

From: Monika Adcock [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Sen. Lora Reinbold <Sen.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov>
Cc: Carder Adcock [REDACTED]
Subject: Please support Senate Bill 14

Hi Senator Reinbold,

I'm writing to urge your support for SB 14, mainly because it gives elected officials--chosen and voted for by the people--the opportunity to weigh in on selecting judges. Right now our only recourse is to select judges from the pool provided by the unelected and unaccountable Alaska Judicial Council.

Thank you for your support and for your efforts on behalf of all Alaskans!
Monika

--
Monika Adcock
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Aaron Weaver

From: Sen. Lora Reinbold
Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 12:07 PM
To: Aaron Weaver; Terrence Shanigan
Subject: FW: Support SB 14

Senator Reinbold

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From: Clyde Marcellus [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 1:56 PM
To: Sen. Lora Reinbold <Sen.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support SB 14

I understand you are a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I urge you to pass SB 14. I support SB 14 because it gives elected officials, chosen by the people, a greater voice in choosing judges, rather than the unelected and unaccountable Alaska Judicial Council.

Aaron Weaver

From: Carol Carman [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2021 10:55 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB 14

My name is Carol Carman, and I am speaking only for myself.

I am in favor of SB 14. I listened to public testimony and especially appreciate the lawmakers who called in with their expertise in favor of SB 14, and suggestions for constitutional amendments.

Even at the federal level Supreme Court justices are chosen solely by the President and confirmed by the legislature through very public hearings. The President's choice for judges is not spoon fed to him by a small group of lawyers or judges who have the potential to have a conflict of interest.

For the first court lady who testified (Fri, Feb 12) that approach is partisan thus inappropriate is suspect in itself, as retaining exclusive power over judges by only a small select private group with private interviews of judges (with no oversight) makes it even more prone to being an exclusive 'good ole' boys club'. With the left currently putting negative labels on the right for undeserved reasons solely for political reasons, I can see a huge risk of that happening in a small private group of colleagues with ultimate power over who does or does not become a judge.

I have seen numerous judges actually change law.

Abortion was made legal in a well known court case. No law was passed. It was legislated at the bench. Evidence is that abortion was murder, then after a single judge's ruling suddenly abortion was legal. Evidence also is when legislatures change laws to suit what judges say. That is totally backwards from how laws are supposed to be created. Two wrongs don't make a right.

The PFD is now 'appropriated' by the legislature in the budget. It used to be a transfer of money according to the formula in statute. But, one judge changed all that. Statute has not been followed since that court case. He essentially legislated from the bench. Evidence is the change that occurred after his ruling.

I think there needs to be an amendment that allows for dismissing judges who issue rulings that clearly violate existing law. Such a judge's ruling should be nullified, stating that his/her ruling violates existing statute or the constitution.

Thank you, Senator Shower, for this bill. Proud to call you my senator!

Carol Carman
[REDACTED]

Aaron Weaver

From: Bill [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 3:12 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB14

I'm in FAVOR of Mike Showers SB14 and want it to move to the next level or better yet PASSED.

William Quantick
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Aaron Weaver

From: Dean Eisberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 12:59 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB14

SB 14

Sponsor - Mike Shower

Short Title - and review of judges

"An Act relating to the selection and retention of judicial officers for the court of appeals and the district court and of magistrates; relating to the duties of the judicial council; relating to the duties of the Commission on Judicial Conduct; and relating to retention or rejection of a judicial officer."

I support SB14 allowing the Legislature have the say in picking our Judges, NOT THE ALASKA BAR ASSOCIATION.

Dean Eisberg
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Aaron Weaver

From: Paula & Robert Caywood [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 12:15 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB14

Robert Caywood
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I am in favor of SB14. I also think that judges that go against the vote of the people should be rejected.

Aaron Weaver

From: Andrew R Zajac [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 11:39 AM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB 14

To All Involved,
Please support SB 14. I am opposed to the Alaska Bar Association selecting our judges. That should be the responsibility of our state legislators. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Andrew Zajac
Eagle River, AK

Sent from my iPhone

Aaron Weaver

From: Adam Hykes [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 11:54 AM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: Yes on sb14

Hello Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Adam Hykes, I represent myself and my wife Kayla Hykes. We live in District P in Homer, and we support SB14.

