

Senate Judiciary,

I served on the Alaska Judicial Council as an attorney member from 2000 to 2006. The work load was such that I can foresee the day when the sheer volume of judicial applicants might require some alternate means for the extensive screening of candidates that the council provides. Because the members are not compensated, personal sacrifice is asked of all members who serve. All members review all candidates. The application materials themselves are commonly extensive, requiring considerable preparation time before the candidate interviews are conducted. Interviews are held depending upon the frequency of judicial vacancies. That number has increased as our state has grown and the number of judicial positions has expanded. The practice since statehood has been for all candidates to be interviewed (at least once). All council members are involved in all decisions on candidates. In addition, there are meetings to review sitting judges who are up for retention. There is also the data collection work assigned to the council.

As our state judiciary has expanded over the past 52 years, the council's work has expanded. There have been surges with certain peak years – commonly those when there have been numerous additional judicial positions created, and when there have been disproportion numbers of retirements. Despite the growth, the seven member council has managed. The compactness of the seven member council recommends itself for certain efficiencies that would be lost with a larger council composition.

I have trouble appreciating how expanding the council to 16 members will make the process more efficient. Coordinating meeting scheduling for 7 members presents a big enough challenge. Getting 16 calendars to line up will present a distinct challenge for any one meeting, let alone the 3 to 5 (or more?) that commonly happen per year. The only arguable advantage I can foresee with using a council as large as 16 members would be if the work load becomes sufficiently overwhelming that there is simply too much work to expect of public service council members. Consider, for example, the workload model used by the the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. That federal court consists of 30 or more appellate judges. The 9th Circuit acts through the assignment to a three judge panel, drawn from the 30 sitting judges. Occasions when the full panel considers matters are limited to *en banc* or certain administrative matters. I question whether using the 9th Circuit model of "efficiency" is required for our state.

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