

Stricken language would be deleted from present law. Underlined language would be added to present law.

1 State of Arkansas
2 81st General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 1997

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 2271

4
5 By: Representative Thomas

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 "AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE NONPARTISAN ELECTION OF CERTAIN
10 JUDICIAL OFFICES; TO AMEND VARIOUS SECTIONS OF ARKANSAS
11 CODE TITLE 7 AND ARKANSAS CODE 14-42-206 TO CONFORM WITH
12 THIS ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

Subtitle

15 "AN ACT CONCERNING NONPARTISAN JUDICIAL
16 ELECTIONS."

17
18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

20 SECTION 1. Definitions.

21 For the purposes of this act, "nonpartisan judicial office" means the
22 offices of Supreme Court Justice, judge of the Court of Appeals, circuit
23 judge, chancery judge, circuit-chancery judge and municipal judge.

25 SECTION 2. Nonpartisan election of judges and justices.

26 (a) The offices of Supreme Court Justice, judge of the Court of
27 Appeals, circuit judge, chancery judge, circuit-chancery judge and municipal
28 judge are declared to be nonpartisan offices and candidates for those offices
29 are declared to be independent candidates.

30 (b)(1) The period for filing as a candidate for a nonpartisan judicial
31 office shall be the same as for filing political practice pledges in a
32 preferential primary election under Arkansas Code 7-7-203. The candidate may
33 pay a filing fee as provided for in this act, file a petition in the manner
34 provided by Arkansas Code 7-7-103, or file as a write-in candidate pursuant to
35 Arkansas Code 7-5-205. The filing period prescribed by this subsection shall
36 apply regardless of whether the person pays the filing fee, files a petition,

1 or files as a write-in candidate.

2 (2) A candidate for Supreme Court Justice or judge of the Court
 3 of Appeals shall file with the Secretary of State. A candidate for circuit
 4 judge, chancery judge, or circuit-chancery judge shall file with the county
 5 clerk of each county in which he or she is a candidate and shall file his or
 6 her political practice pledge with the Secretary of State. A candidate for
 7 municipal judge shall file with the county clerk.

8 (3) Arkansas Code 7-7-203, concerning independent candidates,
 9 shall not apply to nonpartisan judicial offices except to the extent
 10 authorized by this section.

11 (c) The election for nonpartisan judicial offices shall be held at the
 12 same time as provided by law for preferential primary elections. However, the
 13 election is not a primary election.

14 (d) No person shall be elected to a nonpartisan judicial office without
 15 receiving a majority of the votes cast at the election for the office. In any
 16 election where no person receives a majority of the votes cast, the two (2)
 17 candidates receiving the highest and next highest number of votes shall be
 18 certified to a runoff election which shall be held at the same time as the
 19 November general election.

20

21 SECTION 3. Conduct of Election by County Board of Election
 22 Commissioners.

23 The names of candidates for nonpartisan judicial offices shall be placed
 24 on the ballots of the political parties but shall be designated as
 25 "nonpartisan judicial candidates." The county board of election commissioners
 26 shall provide a separate ballot for nonpartisan judicial offices for
 27 individuals who do not wish to participate in a party primary.

28

29 SECTION 4. Filing Fees.

30 (a) The State Board of Election Commissioners shall establish
 31 reasonable filing fees for nonpartisan judicial offices.

32 (b) The filing fee for the offices of Supreme Court Justice, judge of
 33 the Court of Appeals, circuit judge, chancery judge, and circuit-chancery
 34 judge shall be paid to the Secretary of State at the same time the candidate
 35 files his or her political practices pledge. A candidate for municipal judge
 36 shall pay the filing fee to the county clerk at the same time the candidate

1 files his or her political practices pledge.

2 (c) The filing fees shall be remitted to the State Treasurer for
 3 deposit as general revenues.

4
 5 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code 7-5-205 is amended to read as follows:

6 "7-5-205. Write-in candidates votes - When counted.

7 No votes for write-in candidates in general elections shall be counted
 8 or tabulated unless the candidate or his agent shall notify in writing the
 9 county board of election commissioners and either the Secretary of State if a
 10 state or district candidate, or a county clerk if a candidate for a county
 11 township or municipal office, of his intention to be a write-in candidate not
 12 later than sixty (60) days before the opening of the polls; except that, a
 13 candidate for a nonpartisan judicial office shall file his or her intent to be
 14 a write-in candidate not later than the deadline for filing a political
 15 practice pledge under § 7-7-203."

16
 17 SECTION 6. Arkansas Code 7-5-704 is amended to add an additional
 18 subsection to read as follows:

19 "(c) Subsection (b) of this section shall not apply to the offices of
 20 Justice of the Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Appeals, circuit judge,
 21 chancery judge, circuit-chancery judge, and municipal judge."

22
 23 SECTION 7. Arkansas Code 7-7-306 is amended to read as follows:

24 "7-7-306. Partisan ballots only.

25 At each primary election each county board of election commissioners
 26 shall furnish separate ballots ~~for each political party~~ containing only the
 27 names of persons seeking offices to be voted upon as a nominee or candidate of
 28 that political party. This section shall not prohibit the names of candidates
 29 for a nonpartisan judicial office from appearing on a primary election
 30 ballot."

31
 32 SECTION 8. Arkansas Code 7-7-401 (e) is amended to read as follows:

33 "(e) Nomination as an independent candidate for Supreme Court Justice,
 34 judge of the Court of Appeals, circuit judge, chancery judge, circuit-chancery
 35 judge, or municipal judge shall be deemed certified upon the candidate filing
 36 for office. For any other office, nomination ~~Nomination~~ as an independent

1 candidate without political party affiliation for election to any office shall
2 be certified by petition of electors in the manner provided in § 7-7-103."

3

4 SECTION 9. Arkansas Code 14-42-206 is amended to add a new subsection
5 to read as follows:

6 "(f) This section shall not be construed to allow a party primary for
7 the office of municipal judge. Nor shall this section be construed to require
8 a candidate for municipal judge to file a petition of nomination."

9

10 SECTION 10. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent
11 nature are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas
12 Code Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.

13

14 SECTION 11. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to
15 any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect
16 other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without
17 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this
18 act are declared to be severable.

19

20 SECTION 12. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act are
21 hereby repealed.

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35