

HJR 50 -- Election of Judges

Sponsor: Hunter

This proposed constitutional amendment makes changes regarding judges. In its main provisions, the amendment:

- (1) Changes jurisdiction of circuit and associate circuit courts from original to general and includes small claims and probate within that jurisdiction;
- (2) Eliminates the nonpartisan court plan method for selection of certain judges, requiring all judges to be elected at general elections;
- (3) Changes from 12 to six years the term of office for supreme, appellate, and circuit court judges;
- (4) Changes the qualifications for associate circuit judges to the same qualifications as circuit court judges and lowers the minimum age from 30 to 28 years;
- (5) Requires the Governor to fill judicial vacancies in all courts by appointment, with the appointee to serve until the next general election. The appointee will be one of three persons nominated by a nonpartisan judicial commission; and
- (6) Prohibits all judges from making political contributions, except to their own campaigns.

The constitutional amendment becomes effective January 1, 2006.