

STATE OF NEW YORK

732

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 11, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. CARROLL, PAULIN -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. LUPARDO -- read once and referred to the Committee on Judiciary

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY

proposing amendments to article 6 of the constitution, in relation to the manner of selecting judges and justices of the unified court system, and to repeal section 21 of article 6 thereof relating thereto

1 Section 1. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That subdivision c of
2 section 4 of article 6 of the constitution be amended to read as
3 follows:

4 c. The governor shall designate the presiding justice of each appel-
5 late division, who shall act as such during his or her term of office
6 and shall be a resident of the department. The other justices of the
7 appellate divisions shall be designated by the governor, from all the
8 justices [~~elected to~~] of the supreme court, other than those serving by
9 interim appointment pursuant to section twenty-one of this article for
10 terms of five years or the unexpired portions of their respective terms
11 of office, if less than five years.

12 § 2. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That subdivisions b and c of
13 section 6 of article 6 of the constitution be amended to read as
14 follows:

15 b. Once every ten years the legislature may increase or decrease the
16 number of judicial districts or alter the composition of judicial
17 districts and thereupon re-apportion the justices to be thereafter
18 [~~elected~~] selected in the judicial districts so altered. Each judicial
19 district shall be bounded by county lines.

20 c. [~~The justices of the supreme court shall be chosen by the electors~~
21 ~~of the judicial district in which they are to serve.~~] The terms of
22 justices of the supreme court shall be fourteen years [~~from and includ-~~
23 ~~ing the first day of January next after their election~~].

24 § 3. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That section 9 of article 6 of
25 the constitution be amended to read as follows:

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 § 9. The court of claims is continued. It shall consist of the eight
2 judges now authorized by law, but the legislature may increase such
3 number and may reduce such number to six or seven. The terms of the
4 judges shall be [~~appointed by the governor by and with the advice and~~
5 ~~consent of the senate and their terms of office shall be~~] nine years.
6 The court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine claims against
7 the state or by the state against the claimant or between conflicting
8 claimants as the legislature may provide.

9 § 4. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That subdivisions a and b of
10 section 10 of article 6 of the constitution be amended to read as
11 follows:

12 a. The county court is continued in each county outside the city of
13 New York. There shall be at least one judge of the county court in each
14 county and such number of additional judges in each county as may be
15 provided by law. The judges shall be residents of the county [~~and shall~~
16 ~~be chosen by the electors of the county~~].

17 b. The terms of the judges of the county court shall be ten years
18 [~~from and including the first day of January next after their election~~].

19 § 5. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That subdivisions b and c of
20 section 12 of article 6 of the constitution be amended to read as
21 follows:

22 b. The judges of the surrogate's court shall be residents of the coun-
23 ty [~~and shall be chosen by the electors of the county~~].

24 c. The terms of the judges of the surrogate's court in the city of New
25 York shall be fourteen years, and in other counties ten years[~~, from and~~
26 ~~including the first day of January next after their election~~].

27 § 6. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That subdivision a of section 13
28 of article 6 of the constitution be amended to read as follows:

29 a. The family court of the state of New York is hereby established. It
30 shall consist of at least one judge in each county outside the city of
31 New York and such number of additional judges for such counties as may
32 be provided by law. Within the city of New York it shall consist of such
33 number of judges as may be provided by law. The judges of the family
34 court within the city of New York shall be residents of such city and
35 [~~shall be appointed by the mayor of the city of New York for terms of~~
36 ~~ten years. The~~] the judges of the family court outside the city of New
37 York[~~,~~] shall be [~~chosen by the electors of the counties wherein they~~
38 ~~reside for~~] residents of the county. The terms of judges of the family
39 court shall be ten years.

40 § 7. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That subdivision a of section 15
41 of article 6 of the constitution be amended to read as follows:

42 a. The legislature shall by law establish a single court of city-wide
43 civil jurisdiction and a single court of city-wide criminal jurisdiction
44 in and for the city of New York and the legislature may, upon the
45 request of the mayor and the local legislative body of the city of New
46 York, merge the two courts into one city-wide court of both civil and
47 criminal jurisdiction. The said city-wide courts shall consist of such
48 number of judges as may be provided by law. The judges of the court of
49 city-wide civil jurisdiction and of the court of city-wide criminal
50 jurisdiction shall be residents of such city [~~and shall be chosen for~~
51 ~~and their~~] terms [~~of~~] shall be ten years [~~by the electors of the counties~~
52 ~~included within the city of New York from districts within such counties~~
53 ~~established by law. The judges of the court of city wide criminal juris-~~
54 ~~isdiction shall be residents of such city and shall be appointed for terms~~
55 ~~of ten years by the mayor of the city of New York~~].

