



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

***Raised Bill No. 7041***

LCO No. 5101



Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY

Introduced by:  
(JUD)

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMPOSITION OF THE JUDICIAL  
SELECTION COMMISSION AND DECISIONS RENDERED BY SAID  
COMMISSION.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General  
Assembly convened:

1       Section 1. Section 51-44a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2       following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

3       (a) There is established a Judicial Selection Commission, within the  
4       Office of Governmental Accountability established under section 1-300.  
5       [Said] (1) Until December 31, 2025, the commission shall be comprised  
6       of twelve members. Six of the members shall be attorneys-at-law and six  
7       of the members shall not be attorneys-at-law. Not more than six of the  
8       members shall belong to the same political party. None of the members  
9       shall be an elected or appointed official of the state or hold state-wide  
10       office in a political party. (2) On and after January 1, 2026, the  
11       commission shall be comprised of twelve members, appointed in  
12       accordance with the provisions of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of  
13       this section. Eight of the members shall be attorneys-at-law and four of  
14       the members shall not be attorneys-at-law. Not more than six of the

15 members shall belong to the same political party. None of the members  
16 shall otherwise be an elected or appointed official of the state or hold  
17 state-wide office in a political party.

18 (b) The members of the commission shall be appointed as follows:  
19 [The] (1) Until December 31, 2025, the Governor shall appoint six  
20 members, one from each congressional district and one at-large  
21 member, three of whom shall be attorneys-at-law and three of whom  
22 shall not be attorneys-at-law; the president pro tempore of the Senate  
23 shall appoint one member who shall be an attorney-at-law; the speaker  
24 of the House of Representatives shall appoint one member who shall  
25 not be an attorney-at-law; the majority leader of the Senate shall appoint  
26 one member who shall not be an attorney-at-law; the majority leader of  
27 the House of Representatives shall appoint one member who shall be an  
28 attorney-at-law; the minority leader of the Senate shall appoint one  
29 member who shall not be an attorney-at-law; and the minority leader of  
30 the House of Representatives shall appoint one member who shall be an  
31 attorney-at-law. (2) On and after January 1, 2026, (A) the Governor shall  
32 appoint six members, one from each congressional district and one at-  
33 large member, two of whom shall be attorneys-at-law who have  
34 engaged in the practice of law in this state for not less than ten years and  
35 four of whom shall not be attorneys-at-law; (B) the president pro  
36 tempore of the Senate shall appoint one member who shall be an  
37 attorney-at-law who has engaged in the practice of law in this state for  
38 not less than ten years; (C) the speaker of the House of Representatives  
39 shall appoint one member who shall be an attorney-at-law who has  
40 engaged in the practice of law in this state for not less than ten years; (D)  
41 the majority leader of the Senate shall appoint one member who shall be  
42 an attorney-at-law who has engaged in the practice of law in this state  
43 for not less than ten years; (E) the majority leader of the House of  
44 Representatives shall appoint one member who shall be an attorney-at-  
45 law who has engaged in the practice of law in this state for not less than  
46 ten years; (F) the minority leader of the Senate shall appoint one member  
47 who shall be an attorney-at-law who has engaged in the practice of law  
48 in this state for not less than ten years; and (G) the minority leader of the

49 House of Representatives shall appoint one member who shall be an  
50 attorney-at-law who has engaged in the practice of law in this state for  
51 not less than ten years.

52 (c) The members of the commission shall elect a chairperson from  
53 among the members appointed by the Governor.

54 (d) (1) The members of the commission shall serve for terms of three  
55 years.

56 (2) Members [appointed on or after June 26, 2003,] shall serve for  
57 terms of three years and, notwithstanding the provisions of section 4-1,  
58 until their successors are appointed and have qualified or ninety days  
59 after the completion of their terms, whichever is earlier. The term of any  
60 member appointed pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this  
61 section shall end on December 31, 2025. Notwithstanding the provisions  
62 of subdivision (4) of this subsection, a member serving on the  
63 commission on December 31, 2025, who meets the requirements  
64 prescribed in subsection (b) of this section, may be reappointed to the  
65 commission for an additional consecutive term. Such additional  
66 consecutive term shall end three years following the date of such  
67 member's original appointment pursuant to subdivision (1) of  
68 subsection (b) of this section.

69 [(3) Members serving on June 26, 2003, shall continue to serve as  
70 members until the end of their terms and, notwithstanding the  
71 provisions of section 4-1, until their successors are appointed and have  
72 qualified or ninety days after the completion of their terms, whichever  
73 is earlier, except that members serving on June 26, 2003, who have  
74 completed their terms and are serving until their successors are  
75 appointed and have qualified shall, notwithstanding the provisions of  
76 section 4-1, continue to serve until their successors are appointed and  
77 have qualified, but not later than January 1, 2004.]

78 [(4)] (3) Any vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be  
79 filled for the unexpired portion of the term by the appointing authority.  
80 The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their

81 services but shall be reimbursed for any necessary expenses incurred in  
82 the performance of their duties.

