



CAMPAIGN AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY ETHICS ADVISORY OPINIONS ACROSS THE NATION 2006-2008

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"Recent Judicial Ethics Advisory Opinions—Campaign and Political Activity."

- A judicial candidate may sign the Cuban American Bar Association Judicial Election Campaign Pledge committing to diversity. Florida Opinion 2008-14.
- A judicial candidate should not state in campaign advertisements that his judicial philosophy is that those who bring drugs into the county for sale should be dealt with harshly. West Virginia Opinion (March 24, 2008).
- A judicial candidate may not state in campaign literature: "I believe justice requires a fair system for all, especially little children who may be too small or unable to speak for themselves," and "Balance the scales of justice for victims." Oklahoma Opinion 07-1.
- A judicial candidate may state in advertisements that he is "not accepting campaign contributions from anyone" if that statement is accurate. South Dakota Opinion 06-4.
- A judge who is a candidate for another judicial office may include a link on her campaign web-site to articles about her and photographs taken in the courtroom during a trial and published by a newspaper. A judge's campaign committee may solicit donations on a campaign web-site provided the contributions go directly to the committee. New York Opinion 07-135.
- A sitting judge may be pictured in campaign materials wearing a judicial robe and in a courtroom. South Dakota Opinion 06-1.
- A judge who is a candidate for re-election may use in a campaign advertisement a photograph of herself in a judicial robe in front of the door to her chambers but may not use a video of her asking viewers to vote for her filmed inside her chambers or the courthouse. New York Opinion 07-139.
- A judicial candidate whose parent is an elected public official may not publicize the parent's endorsement, may not use the name and image of the parent in campaign materials, and may not authorize the parent to host a fund-raiser for her campaign even if the parent's office is not identified, but may permit the parent to send letters, postcards, and e-mails to his friends and acquaintances urging a vote for the candidate and may campaign with the parent at church picnics and other public functions if the parent's office is not identified, Kentucky Opinion JE-116 (2008).

- A judge's parents may not generate a letter soliciting campaign contributions for the judge's re-election. Florida Opinion 2008-9.
- A judge may advocate for passage of a bond to fund a new court facility by writing an op-ed article for the local press, speaking at public informational forums, and advocating publicly about the need for the facility. New York Opinion 07-109.
- A judge may publicly campaign against a proposed constitutional amendment that would require that all municipal judges be licensed to practice law by writing commentary for the press, discussing the matter at debates, and speaking on the radio. New Mexico Opinion 08-1.
- A judge may submit to a newspaper an op-ed article that advocates citizens learn about each judge who is a candidate for retention and not vote "no" for all of the retention judges. Pennsylvania Informal Opinion 10/3/07.
- A judge may participate as an audience member at a "meet the candidates" event by distributing factual materials and questioning candidates for the state legislature about judicial compensation. New York Opinion 08-5.
- A judge who is not a candidate for elective judicial office may not attend a holiday party hosted by a friend who is a member of Congress and financed with the friend's campaign funds. New York Opinion 07-211.
- A judge who is not a candidate for election may not attend a reception honoring elected officials sponsored by a political organization. Pennsylvania Informal Opinion 12/26/07.
- A judge may not contribute to a political action committee, including a political action committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. Pennsylvania Informal Opinion 11/30/07.
- A judge who had the credit card company block a campaign contribution after he realized the contribution violated the code of judicial conduct is not required to self-report to the Judicial Conduct Board. Pennsylvania Informal Opinion 2/26/08.

This article like all other ethics articles on the Judicial Family Institute (JFI) website should be compared against the current code of judicial conduct of your state, commonwealth, or territory. "No judicial conduct commission has jurisdiction over non-judge family members" according to Cynthia Gray, Director of the Center for Judicial Ethics of the National Center for State Courts.

An Ethics Guide for Judges and Their Families by Cynthia Gray is available free online through the National Center for State Courts at (<http://www.ncsc.org/Topics/Judicial-Officers/Ethics/Center-for-Judicial-Ethics/CJE-Publications.aspx>)

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