



Supreme Court of Wisconsin

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Public financing of Supreme Court campaigns is a timely and vital subject, important to the maintenance of a fair, neutral, impartial, non-partisan judiciary in Wisconsin. We commend the legislature and governor for considering this issue.

We write to support the concept of realistic, meaningful public financing for Supreme Court elections to facilitate and protect the judicial function.

A cornerstone of our state is that the judiciary is fair, neutral, impartial, and non-partisan. The risk inherent in any non-publicly funded judicial election for this Court is that the public may inaccurately perceive a justice as beholden to individuals or groups that contribute to his or her campaign. Judges must not only be fair, neutral, impartial and non-partisan but also should be so perceived by the public.

This letter favoring the concept of realistic, meaningful public campaign financing for Supreme Court Justices does not address public campaign financing for other officers. Moreover, it does not endorse any particular bill or proposal and does not foretell a decision on any federal or state constitutional free speech or other legal issue that may arise from the adoption of public financing for Supreme Court elections. Rather, this letter is part of our continuing commitment to maintain a fair, neutral, impartial, and non-partisan Wisconsin judiciary and to preserve the courts as an impartial forum for resolving disputes.

Sincerely yours,

Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson

Justice Ann Walsh Bradley

Justice N. Patrick Crooks

Justice David T. Prosser, Jr.

Justice Patience Drake Roggensack

Justice Louis B. Butler, Jr.

Justice Annette Kingsland Ziegler

cc: Governor Doyle
James Alexander