



LEIGH INGALLS SAUFLEY
Chief Justice

STATE OF MAINE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT

July 17, 2012

Open Letter From Chief Justice Leigh I. Saufley

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Re: GAL Oversight Review

I want to thank the public, interested parties, and stakeholders who attended the May 31, 2012, meeting regarding improving the Guardian Ad Litem complaint process, and I thank those who took the time to send in written comments as well.

The written comments that have been posted on the judicial branch web page are available at: http://www.courts.state.me.us/maine_courts/supreme/gal_comments.shtml.

As mentioned at the meeting, the Maine Judicial Branch has obtained the assistance of the National Center for State Courts to provide the Branch with information on how other state courts investigate and resolve complaints against GALs. We expect to receive information from NCSC in the near future.

In the next few weeks, the Branch will form a Task Force to review the public comments, as well as the information received from the NCSC, and to provide feedback as we develop proposals for revisions to the GAL complaint process. We intend to create a Task Force that is broadly representative of the stakeholders involved in these matters.

Because the Branch must report back to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary by October 1, 2012, members of the Task Force must be available to attend meetings in August and September. We anticipate as many as three meetings in Augusta in that short time frame. Several people who filed comments expressed an interest in providing further assistance or information to the Branch or to serve on any committee we might form.

To keep the numbers manageable, we will select one or two members to represent the separate stakeholder groups, including public/consumer representatives. Those interested in serving on the Task Force should notify the court by **July 24, 2012**, by email to lawcourt.clerk@courts.maine.gov, or to Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court, 205 Newbury Street, Room 139, Portland, ME 04101.

We will post the members of the Task Force and meeting dates once the Task Force is formed.

Once, again, I thank all those who have taken the time to share their comments with the Court.