

Commission on Civics Education
Monday, June 11, 2007
Virginia Historical Society
Richmond, Virginia
10 a.m.

Meeting Summary

The Commission on Civics Education, established by House Bill 1769 as an advisory commission in the executive branch of state government, held its seventh meeting on June 11, 2007.

Members Present

Dr. Stephen G. Bragaw
The Honorable James H. Dillard, II
The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds
J. Westwood Smithers, Jr.
Ginger Stanley
Kenneth S. Stroupe, Jr.
The Honorable Robert Tata
Kathryn Williams

Members Absent

The Honorable Kenneth C. Alexander
Carmela C. Bills
Thomas C. Coen
Glen H. Hoptman
Dr. Sheila G. Hill
The Honorable Frederick M. Quayle
The Honorable Beverly J. Sherwood
Richard C. Sullivan, Jr.
The Honorable R. Lee Ware, Jr.

Other Persons in Attendance

Agnes Dunn
Daman Irby
Doug Pond

Ex-Officio Present

Jean Bankos (Designee for The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine)
Dr. Beverly Thurston (Designee for Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.)

Ex-Officio Absent

Dr. Mark E. Emblidge
Jeremy Greenfield (Designee for The Honorable Bill Bolling)
David E. Johnson (Designee for The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell)
Dr. Barbara A. Perry

Department of Education

Betsy Barton
Joel M. Dexter

Welcome

The Honorable Robert Tata called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and completed the roll call. The minutes from the February 26, 2007, meeting of the Commission on Civics Education were approved.

Presentations and Discussions

The Honorable Robert Tata:

- Discussed the resolution designating September 17 – 21, 2007, as Civics Week.
- Asked about the status of the proposed civics seminars.

Daman Irby (Youth Leadership Initiative):

- Described a Youth Leadership Initiative program, *The Constitution for All*, that will be offered during the fall. It:
 - Offers lesson plans and assistance for local mock constitutional conventions.
 - Culminates in the national Mock Constitutional Convention on October 19, 2007.
 - Takes the place of the mock election this year.

It was suggested that momentum for the Mock Constitutional Convention could be created by having a speaker promote it during Civics Week. There were also questions about what materials teachers will receive. It was explained that suggested constitutional amendments would be offered but that the emphasis was on having students develop their own ideas.

Kathryn Williams:

- Proposed that posters displaying the Bill of Rights be printed and distributed to public schools in Virginia.
- Pointed out that this had been done several years ago, but that many schools do not currently have copies.
- Provided an estimated cost of \$4,439 for printing and distribution by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

There was discussion concerning how many schools to include in the mailing and the means of processing and distributing the poster. The original proposal included all public middle and high schools. There was a suggestion that elementary schools be included. Most members in attendance agreed. There was also an offer to send the posters with a mailing from the Youth Leadership Initiative in order to lower costs and more effectively distribute the posters to schools. This option will be explored. There was general agreement on the need to deliver the posters before the beginning of the school year.

The discussion then returned to Civics Week and the proposed civics seminars. Since the seminars were still in the early planning stages, there was a proposal to link them to Civics Week. Also, since the Forum on the Future of Democracy was taking place during the same week, it was suggested that Civics Week could benefit from the presence of the other activity and its speakers. Since the Forum will meet through September 19, 2007, it was decided to focus on September 20 as a day for intensive civics activities. A subcommittee was formed to confer separately and design a plan for that day.

Agnes Dunn:

- Presented information on the Sandra Day O'Connor *Our Courts* Project. It:
 - Is designed for middle school grade levels 7 - 9.
 - Focuses on the rule of law, fairness, and legal rights.
 - Is organized by the Arizona School of Law.
 - Includes twelve teachers, four from Virginia.

Dr. Stephen Bragaw:

- Gave an update on the Project Citizen Competition. There will be:
 - Entries from several Virginia localities.
 - Participation in a national competition for the state winners.

The Honorable James Dillard:

- Proposed sponsoring publication of a textbook on Virginia.
- To be modeled on the 1983 book *The Good People of Virginia*.

Discussion centered on how to encourage the publication. Previously the Chamber of Commerce had sponsored it. It was decided that a representative from the Commission will present the idea to the Chamber. There were also questions concerning format and the need for editing the concepts and updating the approach used to more effectively reach today's students. There was agreement on the usefulness of such a project.

Adjournment

The Honorable Robert Tata:

- Suggested August 3, 2007, as the next meeting date.
- Adjourned the meeting at 11:34 a.m.