1 § 8. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That subdivision h of section 16
2 of article 6 of the constitution be amended to read as follows:

3 h. The judges shall be residents of the district and [~~shall be chosen~~
4 ~~by the electors of the district. Their~~] their terms shall be six years
5 [~~from and including the first day of January next after their election~~].

6 § 9. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That the opening paragraph of
7 subdivision b of section 20 of article 6 of the constitution be amended
8 to read as follows:

9 A judge of the court of appeals, justice of the supreme court, judge
10 of the court of claims, judge of a county court, judge of the surro-
11 gate's court, judge of the family court or judge of a court for the city
12 of New York established pursuant to section fifteen of this article [~~who~~
13 ~~is elected or appointed after the effective date of this article~~] may
14 not:

15 § 10. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That section 21 of article 6 of
16 the constitution be REPEALED and a new section 21 be added to read as
17 follows:

18 § 21. a. There shall be a judicial nominating commission for each
19 judicial district outside the city of New York to evaluate the qualifi-
20 cations of candidates for appointment in such district to the offices of
21 judge or justice of the supreme court, the county court, the family
22 court, the surrogate's court, and, in each district in which the dis-
23 trict court has been established, the district court. There shall be one
24 city-wide judicial nominating commission to evaluate the qualifications
25 of candidates for appointment in the city of New York to the offices of
26 judge or justice of the supreme court, the family court, the surrogate's
27 court, and the city-wide court or courts for such city established pur-
28 suant to section fifteen of this article. There shall be one statewide
29 judicial nominating commission to evaluate the qualifications of candi-
30 dates for appointment to the office of judge of the court of claims, and
31 for designation to the offices of presiding justice and justice of the
32 appellate division.

33 b. (1) Each such commission shall consist of thirteen at-large members
34 of whom four shall be appointed by the governor, three by the chief
35 judge of the court of appeals, one each by the temporary president of
36 the senate, the speaker of the assembly, the minority leader of the sen-
37 ate and the minority leader of the assembly, and one by the president of
38 the New York state bar association. The chief administrator of the
39 courts shall be a member of the statewide judicial nominating commis-
40 sion. Each commission, other than a statewide judicial nominating
41 commission, also shall include one at-large member appointed by the pre-
42 siding justice of the appellate division of the department in which the
43 district is located and two regional members from each county in the
44 district appointed by the chief elected official of the county, except
45 that there shall be four regional members appointed from each county in
46 the city of New York, two of whom shall be appointed by the chief
47 elected official of such county and two of whom shall be appointed by
48 the mayor of such city. Regional members shall serve only when the
49 vacant office is to be filled by a resident of their county. To the
50 extent practicable, the members of each commission shall reflect diver-
51 sity of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, geography and,
52 among those who are also members of the bar, various practice areas and
53 size of practice.

54 (2) Of the four members of each commission appointed by the governor,
55 not more than two shall be enrolled in the same political party and at
56 least two shall not be members of the bar of the state. Of the three

1 members appointed by the chief judge of the court of appeals, not more
2 than two shall be members of the bar of the state. The member appointed
3 by the presiding justice of the appellate division shall be a member of
4 the bar of the state. The two regional members from each county outside
5 the city of New York shall not be enrolled in the same political party
6 and one shall not be a member of the bar of the state. The two regional
7 members from each county in the city of New York appointed by the chief
8 elected official of each such county shall not be enrolled in the same
9 political party and one shall not be a member of the bar of the state,
10 and the two regional members from each county in the city of New York
11 appointed by the mayor of such city shall not be enrolled in the same
12 political party and one shall not be a member of the bar of the state.
13 Except for the chief administrator of the courts, no at-large or
14 regional member of any commission shall hold or have held any judicial
15 office or hold any elected public office for which he or she receives
16 compensation during his or her period of service, except that the gover-
17 nor and chief judge may each appoint no more than one former judge or
18 justice of the unified court system to each commission. No at-large or
19 regional member of any commission shall hold office in any political
20 party, and, except for the chief administrator of the courts, no member
21 shall be eligible for appointment to judicial office in any court of the
22 state during the member's period of service or within one year thereaft-
23 er.

