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Public: Apply Now to Join Special Supreme Court Committee

Idahoans today are invited to apply for a unique chance to shape their future judiciary.

Last week, the Idaho Supreme Court announced it will create a Special Committee on Judicial Recruitment and Selection. This committee will examine ways to improve judicial recruitment in Idaho and concerns raised about the membership and processes of the Idaho Judicial Council, which plays a key role in vetting and recommending judges to fill vacancies outside of an election cycle.

The Court believes citizen participation and input is crucial to this process. Today, members of the public and attorneys who are interested in serving on the committee may apply to do so by **submitting a letter of interest, along with a resume or biographical sketch, to specialcomm@idcourts.net.**

“The Idaho Supreme Court supports an approach to addressing concerns about judicial recruitment, including Judicial Council membership and processes, that is inclusive of the views of all three branches of government,” said Chief Justice G. Richard Bevan. “But also critical to finding good solutions are the perspectives of those that the courts serve every day, both attorneys and non-attorneys.”

Applications are **due by April 8, 2022.**

Those selected will join a magistrate judge and district judge who also will be appointed to the committee. Information for judges who wish to serve will be provided separately to that group. In addition, the Court invited Gov. Brad Little, Senate Pro Tem Chuck Winder and House Speaker Scott Bedke to nominate two members each for the committee.

“The impact of the work of the Idaho judiciary is broad, including on Idaho’s families, businesses, and communities. Thus, any consideration of significant changes to the judicial branch would benefit from the collective wisdom of a similarly broad committee of stakeholders,” Chief Justice Bevan said.

More information about this committee and the application process can be found on the Idaho Supreme Court’s website (isc.idaho.gov/Special-Committee-on-Judicial-Recruitment-and-Selection).

Background

The role of a judge requires a highly qualified and talented person who can interpret Idaho law fairly and consistently.

Idaho's judges are elected by the people. But our system also recognizes the need to fill vacancies outside of election years and maintain the work of the courts, which can't just be put on hold. In those cases, the Idaho Judicial Council and local district magistrates commissions scrutinize applicants and recommend potential appointees to the governor, continuing the high standards of Idaho's courts.

The Idaho courts continue to experience recruitment challenges, particularly for district judges who oversee the most complex cases at the trial level. In 2021, some vacant judgeships only received three or four applicants; the law requires the Judicial Council to provide two to four potential appointees for the governor to consider.

Idaho's courts have often evolved to address the challenges of the times. Most often, significant changes have been worked out through a thoughtful, deliberative committee process bringing Idaho's branches of government and the public together to find consensus. This new committee's breadth echoes one formed by the Legislative Council in the 1960s that with public input, helped usher in many significant changes — including the creation of the Judicial Council itself.

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