

Don Barber,
Town of Caroline

PLEASE NOTE:

The following questions illustrate some of the areas of inquiry by the Task Force. They do not suggest any current view of the Task Force or its members; nor are they meant to forecast any definitive objective of the group. They are intended simply to help you focus your views and any submission that you care to provide.

How well do the local Justice Courts protect the due process rights of defendants in criminal proceedings?

I have heard no complaints. My perception is that local courts are well trained in this area.

What are the benefits/disadvantages of local Justice Courts being presided over by non-lawyer Justices?

Not taking community roots into account - only advantage is ~~the~~ possibility for lower salary cost to municipality.

Do the Justice Courts provide consistent and quality administration of the criminal and civil law, operating in an independent, public and transparent manner?

I believe the court clerk plays a major role in administration. We have seen significant differences with turnover every 5 years. I have heard no complaints about transparency.

What is your opinion about a plan which would create one or two strategically located municipal courts presided over by a lawyer-Judge, to replace the 13 local town/village courts where non-lawyer Justices may preside?

Political issues to overcome - connection to rural community & waiting time to enter court system and then on the day of the trial.

What is your opinion about a plan which would eliminate all village courts (Cayuga Heights and Freeville) and let the towns absorb those caseloads? No opinion

What is your opinion about a plan which would eliminate the second Justice in town courts and thereby increase the remaining Justice's time/responsibility?

I am fine with this if there is a predictable and fair mutual aid system established (so that a couple of towns receive majority of caseload but few fees.)

What is your opinion about a plan which would move all criminal cases to one or two District Courts (presided over by lawyer-Judges), or to the Ithaca City Court, and leave the town and village courts otherwise intact?

Same as above

What is your opinion about a plan which would move all after-hours arraignments to a central booking area?

No opinion

What suggestions do you have for improving the local justice court system?

None at this time

Don Barber 2/2/15