



MORGAN MEYER  
CHAIR

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL INVESTIGATING  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NICOLE COLLIER  
VICE CHAIR

October 18, 2019

**STATEMENT**

The House Committee on General Investigating has retained a bi-partisan expert panel of legal advisors to assist the committee in connection with its August 2019 request for an investigation by the Texas Rangers into the facts and circumstances surrounding a June 12, 2019 meeting between Michael Quinn Sullivan and Representatives Dennis Bonnen and Dustin Burrows.

Patricia Gray, a former Democratic member of the House; Will F. Hartnett, a former Republican member of the House; and Thomas R. Phillips, the former chief justice of the Texas Supreme Court, will serve as legal advisors to the committee during the committee's review of the Rangers' investigative report. Short biographies of the expert panel follow this statement.

"My colleagues on the committee and I have consistently said that any investigation must follow the facts and the evidence without regard to political consideration," said Committee Chairman Morgan Meyer, R-Dallas. "This bi-partisan panel will aid the committee in evaluating the final evidence solely on legal considerations. Each member of the panel is recognized for their legal expertise and judgment, and we are grateful that they are willing to again serve the public in this capacity."

"Due to heightened public interest, my colleagues and I want to ensure transparency in this critical matter remains consistent with the constitutional guarantees of due process," said Committee Vice Chairwoman Nicole Collier, D-Fort Worth. "And, while the committee does not ordinarily make public statements on its actions during the course of an investigation, it is crucial that the House of Representatives and the public have continued confidence in the committee's work."

After the Rangers deliver their final report to the committee, the panel of legal advisors will review the report and the supporting evidence with the committee members and advise the committee on the most appropriate next steps.

## PANEL BIOGRAPHIES

**Patricia Gray** served in the Texas House of Representatives from 1992-2003. During her tenure, she served on the General Investigating Committee, chaired the Civil Practices and Public Health Committees, and chaired the Texas Sunset Commission overseeing legislative review of Texas state agencies. Texas Monthly named her one of the Ten Best Legislators in 1999 noting her “sincerity and deep conviction.” A recipient of the American Medical Association’s Nathan Davis Award for Outstanding Government Service, Ms. Gray served as Director of Research for the Health Law and Policy Institute at the University of Houston Law Center. The first woman president of the Galveston County Bar Association, she practiced law in Galveston for 21 years, primarily as a partner in the firm Yarbrough, Jameson & Gray. A former adjunct professor of law at UH and special graduate faculty member at The University of Texas Medical Branch, Ms. Gray is an original co-author of *Control Measures and Public Health Emergencies: A Bench Book for Texas Judges*. She earned her J.D. from South Texas College of Law Houston and her LL.M. in Health Law from UH.

**Will Hartnett** served in the Texas House of Representatives from 1991 to 2013. During his tenure, he chaired the Judiciary Committee, and served as vice chair of that committee and the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee, and served on the Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Transportation Committees. Mr. Hartnett served as the Master of Discovery for three House election contests in 2005 and again for an election contest in 2011. Texas Monthly named him one of the Ten Best Legislators in 2011, calling him “the epitome of fairness.” A partner in The Hartnett Law Firm in Dallas, Mr. Harnett is board certified in Estate Planning and Probate Law, is a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, and is listed in the 2019 edition of The Best Lawyers in America. He served on the Board of Directors of the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation from 1987-1990 following his nomination by Governor Clements and confirmation by the Texas Senate. Mr. Harnett is a cum laude graduate of Harvard University and earned his J.D. from The University of Texas in 1981.

**Thomas R. Phillips** served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas from 1988 to 2004. During his tenure on the Court, he served as President of the Conference of Chief Justices, as an adviser to the Federal Judicial Code Project of the American Law Institute, and as a member of the Committee on Federal-State Relations of the U.S. Judicial Conference. Mr. Phillips is a partner in the Austin office of Baker Botts with an appellate practice and, as Chambers USA reports, he “has an absolutely exceptional legal mind and does incredibly well at narrowing the issues to the most important core issues.” Before becoming chief justice, Mr. Phillips was a briefing attorney for Justice Ruel C. Walker of the Supreme Court of Texas, practiced law in the Houston office of Baker Botts, and served as judge of the 280th District Court in Harris County. A member of the American Law Institute, he is board certified in Civil Trial Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Mr. Phillips is a graduate of Baylor University and earned his J.D. from Harvard University.