



OHIO STATE BAR
ASSOCIATION
Connect. Advance. Succeed.

**STATEMENT OF THE OHIO STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 460**

Before the House State and Local Government Committee
Representative Scott Wiggam, Chair
December 1, 2020

Chairman Wiggam, Vice-Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the State and Local Government Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 460 on behalf of the Ohio State Bar Association (“OSBA”).

The OSBA has long been concerned about the lack of voter participation in judicial elections, which is why we work each election cycle to educate the public through our Ohio Supreme Court ratings process, our Judicial Election Advertising Monitoring Committee and our partnership with the Supreme Court and others to promote Judicial Votes Count (www.judicialvotescount.com).

While we recognize that there is more work to be done to educate and engage Ohio voters on judicial elections, the OSBA opposes House Bill 460 because we continue to believe that partisan designations threaten the independence of the judiciary. Because the independence of the judiciary is critical for ensuring fairness and impartiality in Ohio courtrooms and central to our form of government and sustaining the Rule of Law, we urge this chamber to exercise caution and due consideration for the potential consequences such a change could have on public trust and confidence in our judicial system.

While we do not believe that House Bill 460 is the right answer, the OSBA stands ready to assist this body with addressing the aforementioned problem of engagement in judicial elections.