Thank you for serving,
Adam & Kayla Hykes

From: Nicole Borromeo [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 2:22 PM
To: Sen. Lora Reinbold <Sen.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov>; Sen. Robert Myers <Senator.Robert.Myers@akleg.gov>; Sen. Jesse Kiehl <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Shower <sen.mike.shower@akleg.gov>; Sen. Shelley Hughes <sen.shelley.hughes@akleg.gov>
Cc: Julie Kitka [REDACTED]
Subject: Opposition to Senate Bill 14, Judicial Selection and Retention

Chairman Reinbold and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Please find attached a letter of opposition to SB 14, together with a Convention Resolution to that effect, from the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Alaska's merit-based judicial selection and retention system is the gold standard.

Please do not pass this bill out of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Cordially,
Nicole

NICOLE BORROMEO
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



February 10, 2021

Sent Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Lora Reinbold
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811
Senator.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov

Re: Senate Bill 14, Selection and Review of Judges

Dear Chairman Reinbold and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) writes in opposition to Senate Bill (SB) 14, Selection and Review of Judges.

Formed in 1966, AFN is the oldest and largest statewide Native organization in Alaska. Our members include 8 regional Native for-profit corporations, 12 regional Native not-for-profit organizations (or tribal consortia), 164 village Native for-profit corporations, and 165 federally recognized tribes. Our mission, among other things, is to advance and enhance the political voice of the Alaska Native community on issues of mutual concern, including changes to Alaska's judiciary.

Since 1959, Alaska has followed the non-partisan, merit-based Missouri Plan (Plan) for the selection and retention of judges. More than 30 other states also follow the Plan in some form. It is the preferred best practice because it is transparent to the public and accountable to the people.

The mechanisms of the selection and retention process are set out in Article 4 of Alaska's Constitution. Specifically, the seven member, non-partisan Alaska Judicial Council (Council) screens and nominates at least two judicial candidates to the Governor when a vacancy on the bench occurs. The Governor then appoints one of the candidates to the judgeship. The judge then stands for retention by Alaska voters at regular intervals which coincide with general elections. The process has resulted in high-quality judges and fair and impartial state courts for more than six decades.

SB 14, introduced by Senator Mike Shower (R- Wasilla), would make unnecessary fundamental changes to Alaska's judiciary, including—

- Allowing the Governor to fill judicial vacancies by appointing any attorney who has practiced law in Alaska for at least five years, as opposed to selecting the most qualified candidate as vetted by the Council;
- Politicizing the bench by subjecting all judges to legislative confirmation, as opposed to utilizing the merit-based appointment process, which so far has avoided corrupt judicial selections;
- Transferring judicial retention responsibilities to the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct (Commission), as opposed to the Council, even though the Commission has no judicial evaluation experience; and
- Requiring judges to pass a subjective ideological test by signaling their commitment to 'strict constitutional interpretation of statutes and regulations and adhering to legislative intent,' which is not now present in Alaska's judicial selection and retention process, and perhaps the most concerning aspect of the bill.

More than 60 years ago Alaskans chose the Missouri Plan for selecting and retaining state judges for a reason. It is the gold standard. Alaska's judicial selection and retention system is not broken. It does not need to be fixed through SB 14 or Sen. Shower's corresponding Senate Joint Resolution 2.

Similar efforts have been resoundingly rejected by the Alaska State Legislature in the past. AFN respectfully asks the members of this Committee to do the same here.

A resolution from our 2014 Convention on this subject is enclosed for your review and records. Please contact me directly if you have any questions about the content of this letter.

