



## STATEMENT OF PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES

The fundamental purpose of the Committee is to monitor campaign statements, advertising and conduct in elections for judicial office for compliance with the standards of the Code of Judicial Conduct, to assist candidates in understanding and complying with the Code, and by so doing to promote better public understanding of the role and functions of the judicial branch of government.

The Committee is a statewide Committee which will monitor all judicial election campaigns starting in 2006.

The Committee will adopt procedures for receiving, investigating and reviewing campaign statements and advertising, and commenting on whether any statement or advertising violates or falls below any relevant standard of the Code of Judicial Conduct. The Committee will act on its own initiative as well as receive and act on notices or complaints from any and all sources.

Committee comments shall be served on the party submitting a complaint, and on the candidate or other person responsible for the statement or advertising, but shall not be publicly released by the Committee unless the complaint or the Committee's comments have first been publicly released or commented on, wholly or partially, by or on behalf of a party served with the response.

The Committee believes that judges are not political officers; they do not have or promote political goals or agendas; they do not represent particular persons or organizations, nor do they

serve parties, factions or constituents, but act with independence, impartiality and integrity toward all persons and issues. They do not promise acts, decisions or results other than to obey, respect, uphold and honor the law. The goal of courts and judges is to do justice in accordance with law, as nearly as human judgment can approach that goal.

The Committee recognizes that judges are human, and possess the full range of human emotions, attitudes and opinions formed by their individual life experiences. Candidates for judicial office have the right of freedom of speech to inform voters who they are, how and why they feel qualified, and how they stand on issues that affect the offices for which they are campaigning, but they have no right to make pledges, promises, or commitments of future conduct or decisions that are inconsistent with the impartial adjudication of cases or issues that may come before them as judges. Election campaigns are part of a political process, but judicial office is not political office.

The judicial branch does not function in the same way as the executive or legislative branches. The work to be done by the courts is not initiated by the courts themselves, but is decided by the parties and cases that come before the courts. It is the duty of the courts to decide those matters impartially and in accordance with the facts and law presented by the parties appearing before them. Judicial decisions should not be affected by personal preferences and beliefs of judges, or by public clamor or fear of criticism.

It follows that the platforms, promises, pledges, commitments, accusations, verbal attacks, and personal vilification that sometimes characterize campaigns for election to executive, legislative and administrative offices are not relevant or appropriate in campaigns for judicial office, and violate the Code of Judicial Conduct.