

By: Duncan

S.J.R. No. 32

A JOINT RESOLUTION

1 proposing a constitutional amendment providing for appointment to
2 fill vacancies in certain judicial offices and for nonpartisan
3 retention elections for those offices.

4 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Section 2, Article V, Texas Constitution, is
6 amended by amending Subsections (b) and (c) and adding Subsection
7 (d) to read as follows:

8 (b) No person shall be eligible to serve in the office of
9 Chief Justice or Justice of the Supreme Court unless the person is
10 licensed to practice law in this state and is, at the time of
11 election or appointment, a citizen of the United States and of this
12 state, and has attained the age of thirty-five years, and has been a
13 practicing lawyer, or a lawyer and judge of a court of record
14 together at least ten years.

15 (c) On appointment to a vacancy, a Chief Justice or Justice
16 serves an initial term that ends January 1 of the third odd-numbered
17 year that occurs after the Chief Justice or Justice takes the oath
18 of office. At the end of the appointed term and of each successive
19 term, the Chief Justice or Justice [~~Said Justices~~] shall be
20 subject, in the manner provided by law, to retention or rejection on
21 a nonpartisan ballot [~~elected (three of them each two years)~~] by the
22 qualified voters of the state at a general election and if
23 retained [~~+~~] shall hold office for a term of [~~their offices~~] six
24 years.

1 (d) The Chief Justice and Justices~~[, and]~~ shall each receive
2 the ~~[such]~~ compensation ~~[as shall be]~~ provided by law.

3 SECTION 2. Subsection (a), Section 4, Article V, Texas
4 Constitution, is amended to read as follows:

5 (a) The Court of Criminal Appeals shall consist of eight
6 Judges and one Presiding Judge. The Judges shall have the same
7 qualifications and receive the same salaries as the Associate
8 Justices of the Supreme Court, and the Presiding Judge shall have
9 the same qualifications and receive the same salary as the Chief
10 Justice of the Supreme Court. On appointment to a vacancy, a
11 Presiding Judge or Judge serves an initial term that ends January 1
12 of the third odd-numbered year that occurs after the Presiding
13 Judge or Judge takes the oath of office. At the end of the appointed
14 term and of each successive term, the ~~[The]~~ Presiding Judge or Judge
15 ~~[and the Judges]~~ shall be subject, in the manner provided by law, to
16 retention or rejection on a nonpartisan ballot ~~[elected]~~ by the
17 qualified voters of the state at a general election and if retained
18 shall hold office ~~[their offices]~~ for a term of six years.

19 SECTION 3. Subsection (b), Section 6, Article V, Texas
20 Constitution, is amended to read as follows:

21 (b) Each of said Courts of Appeals shall hold its sessions
22 at a place in its district to be designated by the Legislature, and
23 at such time as may be prescribed by law. On appointment to a
24 vacancy, a Chief Justice or Justice serves an initial term that ends
25 January 1 of the third odd-numbered year that occurs after the Chief
26 Justice or Justice takes the oath of office. At the end of the
27 appointed term and of each successive term, the Chief Justice or

1 Justice [~~Said Justices~~] shall be subject, in the manner provided by
2 law, to retention or rejection on a nonpartisan ballot [~~elected~~] by
3 the qualified voters of their respective districts at a general
4 election and if retained shall hold office[~~7~~] for a term of six
5 years. The Chief Justice and Justices [~~and~~] shall receive for their
6 services the compensation [~~sum~~] provided by law.

7 SECTION 4. Section 7, Article V, Texas Constitution, is
8 amended to read as follows:

9 Sec. 7. (a) The State shall be divided into judicial
10 districts, with each district having one or more Judges as may be
11 provided by law or by this Constitution.

12 (b) On appointment to a vacancy, a district judge serves an
13 initial term that ends January 1 of the second odd-numbered year
14 that occurs after the district judge takes the oath of office. At
15 the end of the appointed term and of each successive term, the
16 [~~Each~~] district judge shall be subject, in the manner provided by
17 law, to retention or rejection on a nonpartisan ballot [~~elected~~] by
18 the qualified voters at a General Election [~~and shall be a citizen~~
19 ~~of the United States and of this State, who is licensed to practice~~
20 ~~law in this State and has been a practicing lawyer or a Judge of a~~
21 ~~Court in this State, or both combined, for four (4) years next~~
22 ~~preceding his election, who has resided in the district in which he~~
23 ~~was elected for two (2) years next preceding his election, and who~~
24 ~~shall reside in his district during his term of office]~~ and if
25 retained shall hold [~~his~~] office for a term [~~the period~~] of four
26 [~~(4)~~] years. A district judge must reside in the district the judge
27 serves during the judge's term of office[~~7~~] and [~~who~~] shall receive

for his services an annual salary to be fixed by the Legislature.

(c) A person is not eligible to serve as a district judge unless the person is a citizen of the United States and of this State, who is licensed to practice law in this State and has been a practicing lawyer or a Judge of a Court in this State, or both combined, for four years next preceding the person's appointment, and who has resided in the district to which the person was appointed for two years next preceding the person's appointment.

(d) The Court shall conduct its proceedings at the county seat of the county in which the case is pending, except as otherwise provided by law. He shall hold the regular terms of his Court at the County Seat of each County in his district in such manner as may be prescribed by law. The Legislature shall have power by General or Special Laws to make such provisions concerning the terms or sessions of each Court as it may deem necessary.

(e) The Legislature shall also provide for the holding of District Court when the Judge thereof is absent, or is from any cause disabled or disqualified from presiding.

SECTION 5. Subsection (a), Section 28, Article V, Texas Constitution, is amended to read as follows:

(a) A vacancy in the office of Chief Justice, Justice, or Judge of the Supreme Court, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the Court of Appeals, or the District Courts shall be filled by the Governor ~~[until the next succeeding General Election for state officers, and at that election the voters shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired term]~~. In exercising its duty to provide advice and consent on an appointment made by the Governor under Section 12, Article IV, of

1 this constitution, the senate by rule may provide for the
2 confirmation or rejection of a person appointed to fill a vacancy
3 described by this subsection during a recess of the senate by a
4 two-thirds vote of the membership of a committee of the senate
5 designated for that purpose. Notwithstanding a temporary
6 confirmation as provided by this section, Section 12, Article IV,
7 of this constitution, applies to the appointee when the senate next
8 convenes.

9 SECTION 6. The following temporary provision is added to
10 the Texas Constitution:

11 TEMPORARY PROVISION. (a) This temporary provision applies
12 to the constitutional amendment proposed by the 80th Legislature,
13 Regular Session, 2007, providing for appointment to fill vacancies
14 in certain judicial offices and for nonpartisan retention elections
15 for those offices.

16 (b) The constitutional amendment takes effect January 1,
17 2008.

18 (c) This temporary provision expires January 2, 2008.

19 SECTION 7. This proposed constitutional amendment shall be
20 submitted to the voters at an election to be held November 6, 2007.
21 The ballot shall be printed to provide for voting for or against the
22 proposition: "The constitutional amendment providing for
23 appointment to fill vacancies in the offices of the justices and
24 judges of the appellate and district courts and for nonpartisan
25 retention elections for those offices."