

Daniel George

From: Beth Adams <bethmuir54@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2015 10:00 PM
To: Senate State Affairs
Subject: NO ON SJR 3

Keep politics out of our judiciary! The system we have has been working for over 50 years, there is NO reason to change it except to try to politicize it. Back to work on fiscal issues!

Beth Adams

Sent from my iPhone

Daniel George

From: Brad Owens <bowensak@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2015 6:49 PM
To: Senate State Affairs
Cc: Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: SJR 3

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I write to urge you to oppose SJR 3. The reasons are many: first, the current merit system for selecting and retaining judges is a model resulting in a genuinely independent and high quality judiciary. There is no good non-political reason to change this system created by the Alaska founding-fathers. Second, the proposed change creates a serious issue involving the separation of powers. There is no valid reason to create a situation that dramatically impacts the careful system of checks and balances between the three branches of government and is likely to result in years of litigation. Third, it will negatively politicize courts in Alaska by making judges beholden to the people and organizations that support them, rather than the principles of law under the Constitution.

Please reject this effort to change the Alaska Judicial Council as proposed by SJR 3.

Brad Owens

Sent from my iPhone

Donald McClintock
6525 Michigan Blvd.
Anchorage Alaska 99516

March 23, 2015

Via Electronic Mail: senate.state.affairs@akleg.gov
Senate State Affairs Committee

Re: SJR 3

Dear Senators:

As a long time business attorney in Alaska, I urge you not to advance the committee proposal for SJR 3 out of committee. Our system works. For over thirty years I have seen prosecutors, government attorneys, public defenders and private attorneys go through the grueling and transparent Judicial Counsel process. Invariably, those nominated for the governor's consideration had earned the respect of the bar without regard to their religion, ethnicity or political affiliation. Equally significant, once these attorneys assumed the robes of their office, the vestiges of their past disappeared. We have truly cultivated a culture of an independent impartial judiciary and our judicial selection process is an integral part of that culture.

Do I disagree with some of the results from the courts? Of course, and sometimes, not always I have been vindicated on appeal. But I have never walked out of court with the concern or belief that my case was lost because my adversary or his client had an affiliation with the legislature or the governor's office that somehow steered the selection process so the judge was beholden to any constituency or to any predetermined bias or cause.

Constitutional Convention Delegate Ralph Rivers acknowledged as much when our delegates overwhelmingly rejected legislative confirmation of the Bar Association delegates. In speaking against the amendment, he said:

The purpose of the draft as now written is to have a non-partisan selection of these lawyer members, and the minute you adopt something like this, you are making a partisan proposition out of it. We want that to carry through to a non-partisan selection of judges, so I think our thinking is quite clear."

Alaska is recognized nationally for its highly successful judicial selection process free of partisanship. Our system of non-partisan merit selection combined with retention elections promotes the best of both worlds—non-partisan merit selection coupled with pure democratic accountability—a vote of the people. The system works—don't break it. Let's be proud of it.

Sincerely,
/s
Donald McClintock

Daniel George

From: SCOTT MCMURREN <zoom907@me.com>
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2015 10:19 PM
To: Sen. Bill Stoltze
Cc: Senate State Affairs; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Pete Kelly; Christy McMurren
Subject: SJR3

Mar. 23, 2015

Sen. Bill Stoltze
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
(via email)

Re: SJR3

Dear Sen. Stoltze:

Thank you for your interest in the Alaska Judicial Council. The Council has served Alaskans very well since Statehood. Senator Kelly's proposed constitutional amendment, SJR3, is a solution looking for a problem. It is truly a weapon of mass distraction. I oppose the resolution. Further, I would admonish you to instead work on a budget within our newly-limited means in the midst of the oil-price crash.

Your attempt to "pack" the council with appointees who pass your political litmus test is a blatant attack on an independent judiciary.

Your bold move to grab the power to confirm lawyers on the council is another affront to an independent judiciary.

Senator Kelly's populist ruse in calling for a "vote of the people" really misses the mark. The people would be voting to take procedural power from one branch of government to another. The real "vote of the people" comes when it's time to retain judges.

This strategy is reminiscent of when President Franklin Roosevelt tried to pack the U.S. Supreme Court with as many as 15 justices in order to get more favorable rulings. That was in 1937. The Judicial Procedures Reform Bill ultimately failed. It is my sincere and earnest desire that your SJR3 meets with a similar fate.

Wish Best Wishes,

Scott McMurren
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Anchorage, AK 99508
(907)727-1113
zoom907@me.com

cc: Sen. Kevin Meyer, Sen. Berta Gardner, Sen. Pete Kelly, Senate State Affairs Committee