83       [(5)] (4) No member of the commission may serve consecutive terms,  
84 except that, if [, on or after June 26, 2003,] a person is appointed a  
85 member of the commission to fill a vacancy and complete an unexpired  
86 term, such person may serve an additional term. If a commission  
87 member is an attorney, no member of the commission member's firm  
88 may serve a term consecutive to such commission member.

89       (e) The commission shall evaluate incumbent judges who seek  
90 reappointment to the same court and shall forward to the Governor for  
91 consideration the names of incumbent judges who are recommended  
92 for reappointment as provided in this subsection. The commission shall  
93 adopt regulations in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54  
94 concerning criteria by which to evaluate incumbent judges who seek  
95 reappointment to the same court; provided pending adoption of such  
96 regulations, the commission shall use criteria established prior to June  
97 22, 1989, for the evaluation of such judges. In evaluating the  
98 reappointment of an incumbent judge, the commission shall consider  
99 the legal ability, competence, integrity, character and temperament of  
100 such judge and any other relevant information concerning such judge.  
101 There shall be a presumption that each incumbent judge who seeks  
102 reappointment to the same court qualifies for retention in judicial office.  
103 The burden of rebutting such presumption shall be on the commission.  
104 The commission shall investigate and interview each incumbent judge  
105 who seeks reappointment and, prior to the expiration of a term of office  
106 of such judge, shall recommend such incumbent judge for nomination  
107 for reappointment by the Governor to the same court unless, as  
108 provided in this subsection, recommendation of such judge is denied. If  
109 a preliminary examination indicates further inquiry is necessary before  
110 a recommendation of reappointment may be made, the commission  
111 shall hold a hearing concerning the reappointment of such judge. The  
112 commission shall send notice to the judge by certified or registered mail,  
113 return receipt requested, not less than one hundred eighty days prior to  
114 the convening of such legislative session which is to consider the

115 reappointment of the incumbent judge, [(A)] (1) that a hearing by the  
116 commission on such reappointment shall be held and of the time, date  
117 and place of such hearing, which shall be not less than thirty days nor  
118 more than forty-five days after the date of such notice, and [(B)] (2) of  
119 specific claims made against the judge. The commission shall make a  
120 record of all hearings conducted pursuant to this subsection. The  
121 hearing may be open to the public at the request of the judge. For  
122 purposes of conducting a hearing under this subsection, not less than  
123 ten members of the commission shall be present and voting. A judge  
124 appearing before such a hearing shall be entitled to counsel, to present  
125 evidence and to cross-examine witnesses who appear voluntarily. No  
126 judge shall be required to sign or execute any release in order to proceed  
127 with the hearing. The commission shall not later than twenty days after  
128 the close of such hearing render its decision whether it shall recommend  
129 such incumbent judge for nomination for reappointment by the  
130 Governor. Any affirmative vote of a majority plus one of the members  
131 present and voting shall be required to deny recommendation to the  
132 Governor for nomination of an incumbent judge to the same court. A  
133 judge who has not received approval by the commission may within ten  
134 days after receipt of the notice of decision, which shall include a record  
135 of the numerical vote, request a rehearing on the grounds that the  
136 conclusions of the commission are contrary to the evidence presented at  
137 the hearing or the commission failed to comply with the procedural or  
138 substantive requirements of this section. The decision of the commission  
139 following a rehearing shall be final. There shall be no right of appeal by  
140 any judge appearing before the commission, at law or in equity, or any  
141 resort to any court following the decision of the commission.

142 (f) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, the commission  
143 shall seek qualified candidates for consideration by the Governor for  
144 nomination as judges for the Superior Court, Appellate Court and  
145 Supreme Court. The commission shall adopt regulations, in accordance  
146 with the provisions of chapter 54, concerning criteria by which to  
147 evaluate the qualifications of candidates, including incumbent judges  
148 who seek appointment to a different court. The commission shall

149 investigate and interview the candidates, including incumbent judges  
 150 seeking appointment to a different court. A list of such qualified  
 151 candidates shall be compiled by the commission. No candidate shall  
 152 remain on the list of qualified candidates for more than ten years. A  
 153 decision of the commission denying a recommendation to a candidate  
 154 or judge shall include a brief summary that informs the candidate or  
 155 judge of the reasons for the denial. The form and manner of such  
 156 statement shall be determined by the commission.

157 (g) In connection with any inquiry concerning the reappointment of  
 158 an incumbent judge, the commission shall have the power to issue  
 159 subpoenas requiring the attendance of witnesses and the production of  
 160 any books or papers which in the judgment of the commission are  
 161 relevant to the inquiry. The commission may, upon request of the judge  
 162 whose reappointment is at issue, issue a subpoena on behalf of such  
 163 judge. If any person disobeys such process or, having appeared in  
 164 obedience thereto refuses to answer any pertinent question put to [him]  
 165 such person by the commission, or to produce any books and papers  
 166 pursuant thereto, the commission, on its own behalf or on behalf of the  
 167 judge, may apply to the superior court for the judicial district of  
 168 Hartford setting forth such disobedience to process or refusal to answer,  
 169 and said court may cite such person to appear before said court to  
 170 answer such question or to produce such books and papers and, upon  
 171 [his] refusal so to do shall commit [him] such person to a community  
 172 correctional center, there to remain until [he] such person so testifies.

