



The League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund imPACT e-newsletter.

The purpose of these monthly emails is to provide League members and our partners with information on the most pressing reform issues affecting Ohioans today.

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This article is based on a Letter to the Editor of the Columbus Dispatch sent in April 2010 by Meg Flack, president of the LWV-Ohio Education Fund.

Gov. Strickland's recent appointment to replace the late Chief Justice Thomas Moyer is a reminder that it is time to begin consideration of a better way to select justices for our state's highest court.

The nonpartisan League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund (LWVOEF) predicts the November general election for chief justice could be more partisan, more expensive and involve more special interests than we've seen in a decade. If we are right, this will further erode the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary. But there is something we can do about this.

The LWVOEF believes there is a better way to select our Supreme Court justices—and has for almost 40 years, through both Republican and Democratic administrations. And for the past 18 months, LWVOEF worked with the late Chief Justice Thomas Moyer, a champion of judicial reform, and with the Ohio State Bar Association to educate Ohioans about moving to an appointment / retention-election system for the state's top court.

Of course, those who like things just the way they are tend to mischaracterize an appointment / retention-election system in two fundamental ways. They argue it would be highly political—and they say it would take away Ohioans' right to vote on Supreme Court justices.

Nothing could be further from the truth. An Ohio Plan as envisioned by LWVOEF would use an open, transparent, bipartisan judicial-recommendations process. A diverse commission would base its recommendations on the qualifications of an applicant—not their politics.

In addition, justices appointed under such an Ohio Plan would participate in a public review of their judicial performance prior to their retention election. This information would then help the electorate—finally—cast their ballots with comprehensive knowledge about a justice's performance on the bench.

Yes, there *is* a better way to select our Supreme Court justices than is currently being used.

For more information on what is being considered on Ohio and across the nation regarding judicial reform, please go to <http://www.judicialselection.net/> where there are a host of resources. To see a compilation of articles on the topic go to the League website at <http://www.lwvohio.org/site.cfm/In-the-News.cfm>