Sincerely,



Julie Kitka
President

Encl: Reso. 14-37

Cc: (S)JUD Members, Senators Shower, Hughes, Myers, Kiehl
AFN Board of Directors



Alaska Federation of Natives
2014 Annual Convention
Resolution 14 - 37

- TITLE:** A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ALASKA’S CURRENT SYSTEM OF SELECTION AND RETENTION OF STATE COURT JUDGES
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska and its membership includes 165 federally-recognized tribes, 146 village corporations, 12 regional corporations, and 12 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs; and
- WHEREAS:** The mission of AFN is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community; and
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Judicial Council (AJC) is an independent citizens’ commission established by the Alaska Constitution to screen applicants for judicial vacancies, nominate the most qualified applicants for appointment by the governor, evaluate the performance of sitting judges, recommend to voters whether judges should be retained, and conduct research related to the administration of justice in Alaska; and
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Constitution provides that the AJC shall have seven members, including three attorneys appointed by the Alaska Bar Association, three non-attorneys appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislature, and the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, who acts as the chairperson; and
- WHEREAS:** Through the AJC process the Alaska Constitution created a merit-based system for appointing judges while retaining accountability to the voters, and this Alaska system is widely considered to be one of the best state judicial selection processes in the United States; and
- WHEREAS:** AFN does not support any amendments that would change Alaska’s merit- based system for selecting judges into a partisan political process controlled by the governor and in the long term would inevitably diminish the quality and fairness of the state judiciary; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska Native Tribes, tribal organizations, and individual Alaska Natives subjected to Alaska’s civil or criminal judicial system are best served by an independent state judiciary, selected on merit.
- NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the delegates of the 2014 Annual Convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives support Alaska’s current system of selection and retention of state court judges; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska Federation of Natives opposes any attempt to amend the Alaska Constitution to alter the composition of the Alaska Judicial Council to politicize the judicial selection process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the policy of AFN until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

SUBMITTED BY: Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Bristol Bay Native Association, Aleut Corporation, CIRI
COMMITTEE ACTION: DO PASS
CONVENTION ACTION: ADOPT



Aaron Weaver

From: Donna Goldsmith [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 8:37 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Cc: Donna Goldsmith
Subject: Testimony opposing SB 14
Attachments: AFIC Letter to Reinbold re Goldsmith Testimony SB14.pdf

Hello

I have attached testimony on behalf of Alaskans for Fair and Independent Courts opposing SB 14, which I previously sent to LIO and to Senator Reinbold, directly, on Friday February 12th. I just discovered that it is not posted on Basis.

ALASKANS for FAIR and INDEPENDENT COURTS



1120 Huffman Road, Suite 24-603, Anchorage, AK 99515

February 12, 2021

TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

Honorable Lora Reinbold, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Testimony Opposing SB 14

Dear Senator Reinbold:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SB 14, which proposes to make substantial changes to our Constitutionally-created system of judicial selection and retention. Alaskans for Fair and Independent Courts strongly opposes SB 14, and urges members of this committee not to report it out of committee.

I began my legal career in Alaska as a clerk to the Honorable Walter J. Carpeneti 34 years ago. During my career, I worked with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges on judicial education and policy matters. As part of my law practice, I also conducted judicial training for state and tribal judges throughout the country for more than 15 years. I had the privilege and opportunity to work alongside many talented judges who worked tirelessly to enhance both their skills and knowledge and improve the delivery of justice in their respective states. Based on this in-depth and nationwide experience I can tell you that Alaska's independent, merit-based system of judicial selection and retention is greatly admired as one of the best such systems in the country.

I strongly oppose those changes to our current judicial selection and retention system proffered by SB 14¹, which would gut and dismantle our merit-based system and replace our judicial evaluation, nomination, and retention processes with partisan politics.

As you know, Alaska's constitutionally-created Alaska Judicial Council is comprised of:

- three non- attorneys appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Alaska State Legislature;
- three attorney members who have been chosen by an advisory vote from the judicial district that they would represent and appointed by the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association. The Board of Governors is composed of lawyers and members of the public who are not lawyers; and
- the chief justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, who is the seventh member of the Council, and who chairs the Judicial Council, voting only when to do so would change the vote. The chief justice is chosen by his peers on the Supreme Court, and must be retained periodically by the voters, which means that she/he is held publicly accountable.

