

*Testimony Opposing Senate Bill 80
House Government Oversight Committee
Submitted by: Andrea R. Yagoda*

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair, White, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for affording me the opportunity to testify in opposition House Bill 5149 I am a private citizen and a resident of Ohio for the last 46 years and a retired attorney who practiced in this state for 37 years.

During my tenure as an attorney I would, during every election cycle, advise my clients on which judges our office was supporting for election. These recommendations were not based on party affiliation but rather the competency, impartiality, knowledge of the law and how each judge applied it. Every letter of support gave the reasons why I supported each and every judge. NEVER did I base those recommendations based on any party affiliation.

This bill concerns me in several respects. First, it raises suspicions when only certain judgeships are earmarked ie; Supreme Court and appellate court races. Why do the sponsors of this bill feel the need to designate these particular judgeships as partisan races? The rationale is that this would somehow educate the public. How does this educate the public? Educating the public would be to encourage them to research the candidates, what their positions are, how they have ruled in the past. A party affiliation does nothing to educate the public. What it does do is make Justices and appellate court judges political and the judiciary should not be political. Partisan politics have no place in the judiciary. The message we should be sending is that judges are important in our daily lives, All judges. This bill sends a message that lower court judges are not important. This bill will not make any difference in the drop off for down the ballot judges. How does this bill improve the judicial system? It does not. Please do not turn our courts into a political arena. This bill sends the wrong message. I urge members of this committee to say no to this bill.

*Thank you.
Andrea R. Yagoda*