

# Senator Robert Myers

*Alaska State Legislature*



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### **SB 25 - Sponsor Statement**

“An Act relating to information on judicial officers provided in election pamphlets.”

The State of Alaska constitutional framers established a three-part judicial merit selection and retention system. The Alaska Judicial Council screens and nominates judicial applicants based on the candidate’s moral character, professional competence, and legal experience. The governor then appoints a candidate from the list provided by the Alaska Judicial Council. Allowing Alaskans to vote to retain judicial officers is the third and most important part of the process and reflects the desire of our state founders to keep the judiciary accountable to the electorate.

In addition to screening judicial applicants, the Judicial Council conducts investigations into judicial officers to evaluate their qualifications. Information collected is used for review by the council when they make their simple yes or no recommendation that is published in the Alaska Official Election Pamphlet.

Given the wealth of public information collected by the Judicial Council, it is the goal of this proposed legislation to increase the information readily available to the public. The change will foster informed and knowledgeable voters in judicial retention elections. Some of the information that will be available to voters includes judicial officers’ education, professional experience, affiliation with service organizations, public disciplinary proceedings against a judicial officer, and a self-assessment that evaluates the judicial officer’s judicial performance. This information is already collected by the council, but this legislation will require the election pamphlet to include some of this additional information.

The three-part judicial merit selection and retention system provides the best balance between judicial merit and accountability to the electorate. It relies on extensive information already collected by the Judicial Council to improve the knowledge of the electorate when they cast their votes to retain judicial officers.

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