24 (3) The members of each commission first appointed by the governor
25 shall have, respectively, one, two, three and four year terms as he or
26 she shall designate. The members first appointed by the chief judge of
27 the court of appeals shall have, respectively, two, three and four year
28 terms as he or she shall designate. The member first appointed by the
29 temporary president of the senate shall have a four year term. The mem-
30 ber first appointed by the speaker of the assembly shall have a three
31 year term. The member first appointed by the minority leader of the sen-
32 ate shall have a two year term. The member first appointed by the minor-
33 ity leader of the assembly shall have a one year term. The members first
34 appointed by the presiding justice of the appellate division and the
35 president of the New York state bar association shall have four year
36 terms. The regional members first appointed from each county outside the
37 city of New York shall have, respectively, two and four year terms as
38 the person appointing them shall designate. The two regional members ap-
39 pointed from each county within the city of New York by the chief
40 elected official of each county shall have, respectively, one and three
41 year terms as the person appointing them shall designate and the two
42 regional members appointed from each county within the city of New York
43 by the mayor of such city shall have, respectively, two and four year
44 terms as the mayor shall designate. Each subsequent appointment shall be
45 for a term of four years.

46 (4) The governor shall designate a chairperson for each commission
47 from among its at-large members.

48 (5) Each at-large member of each commission shall be a resident of,
49 have an office in or work in the judicial district in which he or she is
50 to serve, except that each at-large member of the city-wide commission
51 for the city of New York shall be a resident of, have an office in or
52 work in such city and each at-large member of the statewide commission
53 shall be a resident of the state.

54 c. (1) The statewide judicial nominating commission shall consider the
55 qualifications of all candidates for appointment to the office of judge
56 of the court of claims, and for designation to the offices of presiding

1 justice and justice of the appellate division; and each such other dis-
2 trict commission shall consider the qualifications of candidates for ap-
3 pointment outside the city of New York to the offices of judge or
4 justice of the supreme court, the county court, the family court, the
5 surrogate's court, and, in each district in which the district court has
6 been established, the district court. The city-wide commission for the
7 city of New York shall consider candidates for appointment within such
8 city to the offices of judge or justice of the supreme court, the family
9 court, the surrogate's court, and the city-wide court or courts for such
10 city established pursuant to section fifteen of this article. Whenever
11 one or more vacancies in such offices occur, the appropriate commission
12 shall prepare a written report and recommend to the appropriate appoint-
13 ing authority persons who by their character, temperament, professional
14 aptitude and experience are well-qualified for that judicial office. To
15 the extent practicable, the nominees shall reflect diversity of race,
16 gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and geography, taking into
17 consideration the court to which they are being nominated and the
18 members with whom they might be serving.

19 (2) The legislature shall prescribe by law the organization and proce-
20 dure of each commission, provided, however, that where there is one
21 vacancy to be filled, at least three persons and not more than five per-
22 sons shall be recommended as provided herein; where there are two vacan-
23 cies in the same judicial office, at least five persons and not more
24 than eight persons shall be recommended; and, where there are three or
25 more vacancies in the same judicial office, the number of persons recom-
26 ended by the appropriate commission shall be at least two times the
27 number of vacancies and not more than three times the number of vacan-
28 cies. Notwithstanding the foregoing, where a commission is unable to
29 recommend as well-qualified for a judicial office such number of per-
30 sons as is prescribed herein, it shall recommend such lesser number of
31 persons who are well-qualified therefor. To the extent practicable, the
32 nominees shall reflect diversity of race, gender, sexual orientation,
33 ethnicity, and geography, taking into consideration the court to which
34 they are being nominated and the members with whom they might be serv-
35 ing.

