



March 2, 2010

Representative Gene Pelowski Jr.
Chair, State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections
491 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pelowski and Committee Members:

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits urges you to support efforts to reform the state's judicial selection process to ensure an independent judiciary. The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits is a statewide association with over 2000 organizations as our members. For all of our members, policies that support democracy matter. The Board of Directors of MCN has taken a strong position in support of the proposal before you today.

With newly acquired permissiveness for judges to accept campaign contributions and political endorsements, we have seen the damage that has eroded judicial independence in other states. Minnesota should take significant steps to stop the influence of money and politics on judicial service. In *Citizens United vs. FEC*, the court decided to allow corporations and unions unlimited expenditures on support for candidates (but not coordinated with the candidate or campaign.). These new expenditures are likely to go to media ads. Imagine the potential for increased influence of money and politics in future elections, including judicial elections.

The proposed reform is more important than ever. Please vote to advance the efforts that have involved bi-partisan study, development, and shared advocacy. The proposed Constitutional Amendment can maintain the independence of the judicial branch of government and strengthen public trust in our democratic institutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Pratt".

Jon Pratt

Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia Avner".

Marcia Avner

Public Policy Director

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