



Council on Crime and Justice

...bringing just solutions to the causes and consequences of crime...

March 2, 2010

The Honorable Margaret Anderson Kelliher
Speaker of the House
Minnesota House of Representatives
463 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Letter of Support for HF 224/SF 70

Dear Representative Kelliher,

The Council on Crime and Justice urges your support in the effort to pass HF224 (Simon) and SF70 (Rest), which would put needed changes on the 2010 ballot to preserve the integrity and impartiality of Minnesota's courts by reforming the way judges are selected and elected.

Since 1957 the Council has been helping to create a criminal justice system in Minnesota that treats everyone fairly and impartially, and one which instills the utmost confidence in everyone who enters the courthouse.

We are concerned that partisan judicial elections are eroding that fairness and confidence. Other states are seeing those contests devolve into big-money partisan battles featuring vicious attack ads. Whether or not a decision is truly effected, the perception is enough to damage trust in our judicial system. In addition, this legislation and a positive vote from the public in November 2010 would offer improvements over the current system in the following areas:

- The evaluation and information available on judicial performance.
- The information available for voters to decide whether to retain a sitting judge.

The Council on Crime and Justice is part of the Coalition for Impartial Justice. The Coalition is made up of a variety of groups from across the political spectrum that are united in their support of HF224/SF70. We urge you to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

Pamela Alexander
President
Council on Crime and Justice

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