Under the existing system, *four* of the Council's *seven* members are already appointed by the governor, and the voters have typically had an opportunity to retain the chief justice at least once during his/her term. The current composition of the Judicial Council carefully balances the public's right for accountability with the need for experience and understanding of the legal system. It ensures that the legislative and gubernatorial branches of government do not unduly influence or control the selection of judges in our state. Alaska's carefully calibrated balance is a fundamental aspect of our judicial appointment and retention system, and with good reason. Our current system of checks and balances protects the *independence* of our judiciary, which is a vital component – in fact the very hallmark of – any fair and enduring judicial system.

It is important to understand how the Alaska Judicial Council evaluates judicial applicants. To assess whether an applicant is fit to serve as a judge, the Council conducts a rigorous and thorough review of the experience, temperament, and character of all judicial applicants,

¹ The changes proposed by SB 14 would apply only to the Court of Appeals and the District Courts.

forwarding to the governor two or more of the most qualified applicants for appointment. Our nonpartisan system ensures that the Judicial Council will forward to the governor only those who are the most qualified of those who apply, assuring Alaskans that our judges are the best of the best that Alaska has to offer. SB 14 would eliminate the requirement that the governor select the most qualified candidates, and permit the governor to fill judicial openings in our courts by appointing *any* lawyer who has practiced in Alaska for five years. This change would not be in the best interests of Alaskans. Wouldn't Alaskans want the best candidates to serve in our judicial system, as opposed to anyone who the governor might want to appoint simply because he/she likes that individual, or worse, might owe that individual a debt of gratitude? Our current system protects against the possibility of this kind of *quid pro quo* corruption – by contrast, SB 14 invites it.

When a judge's time for retention comes up, the system gives Alaska's voters an opportunity to determine whether to retain that judge. This transparent, carefully crafted, and well-balanced system of checks and balances allows us to maintain a judiciary that is as independent as possible from partisan politics and other outside influences. Under our current system, Alaska's judiciary is free from the forces that so often threaten or *corrupt* judicial systems elsewhere - partisan politics, personal wealth, and political fundraising ability.

The changes proposed by SB 14 would, by design, ensure that partisan politics will pervade and dominate our judicial selection process, upsetting the delicate balance between expertise and public accountability. I am deeply concerned that these changes threaten, in a number of ways, the very independence of our judges and judicial system to the detriment of all Alaskans. SB 14 would:

- require that the three attorney members of the Judicial Council be confirmed by the Alaska Legislature, giving the Legislature authority to confirm all six members of the Council, rather than the three lay members currently within its authority. In so doing, it would upend the thoughtful balance struck by the drafters of our Constitution between the public and those who are experienced in the law. It would directly inject partisan politics into our judicial system at every turn;

- subject judicial appointees to legislative confirmation, a provision that our constitutional framers expressly rejected by an overwhelming vote because it would introduce politics into our system of judicial selection. The existing system reflects this rejection of strictly partisan oversight by carefully balancing the interests of politics, law and the public;
- for the first time in the history of our state, require judges to pass a subjective and ill-defined ideological test that would be impossible, and likely unconstitutional, to enforce. The oath that our judges take to enforce and defend both the Alaska Constitution and the Constitution of the United States suffices to ensure fidelity to the rule of law.

In addition to those changes that would explicitly and directly politicize the judicial selection process, SB 14 would transfer the responsibility for providing voters with impartial information about judges in retention elections from the Alaska Judicial Council – which has competently performed these functions for decades – to the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct, which has no experience in evaluating judges for retention. This is a fiscally imprudent idea in these very difficult days. The Conduct Commission is not staffed or experienced in performing the complex task of statewide evaluations. The Judicial Council will have already performed this task in their initial evaluation of the applicant, and can, thus, more efficiently and effectively perform the evaluation of the applicant/now judge for their retention election.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to oppose SB 14, and oppose any effort to change our prized system in ways that would either politicize it, or reduce the quality and/or independence of our judges. Fair and equal access to justice for every Alaskan requires the independence of our judges, and of the system that evaluates, nominates, appoints, and votes to retain them.

