

Coalition for **Impartial Justice**

600 Nicollet Avenue • Suite 380 • Minneapolis, MN 55402-1039

January 15, 2010

Dear Legislator:

As the 2010 legislative session approaches, we ask for your support of HF224 (Simon) and SF70 (Rest). By reforming judicial selection and retention, this legislation will protect and advance the public's trust and confidence in Minnesota's state courts, and preserve the courts' integrity and impartiality.

The need for reform is urgent. Following a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, judicial elections in other states, including neighboring Wisconsin, have become poisoned by politics and big money. This has sparked increased interest nationwide in preserving an impartial judiciary. At their recent annual conference, The Council of State Governments highlighted the critical importance of this issue.

Under the reforms we recommend, judicial selection and retention would include:

- A nonpartisan merit selection commission.
- A nonpartisan judicial performance evaluation commission.
- Retention elections with performance evaluation results made available to voters.

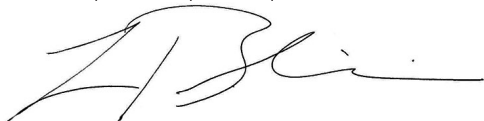
The *Coalition for Impartial Justice (CIJ)*, which I have the privilege of chairing, strongly supports these reforms. The CIJ is made up of public and private sector groups from across the political spectrum. We believe that the legislature should pass HF224/SF70 during the 2010 session. The resulting proposed constitutional amendment can then be placed on the general election ballot in November 2010, giving all Minnesotans a voice in deciding the future of our state courts. We're confident that Minnesotans will embrace reform.

By passing HF224/SF70, the legislature will:

- Preserve the integrity and impartiality of our state courts.
- Protect the public's confidence in the judicial system.
- Provide legacy legislation that will benefit future generations of Minnesotans.

We hope to have the opportunity to speak with you about this critical issue. If we can offer any additional information at this time, please contact me at 612-305-4575.

Sincerely and respectfully,



Leo I. Brisbois
President (2009 – 2010)
Minnesota State Bar Association
A member organization of the Coalition for Impartial Justice

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Center of the American Experiment
Citizens League
Common Cause Minnesota
Council on Crime and Justice
Disability Law Center
Growth and Justice
Hennepin County Bar Association
Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
League of Women Voters Minnesota
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