



11/13/18 item # 29

Judge Victor Villarreal

Webb County Court-at-Law II
1110 Victoria St., Suite 404
Laredo, Texas 78040

November 13, 2018

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Tano Tijerina
Webb County Judge
1000 Houston St.
Laredo, Texas 78040

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Jesse Gonzalez
Webb County Commissioner Precinct 1
1000 Houston St.
Laredo, Texas 78040

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Wawi Tijerina
Webb County Commissioner Precinct 2
1000 Houston St.
Laredo, Texas 78040

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable John Galo
Webb County Commissioner Precinct 3
1000 Houston St.
Laredo, Texas 78040

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Cindy Liendo
Webb County Commissioner Precinct 4
1000 Houston St.
Laredo, Texas 78040

REPORT TO WEBB COUNTY

Dear Webb County Judge and County Commissioners:

Webb County Court-at-Law II (CCL II) continues to strive to become a court of excellence. I am grateful for the opportunity to inform Webb County of the improvements at CCL II, and consistent with my pledge to the Webb County Commissioner's Court and, more recently, to the voters of Webb County for accountability this is my ninth report that the Court gives to Webb County.

100% Guardianship Compliance

Webb County Court-at-Law II was audited by the Office of Court Administration as the worst audited court in the State of Texas regarding guardianship compliance. It was found to be 90% out of compliance with Texas law and the TEXAS ESTATES CODE particularly. The Court has worked diligently, scheduling compliance hearings, meeting with guardians, and registering them. The Court has provided them computer terminals in the Court's jury room to allow them to register as guardians with the Office of Court Administration. This is particularly helpful to those without computers or internet access at home. CCL II staff has communicated with guardians telephonically and in-person, explaining the necessity of yearly reporting; provided information and forms; and appointed attorneys in two cases to represent the wards for legal compliance.

As of November 8, 2018, the Court was found to be in 100% guardianship compliance. To put this in perspective, 80% is considered very good, 85% is difficult, 90% is unheard of. The importance of this work and the message we are sending is that we take care of our elderly, disabled, incapacitated, disadvantaged, and minor children. Our work matters because they matter.

Access to Justice: Class in the Courtroom

Our Access to Justice: Class in the Courtroom mock trial series has welcomed over 2,300 students to the Webb County Justice Center. The program began as a conversation with Senator Zaffirini and then-judge Ed Prado, now US Ambassador to Argentina. As Judge, Ambassador Prado put Santa Claus on trial for 25 years in federal court in San Antonio.

Now, students in Webb County learn about the judicial process and, importantly, when they get older and are summoned to jury duty, they will do so with interest to fulfill their civic duty to serve on a jury and not look for excuses to serve. Our Access to Justice: Class in the Courtroom mock trials are creating a new appreciation for jury service in Webb County among our students.

Jury Trial

On October 29-30, 2018, the Court held a juvenile jury trial. This trial was the first of its kind in the Court in 20 years. Jury trials will now be a regular occurrence in CCL II.

DWI Court

Since its inception, the DWI Court has graduated over 131 program participants. 95 of those participants have graduated since I've been on the bench. This means the Court, under my administration, is responsible for 73% of the program's success.

More recently, the Court has launched the DWI Mentors Program. The program allows DWI Court graduates to serve as examples to those currently in the DWI Court program and others. When they succeed, we all win because we are all safer on the road.

Magistration

On October 1, 2018, Associate Judge Leticia Martinez began magistrating defendants full-time. Since then, the magistration system has been orderly, systematic, efficient, and with regard to the due process rights of those accused of crimes. 587 individuals have been timely magistrated since October 1st without incident. Webb County Court at Law II provides the Webb County District Courts the information regarding the time, date, judge magistrating, and method/place of magistration via the Administrative Judge for the District Courts, Judge Lopez, and the judicial liaison to the Bail Bond Board, Judge Palomo.

