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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

A N A C T

RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE-- COURTS -- JUDICIAL SELECTION

Introduced By: Representative Anastasia P. Williams

Date Introduced: June 11, 2015

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 8-16.1-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 8-16.1 entitled "Judicial
2 Selection" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 ~~8-16.1-6. **Nomination and appointment of judges [Repealed effective June 30, 2014.]**~~

4 ~~**-- Nomination and appointment of judges [Repealed effective June 30, 2016.] --**~~ (a) (1) The
5 governor shall immediately notify the commission of any vacancy or prospective vacancy of a
6 judge of any state court other than the Rhode Island supreme court. The commission shall
7 advertise for each vacancy and solicit prospective candidates and shall consider names submitted
8 from any source. Within ninety (90) days of any vacancy, the commission shall publicly submit
9 the names of not less than three (3), and not more than five (5), highly qualified persons for each
10 vacancy to the governor.

11 (2) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, any individual whose name was
12 publicly submitted to the governor by the commission, as described in subsection (1) above, shall
13 also be eligible for subsequent nomination by the governor for any vacancy, or prospective
14 vacancy, of a judge in the same court for which that particular individual had previously applied
15 except for a vacancy in the position of presiding justice, chief justice, or chief judge.

16 (3) Such individuals shall remain eligible for nomination to fill any vacancy, or
17 prospective vacancy, within the same court to which they previously applied for a period of five
18 (5) years from the date their name or names were publicly submitted to the governor by the
19 commission unless such individuals withdraw from future consideration in writing to the judicial

1 nominating commission. However, such individuals must reapply for any subsequent vacancy, or
2 prospective vacancy, in the same court for the position of presiding justice, chief justice, or chief
3 judge.

4 (4) Subject to the eligibility requirements set forth above, the governor shall fill any
5 vacancy of any judge of the Rhode Island superior court, family court, district court, workers'
6 compensation court, or any other state court ~~which~~ that the general assembly may, from time to
7 time, establish, by nominating one of the three (3) to five (5) highly qualified persons forwarded
8 to him or her by the commission for the court where the vacancy occurs, or by nominating
9 another individual who has previously applied for a vacancy or prospective vacancy within the
10 same court and whose name had been previously publicly submitted to the governor within the
11 previous five (5) years.

12 (b) The governor shall fill any vacancy within twenty-one (21) days of the public
13 submission by the commission.

14 (c) Each nomination shall be delivered forthwith to the secretary of the senate for
15 presentation to the senate, and by and with the advice and consent of the senate, each nominee
16 shall be appointed by the governor to serve subject to the general laws. The senate shall, after
17 seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the nomination, consider the nomination, but if the senate
18 fails within ninety (90) days after the submission to confirm the nominee, or if the senate does not
19 by a majority vote of its members extend the deliberation an additional seven (7) calendar days,
20 the governor shall appoint some other person to fill the vacancy and shall submit his or her
21 appointment to the senate for confirmation in like manner until the senate shall confirm the
22 nomination. If the nominee is rejected by the senate, the commission shall submit a new list of
23 three (3) to five (5) candidates to the governor for the purpose of nomination in accordance with
24 this chapter. Any new list may include, but need not be limited to, the names of any candidates
25 who were previously submitted to the governor by the commission but who were not forwarded
26 to the senate for its advice and consent.

27 (d) During the time for consideration of the nominees by the senate, the senate judiciary
28 committee shall conduct an investigation and public hearing on the question of the qualifications
29 of the nominee or nominees. At the public hearing, the testimony of every witness shall be taken
30 under oath and stenographic records shall be taken and maintained. Further, the senate judiciary
31 committee shall, during the course of its investigation and hearing, have the power upon majority
32 vote of the committee members present to issue witness subpoenas, subpoenas duces tecum, and
33 orders for the production of books, accounts, papers, records, and documents ~~which~~ that shall be
34 signed and issued by the chairperson of the committee, or the person serving in his or her