Finally, and importantly, I believe that the Committee should heed the will of the voters. In the last November election, more than 60% of Alaskans voted to retain their judges, even those who were opposed by partisan groups. SB 14 suggests that there is a problem that needs a solution. It is clear that the voters do not agree.

Thank you very much for your time and attention to this important matter.

Donna J. Goldsmith, Chair

Alaskans for Fair and Independent Courts

Aaron Weaver

From: Mauri Long [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 5:05 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: Fwd: SB 14

In my last sentence, I mistyped "bet" instead of "best". I would also note that I have numerous other comments, but only just became aware that committee was closing public comment today at 5 pm.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Mauri Long [REDACTED]
Date: Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 4:58 PM
Subject: SB 14
To: <sjud@akleg.gov>

This email is intended to be public testimony on SB 14, and my testimony is made on my own behalf, and not as a spokesperson for any other person or entity. My name is Mauri Long and I have lived in Alaska since January 1968. I am also a retired lawyer and past president of the Alaska Bar.

I am AGAINST the proposals included in SB 14.

I find it ironic that the bill proposes to change the framers intended method for selection of judges, by requiring a litmus test affirmation for strict construction, whilst simultaneously attempting to substantially change the way the constitution and framers intended that judges be evaluated and chosen. I do understand that the bill limits the changes in the selection process to the District court, magistrate and Appellate courts that did not exist when the framers chose the merit selection process for the then existing courts. But that is a technicality. A judge considering this issue, were it to pass and become law, would likely find it unconstitutional because it violates the strict interpretation of the constitution and the intention of the framers.

Much of the criticism of the current selection process seems to revolve around the public not having a say in the selection of judges. However, the judicial council has 3 members from the public, and those public members are selected by the governor. That is theoretically the people's elected official, and thus their voice is preserved. Same for the Judicial Conduct Commission. Historically, conservative governors have chosen representatives that participate in the processes in their respective councils or commissions. This bill suggests that those conservative members of the public aren't doing their job, and I beg to disagree. While it is easy to complain about a process or outcome when your desired outcome is not reached, it does not thereby undermine the process. When I have sat on committees, including the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association, I have found that the people's voices are heard loud and clear.

On a practical note, the Judicial Council has been extremely effective in helping the State secure the best and the brightest for the judiciary in the most efficient manner possible. While none of us agrees 100% with every decision, that is as it should be, it means the process is working. I think the proposed bill would cost a fortune to put into practice, while simultaneously losing the merit selection process in America today.

Thank you, Mauri Long

Aaron Weaver

From: Marcia Davis [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 4:15 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB14- a bad idea

I oppose this legislation. I have been an attorney in Alaska for almost 40 years. Our system of selecting Judges is not broken. Please focus on things that need fixing and not imaginary conspiracies of "evil liberal lawyers". That conception is pure fiction. Alaska has lawyers of all kinds and political persuasions.

I had the good fortune of seeing the judicial selection process as a deputy chief of staff to a governor who had the honor of making over 7 judicial selections. The Alaska Judicial Council's work in coming up with the list of nominees was tremendous and rigorous. And the work at the Governor office level likewise was extremely thorough. I am extremely proud of the quality and integrity of Alaska's judiciary. The same cannot be said of the judges in States where judges get elected by popular vote.

That is because lawyers are tougher in judgement of each other than any non-lawyer group would ever be. Judges make their way through the selection process based on their merits and not their popularity or political persuasion.

Leave things as they are. SB14 is an awful idea.

Sincerely,

Marcia Davis

Anchorage Ak

Sent from my PDA; please excuse typos.

Aaron Weaver

From: Lacy Wilcox [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 3:43 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: Testimony on SB14

Good Afternoon Chair Reinbold and Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I had not planned on writing in on SB14 but after listening to the verbal public testimony I felt compelled to offer my opinion for the record.

I first would like to state clearly that I oppose SB14, and find it a waste of time as there is already legislative oversight to the judicial selection process through the confirmation process of Judicial Council appointees. I continue to hear people describe the Judicial Council as an unelected body, which technically is true. However, if we only depended on elected bodies to make recommendations, the elected officials in our state would be overburdened with many decisions. I have observed a lack of momentum by the elected Legislature to do the people's business already, adding this duty would certainly overwhelm.

