



MEDIA CONTACT: Veronica Gonzalez
(210) 335-2873 office
(210) 259-9923 mobile
veronica.gonzalez@bexar.org
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Commissioner Sergio “Chico” Rodriguez Welcomes Korean Delegation

Commissioner Sergio “Chico” Rodriguez met with a Supreme Court Korean delegation yesterday and gave the group a personal tour of the Bexar County Courthouse and Commissioners Court chambers. The delegation consisted of four criminal and civil judges, clerks and court officers. They also visited the Bexar County jail, criminal courtrooms and civil courts at both the Justice Center and Courthouse.



Bexar County has cooperated with the Supreme Court of South Korea to provide participating judges with opportunities to observe court operations in the United States and work side-by-side with judges in various courts. Although similarities in the legal system exist between both countries, there are also some key differences.

The U.S. courts allow access to legal counsel at every step of legal proceedings, but under Korean law, an attorney need not be present during questioning of a suspect by the public prosecutor's office or police. Korean authorities also do not allow the traditional “one phone call” privilege for arrested suspects. One of the most marked differences between the two legal systems is the lack of double jeopardy in the Korean legal system, so being found innocent of a crime is no protection against being tried again for the same offense in Korea. In addition, as of last year, the “jury system” was introduced in Korea, allowing ordinary citizens to participate in criminal trials as jurors.

“Learning about Korean law and the differences between our two countries was fascinating,” said Commissioner Chico Rodriguez. “I hope to continue our close relationship and open communications with our colleagues in Korea.”