

HJR 77 -- Judicial Elections

Sponsor: Funderburk

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment repeals the provisions regarding the selection of judges and requires all judges to be elected. Judges of the Supreme Court will serve eight-year terms instead of 12-year terms. Any vacancy in a judicial office will be filled at the next general election. The current judicial appointment process making use of commissions and gubernatorial appointment and the restrictions on judicial campaigning for office and membership in political parties are repealed. A judge currently on the bench may serve out the remainder of his or her term and these provisions will apply to new judicial vacancies.

The General Assembly must divide the state into seven judicial circuits after each decennial census. Supreme Court judges will be elected by statewide ballot. Appellate judges will run within the boundaries of existing districts established prior to the new circuits. Circuit judges will run within the boundaries of the new circuits established by the General Assembly after each decennial census. Associate circuit judges will run for office within the county.