1 capacity. All such subpoenas and orders shall be served as subpoenas in civil cases in the superior
2 court are served, and witnesses so subpoenaed shall be entitled to the same fees for attendance
3 and travel as provided for witnesses in civil cases in the superior court. If the person subpoenaed
4 to attend before the committee fails to obey the command of the subpoena without reasonable
5 cause; refuse to be sworn; or to be examined; or to answer a legal and pertinent question; or if
6 any person shall refuse to produce books, accounts, papers, records, and documents material to
7 the issue, set forth in an order duly served on him or her; the committee, by majority vote of the
8 committee members present, may apply to any justice of the superior court, for any county, upon
9 proof by affidavit of the fact, for a rule or order returnable in not less than two (2), nor more than
10 five (5), days, directing the person to show cause before the justice who made the order or any
11 other justice of the superior court, why he or she should not be adjudged in contempt. Upon the
12 return of the order, the justice before whom the matter is brought on for hearing shall examine
13 under oath the person, and the person shall be given an opportunity to be heard, and if the justice
14 shall determine that the person has refused without reasonable cause or legal excuse to be
15 examined or to answer a legal and pertinent question, or to produce books, accounts, papers,
16 records, and documents material to the issue ~~which~~ that he or she was ordered to bring or
17 produce, he or she may forthwith commit the offender to the adult correctional institution; there
18 to remain until the person submits to do the act which he or she was so required to do, or is
19 discharged according to law.

20 (e) The committee shall, for the purpose of investigating the qualifications of the
21 nominee or nominees, be furnished with a report compiled by the state police in conjunction with
22 the attorney general's office indicating the determinations and findings of the state police and
23 attorney general's office investigations concerning the background of the nominee or nominees,
24 and the report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

25 (1) Whether the nominee has ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, a
26 misdemeanor or felony in this or any other state or foreign country;

27 (2) Whether the nominee has ever filed a personal bankruptcy petition or an assignment
28 for the benefit of creditors in this or any other state or foreign country; and whether the nominee
29 has ever been a partner in, held ten percent (10%) or more of stock in, or held office in any sole
30 proprietorship, partnership, or corporation that has been involved in bankruptcy or receivership
31 actions as a debtor or because of insolvency at the time the nominee was a partner in, held ten
32 percent (10%) or more stock in, or held office in any such sole proprietorship, partnership, or
33 corporation;

34 (3) Whether the nominee has ever had a civil judgment rendered against him or her

1 arising out of an allegation of fraud, misrepresentation, libel, slander, professional negligence, or
2 any intentional tort in this state or any other state or foreign country;

3 (4) The state police, in conjunction with the attorney general's department, shall provide
4 in their report the names and addresses of each and every source of their information.

5 (f) The reports set forth in this section shall be delivered to the chairperson and members
6 of the senate judiciary committee, in addition to the nominee or nominees, only prior to the
7 commencement of the public hearing. Provided, however, that if the nominee or nominees
8 withdraw or decline the appointment prior to the public hearing, then the report or reports shall be
9 returned to the chairperson of the judiciary committee and destroyed.

10 (g) The committee shall also require a financial statement to be submitted by each
11 nominee, prior to the public hearing, to the chairperson of the senate judiciary committee, to
12 investigate each nominee to determine his or her compliance with the provisions of chapter 14 of
13 title 36.

14 (h) Any associate justice of any state court who is appointed to serve as the chief or
15 presiding justice of that court on an interim basis shall retain his or her status as an associate
16 justice until the appointment to chief or presiding justice is made permanent.

17 (i) In case a vacancy shall occur when the senate is not in session, the governor shall
18 appoint some person from a list of three (3) to five (5) persons submitted to the governor by the
19 commission to fill the vacancy until the senate shall next convene, when the governor shall make
20 an appointment as provided in this section.

21 ~~**8-16.1-6. Nomination and appointment of judges. [Effective June 30, 2014.]**~~

22 **Nomination and appointment of judges. [Effective June 30, 2016.]** -- (a) The governor shall
23 immediately notify the commission of any vacancy or prospective vacancy of a judge of any state
24 court other than the Rhode Island supreme court. The commission shall advertise for each
25 vacancy and solicit prospective candidates and shall consider names submitted from any source.
26 Within ninety (90) days of any vacancy, the commission shall publicly submit the names of not
27 less than three (3), and not more than five (5), highly qualified persons for each vacancy to the
28 governor. The governor shall fill any vacancy of any judge of the Rhode Island superior court,
29 family court, district court, workers' compensation court, or any other state court ~~which~~ that the
30 general assembly may, from time to time, establish, by nominating one of the three (3) to five (5)
31 highly qualified persons forwarded to him or her by the commission for the court where the
32 vacancy occurs.

33 (b) The governor shall fill any vacancy within twenty-one (21) days of the public
34 submission by the commission.

