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AN AJA NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM The Politicization of the Judiciary: How to Respond

Friday, May 18, 2012
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel,
Nashville Downtown
Nashville, Tennessee
Conference Registration Fee: \$195
(Hotel: \$129/night)
<http://aja.ncsc.dni.us/conferences/index.html>

As part of the AJA's midyear meeting, we're presenting a national symposium—*The Politicization of the Judiciary: How to Respond*. The full-day program offers a who's who of the most knowledgeable experts on judicial elections.

To maintain judicial independence, judges must understand how to defend their judicial decisions in an increasingly political, money-driven environment. In 2010, several justices and judges lost their jobs after organized campaigns against them. This is an environment in which judicial decisions may be viewed from the vantage point of third parties who represent particular viewpoints:

- Nearly one-third of all funds spent on state high-court elections in the 2010 election cycle came from noncandidate groups.
- Nearly 40% of all funds spent on state high-court elections came from just 10 groups, including national special-interest groups and political parties.
- Outside groups were responsible for three in four attack ads.

The symposium will present an informative conversation about these issues—with ample participation by judges in attendance—and provide tools for responding to challenges to a fair and impartial judiciary. You will have the chance to discuss your own personal experiences with panelists and other attendees as we work together to consider these challenges.

The speakers are the most knowledgeable people anywhere regarding judicial elections:

- Alaska Supreme Court Justice Dana Fabe, who withstood a strong challenge (focused in part on her ruling in an abortion case) in 2010;
- Former Iowa Supreme Court Justice Michael Streit, who lost his retention election in 2010 after an ouster campaign focused on the court's ruling on same-sex marriage;
- Professor James Gibson (Washington University in St. Louis), the leading expert in academic circles on judicial campaigns and elections;
- Mark White, chair of the ABA Ad Hoc Committee on Judicial Campaign Oversight;
- Philip Nichols and Mark Grebner, two campaign consultants who have assisted judges at all levels in elections throughout the United States;
- K.O. Myers, Director of Research and Programs with the American Judicature Society.

The American Judges Association invites your participation in this symposium. **Note: Space is limited and early registration is advised!**

Attendees at the Friday symposium are also welcome to attend the AJA Board of Governors meeting on Saturday morning. We hope to see you this May in Nashville.



WEBSITES OF INTEREST

The AJA Blog
<http://blog.amjudges.org>

Court Review is published quarterly, but events of interest to judges happen all the time. Current AJA President Kevin Burke has started a blog that fills the gap.

Almost anything that's important to judges is likely to be touched on in the blog, often with links to new reports, articles of interest, or other websites with more information.

Recent blog entries have included:

- Updates on the court-funding crisis, with links to commentaries about problems in funding courts in Florida, New York, and Canada (including a speech by Chief Justice Robert Bauman of the Supreme Court of British Columbia).
- A summary of a new report from Justice at Stake, *The New Politics of Judicial Elections 2009-2010*, which found that the rise in noncandidate TV advertising made the 2010 election cycle the costliest nonpresidential election ever for TV spending in judicial elections. The blog provided a link for downloading the report, as well as a separate link to a Joyce Foundation report on money and politics.
- A report of a recent speech by Florida Bar President Scott G. Hawkins, who suggested that justices of the Florida Supreme Court may be targeted by opposition groups in 2012.
- Notice of a new working group on improving judicial decisions about pretrial release in criminal cases, combined with contact information for those who want to follow the federally funded project.
- A three-step action plan for reducing the chance that a rampant rumor mill will take over your courthouse.
- Guest commentaries, including ones on judicial wellness and court leadership.