The three sessions of the Texas Senate Hearing on Jurisprudence in October 2006 reveal significant concerns regarding the Texas probate system, focusing on judicial conduct, fiduciary responsibilities, and the protection of vulnerable individuals. Key themes include:

\* \*\*Allegations of Cronyism and Bias:\*\* Several witnesses described a "small circle of friends" or a "Tomb Raiders Club" within Harris County probate courts, suggesting that judges favored certain attorneys and appraisers, leading to inflated fees and questionable appointments ([Ex 2-3i] 2006-10-11 791071b October 11 2006 Texas Senate Hearing on Jurisprudence.docx, [Ex 2-3k] 2006-10-11 791072b October 11 2006 Texas Senate Hearing on Jurisprudence.docx).

\* \*\*Judicial Immunity and Accountability:\*\* Witnesses questioned the extent of judicial immunity for court appointees, arguing that they should be held accountable for breaches of fiduciary duty ([Ex 2-3k] 2006-10-11 791072b October 11 2006 Texas Senate Hearing on Jurisprudence.docx).

\* \*\*Need for Transparency and Oversight:\*\* Testimonies emphasized the need for greater transparency in probate proceedings, including full disclosure of financial interests in property sales and stricter oversight of court-appointed fiduciaries ([Ex 2-3k] 2006-10-11 791072b October 11 2006 Texas Senate Hearing on Jurisprudence.docx).

\* \*\*Concerns about Attorney Fees:\*\* Witnesses expressed concerns about excessive attorney fees and the potential for conflicts of interest when attorneys serve as both guardians and legal counsel ([Ex 2-3j] 2006-10-11 791072a October 11 2006 Senate Hearing on Jurisprudence.docx).

\* \*\*Proposed Reforms:\*\* Recommendations included eliminating specialty courts, strengthening the Judicial Ethics Commission, and creating an inspector general for the judicial branch ([Ex 2-3i] 2006-10-11 791071b October 11 2006 Texas Senate Hearing on Jurisprudence.docx, [Ex 2-3k] 2006-10-11 791072b October 11 2006 Texas Senate Hearing on Jurisprudence.docx).