ware has worked as Legislative Aide in the Texas House of Representatives and Chief of Staff in the Texas Senate, and was named a "Texas Super Lawyer Rising Star" twice by Texas Monthly. Ware is an adjunct law professor at the University of Texas School of Law. He holds an A.B. in Political Science from Stanford University and a J.D. from the University of Texas.

Judge Steven Kirkland

Judge Steven Kirkland served as a Judge in the 215th District Court of Harris County from 2009 to 2012 and in Houston Municipal Courts from 2001 through 2008. After graduating from Rice in 1982, he worked as a paralegal at Texaco in order to put himself through the University of Houston Law School. He is a founding board member of Avenue Community Development Corporation which is a community based affordable housing provider in the Near Northside and Washington Avenue corridor.

Tom "Smitty" Smith, Texas Director, Public Citizen

Smitty has been Director of Public Citizen's Texas Office since 1985. He has testified over 1,000 times on energy and other issues before the Texas legislature and Congress. His primary goal is to combat global warming. He has won over a dozen awards for his advocacy work, including the Heinz award and recently was recognized by Politico magazine as one of the 25 most influential Democrats in Texas.

Diane Miller, Principal, Civic Collaboration

Diane Miller specializes in the design, facilitation and implementation of community engagement projects that help diverse groups of people work together to find common ground for action. As principal of Civic Collaboration, Diane has worked with Central Texas governments, businesses and community groups to address complex civic challenges. She sits on the national board of the National Coalition of Dialogue & Deliberation and has a working relationship with the Kettering Foundation.