36 d. (1) From among those recommended by the appropriate commission as
37 provided in paragraph one of subdivision c of this section, the governor
38 shall appoint a person to fill a vacancy in the office of justice of the
39 supreme court and the office of judge of the court of claims, by and
40 with the advice and consent of the senate, and designate a person as
41 presiding justice or justice of the appellate division; the governor
42 shall, upon the nomination of the mayor of the city of New York, appoint
43 a person to fill a vacancy in the office within such city of judge of
44 the family court, the surrogate's court, and the city-wide court or
45 courts for such city established pursuant to section fifteen of this ar-
46 ticle, by and with the advice and consent of the senate; and the gover-
47 nor shall, upon the nomination of the chief elected official of a county
48 outside the city of New York in which a vacancy occurs in the office of
49 judge of the county court, the family court, the surrogate's court, or
50 the district court, appoint a person to fill such office, by and with
51 the advice and consent of the senate.

52 (2) In the case of each appointment that is subject to the advice and
53 consent of the senate, the governor shall transmit to the senate the
54 written report of the appropriate commission relating to the appointee.

55 e. When a vacancy occurs in a judicial office where appointment there-
56 to is subject to the advice and consent of the senate and the senate is

1 not in session to give its advice and consent to an appointment to fill
2 the vacancy, the governor shall fill the vacancy by interim appointment
3 as provided in subdivision d of this section. An interim appointment
4 shall continue until the senate shall pass upon the selection. If the
5 senate confirms an appointment, the justice or judge shall serve the
6 full term provided for his or her office under this article, commencing
7 from the date of such interim appointment. If the senate rejects an
8 appointment, a vacancy in the office shall occur sixty days after such
9 rejection.

10 § 11. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That subdivision a of section
11 25 of article 6 of the constitution be amended to read as follows:

12 a. The compensation of a judge of the court of appeals, a justice of
13 the supreme court, a judge of the court of claims, a judge of the county
14 court, a judge of the surrogate's court, a judge of the family court, a
15 judge of a court for the city of New York established pursuant to
16 section fifteen of this article, a judge of the district court or of a
17 retired judge or justice shall be established by law and shall not be
18 diminished during [~~the~~] his or her term of office [~~for which he or she~~
19 ~~was elected or appointed. Any judge or justice of a court abolished by~~
20 ~~section thirty-five of this article, who pursuant to that section~~
21 ~~becomes a judge or justice of a court established or continued by this~~
22 ~~article, shall receive without interruption or diminution for the~~
23 ~~remainder of the term for which he or she was elected or appointed to~~
24 ~~the abolished court the compensation he or she had been receiving upon~~
25 ~~the effective date of this article together with any additional compen-~~
26 ~~sation that may be prescribed by law].~~

27 § 12. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That article 6 of the constitu-
28 tion be amended by adding a new section 36-d to read as follows:

29 § 36-d. a. The amendments to sections four, six, nine, ten, twelve,
30 thirteen, fifteen, sixteen, twenty and twenty-five of this article, the
31 repeal of section twenty-one, and the insertion of a new section twen-
32 ty-one and this section, as first proposed by a concurrent resolution
33 passed by the legislature in the year two thousand twenty-three, enti-
34 led "CONCURRENT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY proposing amend-
35 ments to article 6 of the constitution, in relation to the manner of
36 selecting judges and justices of the unified court system, and to repeal
37 section 21 of article 6 thereof relating thereto" shall become a part of
38 the constitution on the first day of January next after the approval and
39 ratification of the amendment proposed by such concurrent resolution by
40 the people, but the provisions thereof shall not become operative and
41 the repeal of section twenty-one of this article shall not become effec-
42 tive until September first next thereafter which date shall be deemed
43 the effective date of these amendments.

44 b. Notwithstanding any other provision herein, the judges and justices
45 of the appellate division, the supreme court, the court of claims, the
46 county court, the family court, the surrogate's court, the city-wide
47 court or courts for the city of New York established pursuant to section
48 fifteen of this article, and the district court in office on the effec-
49 tive date of this section shall hold their offices as judges and
50 justices of such courts until the expiration of their respective terms.

51 § 13. Resolved (if the Senate concur), That the foregoing amendments
52 be referred to the first regular legislative session convening after the
53 next succeeding general election of members of the assembly, and, in
54 conformity with section 1 of article 19 of the constitution, be pu-
55 blished for 3 months previous to the time of such election.