SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 3

55TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2022

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT RESOLUTION

PROPOSING TO AMEND ARTICLE 6, SECTION 35 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NEW MEXICO TO PROVIDE THAT AN APPOINTED APPELLATE JUDGE SERVE AT LEAST ONE YEAR BEFORE A GENERAL ELECTION IS HELD FOR THE OFFICE TO WHICH THE JUDGE WAS APPOINTED.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. It is proposed to amend Article 6, Section 35 of the constitution of New Mexico to read:

"There is created the "appellate judges nominating commission", consisting of: the chief justice of the supreme court or the chief justice's designee from the supreme court; two judges of the court of appeals appointed by the chief judge of the court of appeals; the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives and the president pro tempore of the senate shall each appoint two persons, one of whom shall be an
attorney licensed to practice law in this state and the other
who shall be a citizen who is not licensed to practice law in
any state; the dean of the university of New Mexico school of
law, who shall serve as chair of the commission and
shall vote only in the event of a tie vote; four members of the
state bar of New Mexico, representing civil and criminal
prosecution and defense, appointed by the president of the
state bar and the judges on the commission. The appointments shall be made in such manner that each of the
two largest major political parties, as defined by the Election
Code, shall be equally represented on the commission. If
necessary, the president of the state bar and the judges on
the commission shall make the minimum number
of additional appointments of members of the state bar as is
necessary to make each of the two largest major political
parties be equally represented on the commission. These
additional members of the state bar shall be appointed such
that the diverse interests of the state bar are represented.
The dean of the university of New Mexico school of law shall be
the final arbiter of whether such diverse interests are
represented. Members of the commission shall be appointed for
terms as may be provided by law. If a position on the
commission becomes vacant for any reason, the successor shall
be selected by the original appointing authority in the same
manner as the original appointment was made and shall serve for
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the remainder of the term vacated.

The commission shall actively solicit, accept and evaluate applications from qualified lawyers for the position of justice of the supreme court or judge of the court of appeals and may require an applicant to submit any information it deems relevant to the consideration of [his] the application.

Upon the occurrence of an actual vacancy in the office of justice of the supreme court or judge of the court of appeals, the commission shall meet within thirty days and within that period submit to the governor the names of persons qualified for the judicial office and recommended for appointment to that office by a majority of the commission.

Immediately after receiving the commission nominations, the governor may make one request of the commission for submission of additional names, and the commission shall promptly submit such additional names if a majority of the commission finds that additional persons would be qualified and recommends those persons for appointment to the judicial office. The governor shall fill a vacancy or appoint a successor to fill an impending vacancy in the office of justice of the supreme court or judge of the court of appeals within thirty days after receiving final nominations from the commission by appointing one of the persons nominated by the commission for appointment to that office. If the governor fails to make the appointment within that period or from those
nominations, the appointment shall be made from those
nominations by the chief justice or the acting chief justice of the supreme court. [Any] The person appointed shall serve until the [next] first general election [That person's] following one year after appointment. The appointee's successor shall be chosen at such election and shall hold the office until the expiration of the [original] term in effect at the time of election."

SECTION 2. The amendment proposed by this resolution shall be submitted to the people for their approval or rejection at the next general election or at any special election prior to that date that may be called for that purpose.

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