Great Improvement on the closure and judicial resolution of cases.

On April 14, when my appointment by the Webb County Judge and Webb Commissioner's Court became effective, there was a backlog of unresolved, unclosed, unadjudicated cases, and many people and families were waiting to have their day in court. Since then, the Court has implemented a systematic case management system to hear cases as promptly as possible. Criminal cases that typically took 2-5 years to resolve, now generally get resolved in 3-4 months. Our case management system continues to improve, and we are providing litigants their day in court swiftly and fairly. The Court will continue to provide the most updated results to Webb County and the Office of Court Administration.

The future

The Court remains committed to do more with less, to continue reforms in CCL II, and to continue restoring public confidence. This report is meant to apprise Webb County of the efforts, improvements, and reforms at CCL II. On behalf of CCL II, I am committed to ensuring fairness, impartiality, and equal access to justice for all who seek relief in this court. People with cases before CCL II continue to be given opportunities to be heard and to have their days in court.

The Webb County Commissioners Court and CCL II share the same goals: improving the quality of life for residents of Webb County, maintaining trust in our systems of government and justice, and earning respect based on measurable and reported results. We are sending a message that people get their day in court with an equal chance to win; that our elderly, disable, incapacitated, disadvantaged, and minor children are important; that we can educate the next generation of jurors with our mock trials and that jury service is critical to our system of justice; and our DWI Court sends a message that if you drink and drive, there are consequences, and there is help to break addiction. All of us in Webb County, together, with our families benefit from our teamwork. You can count on me to continue operating a full-time court, with honesty, integrity, fairness and eager desire to continue the Court's success.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victor Villarreal". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Victor Villarreal

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

Misc. Docket No. 18-9155

APPOINTMENT TO THE JUDICIAL BRANCH CERTIFICATION COMMISSION

ORDERED:

Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 152.052, the Supreme Court of Texas hereby appoints the following judicial member to the Judicial Branch Certification Commission effective immediately and expiring February 1, 2023. This appointee shall fulfill the unexpired term of Judge Migdalia Lopez:

**Hon. Victor Villarreal
Webb County Court-at-Law II
Laredo**

SIGNED this 8th day of November, 2018.



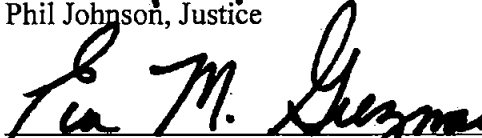
Nathan L. Hecht, Chief Justice



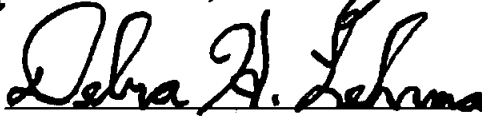
Paul W. Green, Justice



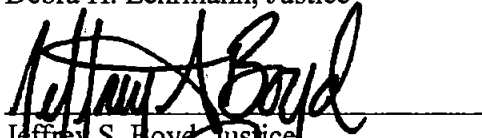
Phil Johnson, Justice



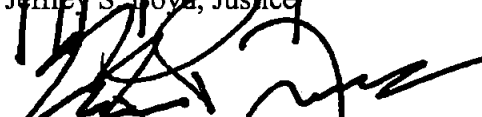
Eva M. Guzman, Justice



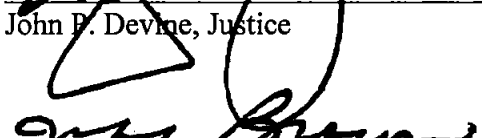
Debra H. Lehrmann, Justice



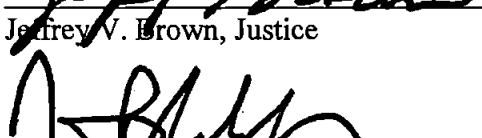
Jeffrey S. Boyd, Justice



John P. Devine, Justice



Jeffrey V. Brown, Justice



James D. Blacklock, Justice