



Thursday, December 08, 2005 — Time: 12:38:09 AM EST

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Time for change

Editor:

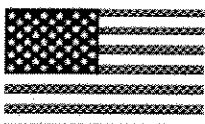
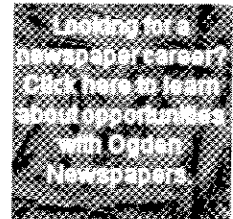
A recent column by Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas

Moyer called for a constitutional amendment to create an appointive-elective system for selecting Ohio's Supreme Court justices. We agree with the chief justice that it is time to institute such a system.

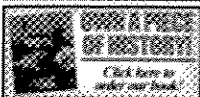
Since the late 1930s, the Ohio State Bar Association has supported an appointive-elective system of selecting Ohio's Supreme Court Justices. Chief Justice Moyer said, "Campaign contributions to judges are bad, not because they influence our decisions but because they lead people to believe that they do." The Ohio State Bar Association agrees. We believe that removing the need to solicit campaign contributions from the judicial selection process would eliminate further erosion of and restore the public's trust and confidence in the system.

In the appointive-elective system proposed by Chief Justice Moyer, justices would be appointed by the governor, who would choose from among three candidates proposed by a diverse, independent, nonpartisan selection panel, a majority of whom would be non-lawyers. The justices then would stand for re-election after serving one or two years and, if retained, would complete the balance of a fixed term of 10 or 12 years. In the proposed system, voters - yes, voters - ultimately would determine if a person appointed to the court will remain.

Ohio is not alone in examining the appointive-elective system. A number of states is considering such proposals in light of the staggering amount of money spent on judicial campaigns - all leading to the public's erroneous perception that campaign contributions buy judicial influence. It is time to end that perception, and the proposed appointive-elective system for selecting justices for Ohio's Supreme Court is a



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proper way to address the matter.

The Ohio State Bar Association stands ready to work with Chief Justice Moyer, Ohio's elected officials and the citizens of this great state to implement an appointive-elective system for Ohio's Supreme Court. It is time to end the perception that money talks in judicial elections.

E. Jane Taylor

President

Ohio State Bar Association

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