WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §3-10-3A

§3-10-3a. Judicial Vacancy Advisory Commission.

(a) The Judicial Vacancy Advisory Commission shall assist the Governor in filling judicial vacancies. The commission shall meet and submit a list of no more than five nor less than two of the most qualified persons to the Governor within 90 days of the occurrence of a vacancy, or the formal announcement of the justice or judge by letter to the Governor of an upcoming resignation or retirement that will result in the occurrence of a vacancy, in the office of Justice of the Supreme Court of Appeals, judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals, judge of a circuit court, or judge of a family court. The Governor shall make the appointment to fill the vacancy, as required by this article, within 30 days following the receipt of the list of qualified candidates or within 30 days following the vacancy, whichever occurs later.

(b) The commission shall consist of eight appointed members appointed by the Governor for six-year terms, including four public members and four attorney members. The Governor shall appoint attorney members from a list of nominees provided by the Board of Governors of the West Virginia State Bar. The Board of Governors of the West Virginia State Bar shall nominate no more than 20 nor less than 10 of the most qualified attorneys for appointment to the commission whenever there is a vacancy in the membership of the commission reserved for attorney members. The commission shall choose one of its appointed members to serve as chair for a three-year term. No more than four appointed members of the commission shall belong to the same political party. All members of the commission shall be citizens of this state. Public members of the commission may not be licensed to practice law in West Virginia or any other jurisdiction.

(c) (1) No more than two appointed members of the commission may be residents of the same state senatorial district, as provided in §1-2-1 of this code, at the time of appointment: *Provided*, That the members appointed to, and serving on, the commission prior to the enactment of this subdivision are not disqualified from service for the remainder of the member's term based on the residency requirements of this subdivision.

(2) No more than three appointed members of the commission may be residents of the same congressional district: *Provided*, That, if the number of congressional districts in the state is reduced to two, then no more than four appointed members of the commission may be residents of the same congressional district: *Provided, however*, That the members appointed to, and serving on, the commission prior to the date on which the number of congressional districts in the state is reduced to two are not disqualified from service for the remainder of the member's term based on the residency requirements of this subdivision.

(d) The Governor, or his or her designee, the President of the West Virginia State Bar, and the Dean of the West Virginia University College of Law shall serve as ex officio members of the commission.

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(e) Members of the commission shall serve without compensation, except that commission members are entitled to reimbursement of travel and other necessary expenses actually incurred while engaged in official commission activities in accordance with the guidelines of the Travel Management Office of the Department of Administration, or its successor entity. The Governor's Office shall cooperate with the commission to ensure that all resources necessary to carrying out the official duties of the commission are provided, including staff assistance, equipment, and materials.

(f) The commission shall adopt written policies that formalize and standardize all operating procedures and ethical practices of its members, including, but not limited to, procedures for training commission members, publishing notice of judicial vacancies, recruiting qualified individuals for consideration by the commission, receiving applications from qualified individuals, notifying the public of judicial vacancies, notifying state or local groups and organizations of judicial vacancies, and soliciting public comment on judicial vacancies. The written policies of the commission are not subject to the provisions of chapter 29A of this code but shall be filed with the Secretary of State.

(g) A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum to do business.

(h) All organizational meetings of the commission shall be open to the public and subject to the requirements of §6-9A-1 *et seq*. of this code. An "organizational meeting" means an initial meeting to discuss the commission's procedures and requirements for a judicial vacancy. The commission shall hold at least one organizational meeting upon the occurrence of a judicial vacancy. All other meetings of the commission are exempt from §6-9A-1 *et seq*. of this code.

(i) The commission shall make available to the public copies of any applications and any letters of recommendation written on behalf of any applicants. All other documents or materials created or received by the commission shall be confidential and exempt from the provisions of chapter 29B of this code, except for the list of the most qualified persons or accompanying memoranda submitted to the Governor in accordance with the provisions of subsection (j) of this section, which shall be available for public inspection, and the written policies required to be filed with the Secretary of State in accordance with subsection (f) of this section.

(j) The commission shall submit its list of the most qualified persons to the Governor in alphabetical order. A memorandum may accompany the list of the most qualified persons and state facts concerning each of the persons listed. The commission shall make copies of any list of the most qualified persons and accompanying memoranda it submits to the Governor available for public inspection.

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