173 (h) (1) Judges of all courts, except those courts to which judges are  
 174 elected, shall be nominated by the Governor exclusively from the list of  
 175 candidates or incumbent judges submitted by the Judicial Selection  
 176 Commission. Any candidate or incumbent judge who is nominated  
 177 from such list by the Governor to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,  
 178 and who is appointed Chief Justice by the General Assembly, shall serve  
 179 a term of eight years from the date of appointment. The Governor shall  
 180 nominate a candidate for a vacancy in a judicial position within forty-  
 181 five days of the date the Governor receives the recommendations of the  
 182 commission. When considering the nomination of an incumbent judge

183 for reappointment to the same court, the Governor may nominate the  
184 incumbent judge if the commission did not deny recommendation for  
185 reappointment. Whenever an incumbent judge is denied  
186 recommendation for reappointment to the same court by the  
187 commission or is recommended by the commission but not nominated  
188 by the Governor for reappointment to the same court, or whenever a  
189 vacancy in a judicial position occurs or is anticipated, the Governor shall  
190 choose a nominee from the list of candidates compiled pursuant to  
191 subsection (f) of this section. (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of  
192 subdivision (1) of this subsection and subsection (f) of this section, the  
193 Governor may nominate an associate judge of the Supreme Court to be  
194 Chief Justice of the Supreme Court without such judge being  
195 investigated and interviewed by the commission and being on the list of  
196 qualified candidates compiled and submitted to the Governor by the  
197 commission. An associate judge of the Supreme Court who has been  
198 nominated by the Governor to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in  
199 accordance with this subdivision, and who is appointed Chief Justice by  
200 the General Assembly, shall serve an initial term as Chief Justice equal  
201 to the remainder of such judge's term as an associate judge of the  
202 Supreme Court.

203 (i) A majority of the membership of the commission shall constitute a  
204 quorum. The affirmative vote of at least a majority of the members of  
205 the commission present and voting shall be required for any action by  
206 the commission except (1) an affirmative vote of at least a majority plus  
207 one of the members present and voting shall be required for a new  
208 nominee to be recommended to the Governor for nomination as a judge  
209 or for an incumbent judge to be recommended to the Governor for  
210 nomination as a judge to a different court, and (2) an affirmative vote of  
211 a majority plus one of the members present and voting shall be required  
212 to deny recommendation to the Governor for nomination of an  
213 incumbent judge to the same court. No vote of the commission on a new  
214 nominee shall be by secret ballot. The vote of the commission on an  
215 incumbent judge may be by secret ballot.

216 (j) Except as provided in subsections (e), (f) and (m) of this section,

217 the investigations, deliberations, files and records of the commission  
218 shall be confidential and not open to the public or subject to disclosure  
219 except that the criteria by which candidates or incumbent judges who  
220 seek reappointment to the same court or appointment to a different  
221 court are evaluated and the procedural rules adopted by the  
222 commission shall be public.

223 (k) The commission may employ such staff as is necessary for the  
224 performance of its functions and duties.

225 (l) No member of the commission who is an attorney-at-law shall be  
226 considered for recommendation to the Governor for nomination as a  
227 judge during his tenure on the commission or for a period of [two] three  
228 years following the termination of his tenure on the commission.

229 (m) On [January 15, 2011, and annually thereafter] or before January  
230 fifteenth annually, the chairperson of the commission shall report to the  
231 joint standing committee on judiciary the following information with  
232 respect to the prior calendar year: (1) The number of candidates  
233 interviewed for appointment as new nominees, the number of  
234 incumbent judges interviewed for reappointment to the same court and  
235 the number of incumbent judges interviewed for appointment to a  
236 different court, (2) the number of candidates who were recommended  
237 and denied recommendation to the Governor as new nominees, the  
238 number of incumbent judges recommended and denied  
239 recommendation for appointment to the same court and the number of  
240 incumbent judges recommended and denied recommendation for  
241 appointment to a different court, (3) the statistics regarding the race,  
242 gender, national origin, religion, areas of professional experience and  
243 years of experience as members of the bar of all such candidates and  
244 incumbent judges interviewed, recommended and denied  
245 recommendation under subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, and  
246 (4) as of January first in the year of such report, the number of candidates  
247 on the list compiled by the commission pursuant to subsection (f) of this  
248 section and the statistics regarding the race, gender, national origin,  
249 religion, areas of professional experience, years of experience as



250 members of the bar and calendar year of recommendation of all such  
251 candidates.

252 (n) The commission shall have the power to enter into such  
253 contractual agreements as may be necessary for the discharge of its  
254 duties concerning the investigation of candidates seeking appointment  
255 to a judicial position and incumbent judges seeking reappointment to  
256 the same court or appointment to a different court, within the limits of  
257 appropriated funds and in accordance with established procedures.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
---	--	--

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	51-44a
-----------	---------------------	--------

***JUD***      *Joint Favorable*