
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 7041 (as amended by House "A")*

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

SUMMARY

This bill changes the composition of the 12-member Judicial Selection Commission, beginning with appointments made on or after July 1, 2025. Under current law, the commission is made up of six attorneys and six non-attorneys. Under the bill, it is comprised of eight attorneys, who each have engaged in the practice of law in Connecticut for at least 10 years, and four non-attorneys.

The bill also makes changes to the commission's operations, as follows:

1. limits the time a candidate may be on the commission's list of candidates qualified for a judicial nomination to 10 years;
2. increases, from two to three years, the time a commission member who is an attorney has to wait after ending his or her commission tenure before being considered for a judicial nomination;
3. at the request of a candidate or judge, requires the commission to include in a decision denying a recommendation for judicial nomination a brief summary of the reasons for the denial; and
4. requires the commission, in its annual report to the Judiciary Committee, to include the areas of professional experience for individuals on the list of qualified candidates and for those who were interviewed, recommended, and denied recommendation.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

*House Amendment “A” (1) applies the composition requirements to appointments made on or after July 1, 2025, rather than ending the current members’ terms at the end of 2025 and requiring new commission appointments beginning January 1, 2026; (2) equalizes the governor’s attorney and non-attorney appointments at three apiece, rather than two attorneys and four non-attorneys, and makes the Senate majority leader’s appointment a non-attorney rather than an attorney; and (3) allows a candidate or incumbent judge to ask for a summary of the reasons supporting a decision to not be considered for nomination or appointment, instead of requiring the decision to have the information.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

JUDICIAL SELECTION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Membership

The bill’s revised requirements for commission members apply to appointments made on or after July 1, 2025. The appointments under current law and the bill, including the applicable appointing authorities and specified qualifications, are in the table below.

Table: Judicial Selection Commission Appointees

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Until June 30, 2025, Under Current Law</i>	<i>Appointments on or after July 1, 2025, Under the Bill</i>
Governor	Six members: One from each congressional district and one at-large as follows: Three attorneys and three non-attorneys	Six members: One from each congressional district and one at-large as follows: Three attorneys who have engaged in the practice of law in Connecticut for at least 10 years and three non-attorneys
Senate majority leader	One non-attorney	One non-attorney
Senate president pro tempore	One attorney	For each, one attorney who has engaged in the practice of law in Connecticut for at least 10 years
Senate minority leader	One non-attorney	
House speaker	One non-attorney	
House majority leader	One attorney	

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Until June 30, 2025, Under Current Law</i>	<i>Appointments on or after July 1, 2025, Under the Bill</i>
House minority leader	One attorney	

As under existing law, no more than six of the members may belong to the same political party, and none may otherwise be an elected or appointed state official or hold statewide office in a political party.

As under current law, members must select a chairperson from among the governor's appointees. They must serve (1) a three-year term and (2) until a successor is appointed and qualified, but no later than 90 days after their term ends.

LIST OF JUDICIAL CANDIDATES

By law, the commission maintains a list of qualified candidates, including judges seeking appointment to a different court, for the governor's consideration for nomination as a judge in the state's Superior, Appellate, and Supreme courts. The bill limits the time a candidate may remain on the list to no more than 10 years.

Under current law, a commission member who is an attorney cannot be considered for a recommendation to the governor during the member's tenure or for two years following. The bill increases this period to three years following the end of the member's commission tenure.

Additionally, if the commission issues a decision informing a candidate that they will not be considered for nomination as a judge or informing an incumbent judge that they will not be considered for appointment to a different court, the bill allows the candidate or judge to request a brief summary of the reasons supporting the decision. The commission must determine the form and manner of the summary.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 41 Nay 0 (04/07/2025)