1 (c) Each nomination shall be forwarded forthwith to the senate, and by and with the
2 advice and consent of the senate, each nominee shall be appointed by the governor to serve
3 subject to the general laws. The senate shall, after seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the
4 nomination consider the nomination, but if the senate fails within ninety (90) days after the
5 submission to confirm the nominee or if the senate does not by a majority vote of its members
6 extend the deliberation an additional seven (7) calendar days, the governor shall appoint some
7 other person to fill the vacancy and shall submit his or her appointment to the senate for
8 confirmation in like manner until the senate shall confirm the nomination. If the nominee is
9 rejected by the senate, the commission shall submit a new list of three (3) to five (5) candidates to
10 the governor for the purpose of nomination in accordance with this chapter. Any new list may
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12 the governor by the commission but who were not forwarded to the senate for its advice and
13 consent.

14 (d) During the time for consideration of the nominees by the senate, the senate judiciary
15 committee shall conduct an investigation and public hearing on the question of the qualifications
16 of the nominee or nominees. At the public hearing, the testimony of every witness shall be taken
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19 vote of the committee members present to issue witness subpoenas, subpoenas duces tecum, and
20 orders for the production of books, accounts, papers, records, and documents which shall be
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22 capacity. All such subpoenas and orders shall be served as subpoenas in civil cases in the superior
23 court are served, and witnesses so subpoenaed shall be entitled to the same fees for attendance
24 and travel as provided for witnesses in civil cases in the superior court. If the person subpoenaed
25 to attend before the committee fails to obey the command of the subpoena without reasonable
26 cause, refuse to be sworn, or to be examined, or to answer a legal and pertinent question, or if any
27 person shall refuse to produce books, accounts, papers, records, and documents material to the
28 issue, set forth in an order duly served on him or her, the committee by majority vote of the
29 committee members present may apply to any justice of the superior court, for any county, upon
30 proof by affidavit of the fact, for a rule or order returnable in not less than two (2) nor more than
31 five (5) days, directing the person to show cause before the justice who made the order or any
32 other justice of the superior court, why he or she should not be adjudged in contempt. Upon the
33 return of the order, the justice before whom the matter is brought on for hearing shall examine
34 under oath the person, and the person shall be given an opportunity to be heard, and if the justice

1 shall determine that the person has refused without reasonable cause or legal excuse to be
2 examined, or to answer a legal and pertinent question, or to produce books, accounts, papers,
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5 to remain until the person submits to do the act which he or she was so required to do, or is
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8 nominee or nominees, be furnished with a report compiled by the state police in conjunction with
9 the attorney general's office indicating the determinations and findings of the state police and
10 attorney general's office investigations concerning the background of the nominee or nominees,
11 and the report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

12 (1) Whether the nominee has ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, a
13 misdemeanor or felony in this or any other state or foreign country;

14 (2) Whether the nominee has ever filed a personal bankruptcy petition or an assignment
15 for the benefit of creditors in this or any other state or foreign country; and whether the nominee
16 has ever been a partner in, held ten percent (10%) or more of stock in, or held office in any sole
17 proprietorship, partnership, or corporation that has been involved in bankruptcy or receivership
18 actions as a debtor or because of insolvency at the time the nominee was a partner in, held ten
19 percent (10%) or more stock in, or held office in any such sole proprietorship, partnership, or
20 corporation;

21 (3) Whether the nominee has ever had a civil judgment rendered against him or her
22 arising out of an allegation of fraud, misrepresentation, libel, slander, professional negligence, or
23 any intentional tort in this state or any other state or foreign country;

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25 in their report the names and addresses of each and every source of their information.

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27 of the senate judiciary committee in addition to the nominee or nominees only prior to the
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34 title 36.

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2 presiding justice of that court on an interim basis shall retain his or her status as an associate
3 justice until the appointment to chief or presiding justice is made permanent.

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5 appoint some person from a list of three (3) to five (5) persons submitted to the governor by the
6 commission to fill the vacancy until the senate shall next convene, when the governor shall make
7 an appointment as provided in this section.

8 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE-- COURTS -- JUDICIAL SELECTION

1 This act would make any individual, whose name was publically submitted to the
2 governor by the judicial nominating commission, eligible for subsequent nomination by the
3 governor until June 30, 2016, for any vacancy or prospective vacancy of a judge in the same court
4 for which that particular individual had previously applied except for a vacancy in the position of
5 presiding justice, chief justice, or chief judge.

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