

*As Amended February 4, 2000*

**BYLAWS OF THE JUDICIAL SCREENING COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
COLUMBUS BAR ASSOCIATION**

**Article I - Duties**

The Committee shall represent the interests of the membership of the Columbus Bar Association (hereinafter referred to as the “Association”) in the continuing effort to preserve and promote the equal and fair administration of justice in Franklin County. In so doing the Committee shall: (1) create and promote within the community a sense of the importance of the judicial offices and the persons seeking and holding such offices; (2) evaluate the performance of incumbent judges; (3) evaluate the fitness for judicial office of persons aspiring to such office; (4) report the committee evaluations to the Board of Governors (hereinafter referred to as “Board”); (5) and perform such other duties as the Board of Governors, or the President, shall direct.

**Article II - Organization**

A. **Appointment**

The Committee shall consist of three classes of seven members each, appointed for three year terms, with the term of one class expiring each year. Members to replace those which terms are expiring shall be appointed by the President, subject to Board approval, prior to the end of the calendar year in which the President takes office. The Committee shall be composed predominately of attorneys who have regularly practiced in the court system. Members shall be broadly representative of Franklin County attorneys and the President shall give due consideration to age, sex, race, courts of practice, type of practice and political affiliation when making appointments to the Committee. Insofar as possible, the make-up of the Committee shall be politically balanced. Prior to appointing a prospective member to the Committee, the President shall secure a commitment from the prospective member to attend the judicial evaluation proceedings provided for in Article III.

The President shall appoint one of the Committee members as its chairperson. The President may appoint non-voting ex-officio members in accordance with the Constitution and bylaws of the Association.

B. Meetings.

The Committee shall meet during the second week of August of each year, or as close thereto as possible, to conduct the interviews and evaluation set forth in Article III (B). The Committee shall, from time to time, conduct such other meetings as the Chairperson shall call.

C. Removal or Replacement

Any member of the Committee shall be subject to removal by the Board upon recommendation of the President or Chairperson for (a) failure to maintain the confidentiality of the business of the Committee; (b) excessive excused or unexcused absences from Committee meetings and/or judicial evaluation sessions; (c) failure to abide by the Committee bylaws; (d) and/or any other just cause as the Board shall determine. In the event of resignation or removal, the President, with Board approval, shall appoint a replacement member(s). In the event a member advises the Chairperson or President that the member will be unable to attend a judicial evaluation session, the President may, with Board approval, appoint a permanent replacement or appoint a temporary replacement without prior Board approval.

D. Impartiality and Confidentiality

All members of the Committee shall conduct their business in an impartial manner. Except as specifically provided by the President or board, all business of the Committee shall be confidential.

**Article III - Judicial Screening  
Committee Evaluation Procedures**

A. Judicial Screening Committee Evaluation Procedures

The Committee shall invite all judicial candidates, except those running unopposed, for an interview and shall evaluate all opposed judicial candidates in the year in which the election for the office is to be held. Prior to the interview, all candidates shall complete a questionnaire that is approved by the Board.

The committee chair shall appoint subcommittees to formulate a list of uniform questions relevant to each particular court (i.e., appellate, trial (municipal and common pleas), domestic/juvenile, and probate courts). The subcommittees shall be politically balanced and appointed on an annual basis. The subcommittees will meet in advance of the screening interviews to develop questions which reflect the collective knowledge of the group and focus, in part, on substantive issues relevant to the judgeship sought by the candidate and which are consistent with the duties of the committee on Judicial Screening as stated in Article I.

After evaluation, the Committee shall report its findings on each candidate in the following categories to the Board: (a) Highly Recommended; (b) Acceptable; or, (c) Not Recommended. For any candidate receiving a Not Recommended from the Committee or where the Committee finding is markedly inconsistent with the most recent performance poll as to that candidate, the Committee Chairperson shall advise the Board as to the perceived reasons for that finding.

1. The Committee shall consider all of the following factors in its evaluation process:
  - a. Integrity
  - b. Previous judicial evaluations
  - c. Judicial performance polls including written comments or a summary thereof
  - d. Professional experience
  - e. Legal knowledge
  - f. Legal ability
  - g. Judicial temperament
  - h. Health
  - i. Diligence and punctuality
  - j. Possible conflicts of interest
  - k. Sensitivity or biases with respect to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability or economic status
  - l. Sentencing practices or philosophies
  - m. Public or community service
  - n. Such other elements or character and ability as the Committee shall determine.

2. In making its findings, the Committee shall employ the following rules:

- a. No person shall receive a Highly Recommended unless 60 percent or more of the votes cast are in that category. Abstentions shall be excluded;
- b. No person shall receive a Not Recommended unless more than 50 percent of the votes cast are in that category. Abstentions shall be excluded;
- c. A motion for reconsideration of a finding may be made by any member of the Committee who voted with respect to the candidate. The motion for reconsideration must be made during the session at which the original vote was taken and be passed by a majority of the members present. If a motion for reconsideration is passed and the resulting finding on the candidate is different, the Committee shall advise the Board of the results of both votes;
- d. Except as provided in c., in all other cases the candidate shall receive an “acceptable.”

B. The results of the Committee’s evaluations shall be reported to the Board so that it may use the results in conducting a preference poll in accordance with Board policies. At the time then the President reports the evaluation results to the judicial candidate, the President shall afford the candidate the opportunity to discuss the evaluation process.

## Article IV -Miscellaneous

### A. Appointment Evaluations

If requested by the President, the Committee shall evaluate candidates for judicial appointment. Such evaluation shall be conducted insofar as feasible, consistent with the procedure provided by Article III, Section B

### B. Disqualification

Subject to III (G), in the case of evaluations, interviews, or other procedures wherein a candidate appears before the Committee and as a result of which the Committee will make a recommendation, finding or determination, any member shall disqualify himself or herself if he or she believes, for any reason, that he or she cannot objectively and fairly fulfill his or her responsibility or that an appearance of partiality exists which warrants disqualification. If the disqualification results in less than eleven members available to vote on an evaluation, no vote shall be conducted.

### C. Quorum

When the Committee is adopting rules of procedure or evaluating judicial candidates, eleven members shall constitute a quorum. For other matters, eight members of the Committee present shall constitute a quorum and a majority vote shall prevail.

If a quorum is lost during a committee meeting, no further business may be conducted until a quorum is once again obtained.

### D. Rules of Procedure

The Committee may adopt rules of procedure that are not inconsistent with these bylaws.

### E. Prohibition Against Financial and Personal Support of Judicial Candidates.

During the calendar year of an election and before the Board of Governors has publicly announced the results of the preference poll conducted by the Association, no member of the Committee shall give or direct personal financial support or personal endorsement to anyone seeking judicial office. This section shall not prohibit contributions by a member's partners, associates, firm or firm's political action committee. In the event a member is aware of a contribution of any of the above, the member shall advise the Chairperson, and after consultation with the Chairperson, shall determine whether to disqualify himself or herself pursuant to Article IV (B).