



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

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Juvenile Justice Panel Sets Hearings in Wilkes-Barre

HARRISBURG, December 3, 2009 - The Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice which is investigating failures in the juvenile justice system in Luzerne County will hold hearings on Monday and Tuesday, December 7 and 8, in Wilkes-Barre.

Witnesses are scheduled to include juveniles whose cases were adjudicated by former Judge Mark A. Ciavarella, Luzerne County commissioners, school officials, victims of juvenile crimes, assistant district attorneys, assistant public defenders and juvenile probation officials.

The hearings will be held at the Best Western East Mountain Inn at 2400 East End Blvd., Wilkes-Barre, beginning Monday at 9 a.m. Juvenile witnesses are scheduled to testify from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday. An agenda, when complete, will be posted on the Web site of the Unified Judicial System. (See link at the bottom of this release)

Additional witnesses are to include Pennsylvania State Court Administrator Zygmunt A. Pines and officials from the state Judicial Conduct Board.

TV and radio stations can pick up a live feed of the hearings transmitted to an audio/video mult box from pool cameras provided by PCN. Still photography of the hearings is permitted **without the use of a flash**.

The Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice is conducting a noncriminal investigation into the circumstances that led to failures in the juvenile justice system in Luzerne County. Its purpose is to determine the causes of the failures, to restore public confidence in the administration of justice and to make recommendations to prevent a recurrence of a similar situation in Luzerne County or elsewhere.

The commission previously held hearings in Wilkes-Barre on November 9 and 10 and heard testimony from the district attorney, the former district attorney, the public defender, the special master reviewing juvenile cases and others.

Superior Court Judge John M. Cleland, chairman of the commission, will be available to the media to answer questions during breaks and at the conclusion of next week's hearings.

Transcripts of the commission's proceedings and other information about the commission are available at: <http://www.pacourts.us/Links/Public/InterbranchCommissionJuvenileJustice.htm>

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