



Date: August 12, 2022

To: Members, Legal Services Trust Fund Commission

From: Kim Savage, Legal Services Trust Fund Commission Appointments Liaison
Christian Schreiber, Legal Services Trust Fund Commission Appointments Liaison

Subject: Appointment of Members to the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission for the 2022-2023 Term

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This memorandum presents the Appointments Liaisons' recommended 2022-2023 appointments for the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission (Commission). There is currently one client eligible member vacancy. In September 2021, there will be two additional vacancies. The State Bar received twenty-one applications.

The recommendation of the Appointments Liaisons will be presented for action at the August 12 Legal Services Trust Fund Commission meeting.

BACKGROUND

Functions of the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission

The Commission was established by the Board in 1982 to administer revenue from Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) and other funds "remitted to the Legal Services Trust Fund Program of the State Bar."¹ Grants from these funds are made to approximately 100 qualified legal services projects and support centers each year. These organizations provide free civil legal aid to indigent² persons in California, or support services to the organizations that directly serve such indigent persons.

The Commission has three primary duties:

1. Determining applicants' grant eligibility.³

2. Monitoring and evaluating grant recipients' compliance with Trust Fund requirements and grant terms.⁴
3. If necessary, terminating grants for noncompliance or requiring a grant recipient to take corrective action.⁵

In 2021, Senate Bill 211 added section 6210.5 to the Business and Professions Code, effective January 1, 2022, providing the Commission with greater autonomy and policy-making power. The Commission fulfills its duties to oversee grants distribution and recipient compliance primarily through committee work and there are currently five committees, including the: Executive Committee; Rules Committee; Eligibility and Budget Review Committee; Bank Grants Committee; Partnership Grants Committee; and Homelessness Prevention Funds Committee.

Size of the Commission and Term of Appointments

Section 6210.5 of the Business and Professions Code also changed the appointments structure of the Commission. The statute left constant the size of the commission, at 21 voting members and three nonvoting judicial advisors. However, the new statute reduced the State Bar Board of Trustees' (Board) appointments from 14 to six voting members. Eight of the Board's appointments were reassigned to the Commission itself (four appointments, of which at least two must be, or have been within five years of appointment, indigent persons) and the Senate Committee on Rules and the Speaker of the Assembly (two appointments each). As she did prior to the new statute, the Chief Justice, as chair of the Judicial Council, appoints seven of the 21 voting members and the three nonvoting judges, one of whom must be an appellate justice.

Section 6210.5 of the Business and Professions Code sets the term of appointments at four years for each commissioner and allows commissioners to be reappointed for a second four-year term. A commissioner currently serving on January 1, 2022, may be reappointed to two additional full terms following completion of their current term.

The new statute also provides that the chair and vice-chair of the Commission are to be selected by the chair of the Judicial Council instead of the Board, as was previously the case.

DISCUSSION

Introduction and Summary

While there are nine total vacancies on the Commission for the 2022-2023 term, the Commission has only three vacancies to fill. The Judicial Council will fill three seats and the remaining six will be divided by the Commission and the legislature to meet the new statutory

requirements. Of the 15 commissioners not terming off, four are public members (including two bankers and one-client eligible member), six are attorneys, one is a retired attorney, two are retired judges, and two are judges.

Twenty-one applications were received for the Commission's three vacant position – 10 from attorney applicants, nine from public members, and two are unknown. Of these applications, five are current commission members seeking reappointment: (1) Catherine Blakemore; (2) Erica Connolly; (3) Pamela Bennett; (4) Richard Reinis; and (5) Christina Vanarelli. All five were appointed by the Board.

The Appointments Liaisons reviewed all applications, which are being considered by both the State Bar and the commission for their respective vacancies. Staff and the Appointments Liaisons have interviewed six candidates. On July 22, 2022, the Board of Trustees renominated Erica Connolly to an additional four-year term. The Judicial Council, the Senate, and the Assembly have separate nominations processes.

The Appointments Liaisons recommendation, if accepted by the Commission, will help provide a Commission with a strong background in legal services for indigent clients and knowledge of grant-making processes and procedures.

Recommendation for Filling Three Vacant Position

After thorough review of the applications, the Appointments Liaisons recommend the following candidates to fill the three vacancies. An overview of each of the applicants is listed below in alphabetical order.

- **Client-Eligible Applicant: Angie King, San Luis Obispo, CA**

Angie is a retired attorney with over 40-years of public interest law experience representing seniors, inmates, hotel maids, farm laborers, and other indigent clients. When practicing in Hawaii, Angie became one the first five awardees of the ABA President's Award in 1980 given to establish a pro bono referral agency for the State Bar. Angie currently volunteers for the San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation, which is an IOLTA-funded organization. She is also a member of numerous boards and agencies working in coalition for common public service goals, including the San Luis Obispo College of Law Advisory Committee and SLOVillage. In addition, Angie has experience in grants administration. The Appointments Liaisons believe that Angie's work with indigent clients and legal services programs will provide the Commission with a valuable perspective.

- **Public Member Applicant: Dr. Vanetta Campbell, Los Angeles, CA**

Vanetta is currently a Professor at California State University Long Beach, School of Social Work, where she has taught since 2005. She previously taught in the Department of Psychology at Mount Saint Mary's University and Los Angeles Community College District. Vanetta also has extensive volunteer experience. She is currently the Co-Chair of the University of California Berkeley, School of Social Welfare's Dean Advisory Board and the Chair of the California State University Long Beach, President's Commission on the Status of Women. Vanetta states that her "academic and professional experience provide a dynamic perspective for system analysis and policy formulation practice." The Appointments Liaisons believe that Vanetta's perspectives as a public member will enhance the Commission's decision-making processes.

- **Public Member Applicant: Xavier Vargas, Los Angeles, CA**

Xavier is currently the VP of Strategic Initiatives & Communications at Alliance, where he is responsible for leading a public charter school network's short- and long-term strategic planning, and both internal and external communications. Prior to joining Alliance, Xavier was part of New York City's historic back-to-school effort during the COVID-19 pandemic. He helped to create and then led the NYC Department of Education's "Situation Room" -- the command center tasked with assisting 2,000+ schools and programs to safely return to in-person instruction. Xavier also has extensive experience in financial services and economic development. The Appointments Liaisons believe that Xavier will contribute a diverse perspective to the Commission and will be helpful in crafting policy recommendations.

CONCLUSION

After careful consideration of each applicant's skills, experiences, and perspectives in relation to the Commission's charge and work plan, the Appointments Liaisons strongly recommends the appointment of Angie King, Dr. Vanetta Campbell, and Xavier Vargas. Moreover, the applicants have strong backgrounds in legal services for indigent clients, complex analytical backgrounds, and knowledge of grant-making processes and procedures, which is vital in advancing the Commission's objectives related to increasing access to justice.