

More than half the money spent on state Supreme Court races nationally in 2002 was spent right here in Ohio. A poll commissioned by the League of Women Voters of Ohio in October 2002 found that *four out of five voters (83 percent) believe that campaign contributions influence judges and candidates—more than any other factor.*

In 2004, Work for Fair and Impartial Ohio Courts

Following the 2003 forum on "Judicial Impartiality - The Next Steps," Ohio citizens and civic organizations call for action to assure that our courts are fair and impartial. We need your help to promote a **nonpartisan voter guide** and our **public education campaign** on the possibilities for judicial reform.

#1. Voter Guide

Wide distribution of nonpartisan voter guides will help voters make better decisions and counter special interests by providing more information than paid ads do. During 2004, the Ohio Secretary of State is creating a web-based voter guide with information about the candidates for Ohio Supreme Court. A broad network of voluntary organizations along with print and broadcast media in Ohio will be built to reach as many citizens as possible.

#2. Public Information

Complementing the voter guide will be a grassroots public information campaign designed to involve citizens in the process of reforming Ohio's judicial system. Hosting forums, helping broaden the coalition, and posting information on the voter guide in a newsletter are only a few of the ways organizations such as yours can promote the possibilities for judicial reform. Reform proposals include:

- ◇ Requiring and enforcing the disclosure of campaign contributions to judicial candidates including those made to third party entities, and requiring that candidates who receive contributions from attorneys appearing before that candidate disclose that relationship.
- ◇ Conducting judicial campaigns with public money to prevent the appearance of impropriety and to reduce the fundraising burden.
- ◇ Lengthening judicial terms, requiring judicial training and raising judicial candidate qualification standards.
- ◇ Utilizing a nonpartisan appointment process when the Governor is called on to fill judicial vacancies.

To be a partner for Fair and Impartial Courts, contact

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