

*Representative Michael Skindell*

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee; we are pleased to present to you today HB 460 which will allow judicial candidates identify their party affiliation on general election ballots. The approach is an “opt-out” provision for party identification. In other words, if the candidate is seeking to be nominated by a party, at the time of their declaration of candidacy they must expressly request that no party identification be placed on the ballot. Otherwise, after nomination by their respective party, partisan identification will appear on the general election.

Currently, 7 states conduct partisan elections in the selection of their judges and 14 states use nonpartisan elections. Ohio elects all of their judges, but prohibits party identification on the general election ballot, even if the judicial candidate is nominated through a partisan election. However, judicial candidates in Ohio can already identify their party affiliation on campaign literature and within advertisements, at their discretion. This legislation would extend that party affiliation to the ballots where that information would reach all voters at the time the ballot is being cast.