Why are we trying to fix a problem that does not exist? If you are dissatisfied with the Judicial Council, then don't confirm those appointees. That is the already existing "check and balance" you seek.

I have served as a Boards and Commissions Director for a prior administration, and closely observed the process and the submissions to the Governor for consideration. The recommended judgeship appointees are vetted to an extreme degree, in fact the thorough background analysis of candidates often resulted in inches thick binders.

If the legislature thinks it can do that job, I would beg to disagree as the track record for vetting simple board appointees leaves much to be desired.

I certainly wish those who are elected would see things as they truly are, and describe issues to the public with clear honesty. And right now, on the subject of the process to appoint judges, I believe firmly that there is no better qualified agency to accomplish this with the least amount of bias possible than the Judicial Council.

I would also like to comment on the atrocious running of the Senate Judiciary Committee, such as the lack of transparency on BASIS for committee documents and the inability for certain committee members to ask questions. The committee room is not a place for personal conspiracy theories to play out, and neither is it a place to ask inappropriate questions of respected state servants. Please get it together, and find grace and decorum, this committee is becoming an embarrassment.

Thank you,

Lacy Wilcox
Juneau, Alaska

Aaron Weaver

From: Barbara Hood [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 3:13 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB 14

Dear Senator Reinbold and Judiciary Committee members,

The current effort to reshape Alaska's judiciary by gutting the current process for selecting and retaining District Court and Court of Appeals judges is an affront to anyone who cares about fair and impartial justice. As a retired Alaskan attorney who grew up in Fairbanks and spent my entire legal career in the state, this transparent attempt to create "more conservative" judges will instead make judges less accountable and less qualified, virtually ensuring that political considerations will be paramount to fitness, competence and integrity in determining who serves on the bench. This would be a terrible disservice to the public and the many thousands of Alaskans who rely on the courts each year to address a wide range of conflicts.

Alaska's judicial selection and retention system is one of the most acclaimed in the country and the world. There is no need for this ill-advised "fix" to a problem that doesn't exist.

Sincerely,

Barbara Hood
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Aaron Weaver

From: Shari George [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 12:24 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Cc: Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Tom Begich
Subject: Senate Judiciary Meeting on February 10, 2021

Dear Senator Reinbold,

I was listening and contemplating testifying at the Wednesday, February 10, meeting of the Senate Judiciary Committee advertised as focusing on SB 14. I was dismayed and disgusted to be subjected to three-quarters of the time being spent on the discussion over the use of masks during the COVID19 pandemic and arguments of constitutional law regarding the right of the government to mandate such. While I do not object to the topic per se, this was not the place for it given the purported point of the meeting. It was a colossal waste of time for the many citizens who took their time to attend to hear testimony on SB 14 and severely limited the number of people who could testify. It's as if you really didn't want to hear public, spoken testimony on SB 14.

Sincerely,

Sharon W. George
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Aaron Weaver

From: Shari George [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 12:07 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: NO on SB 14

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee members,

I am opposed to Senate Bill 14 that seeks to make fundamental changes to Alaska's gold-standard, merit-based selection and retention of judges. The changes offered in this bill politicize the selection of judges which is contrary to the intention of the Alaska Constitution and the best interests of the people of Alaska. Please reject SB 14.

Sincerely,

Sharon W George
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Aaron Weaver

From: Martha Raynolds [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 4:36 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: Against SB 14

Dear Senators of the Judiciary Committee,

Alaska's Constitution is a model for many other governments. It was derived in a thoughtful process that is also a model for many other governments. One of the things that makes it admirable is the way that it treats the judiciary, creating a non-partisan branch of state government by using merit-based selection and retention. This branch of government has served Alaska well, and has been largely free of corruption since Statehood, unlike the Legislative branch!

I strongly urge you to stop Senate Bill 14 that would weaken this merit-based system.

Sincerely,
-- Martha Raynolds
+++++
Martha Raynolds

[REDACTED]