

JUDICIAL ORGANIZATION

POSITION: The League supports reform of the judicial system, particularly in the areas of redistricting, uniformity of structure, and methods for the discipline and removal of judges. The League supports retention of a merit-based selection and retention plan for selection of judges at the appellate level.

The following components of reform of Tennessee's judicial system were recommended:

- *Redistricting* - In order to provide equal access to the court system for all, the League concluded that redistricting was required to correct imbalances in caseloads then existing in the Tennessee court system. A redistricting plan should take into account geography, population, and caseload history. Districts should also be as compact as possible, thus alleviating excessive time required of judges in some areas to serve courts in their districts. The area within each district should also be demographically similar, i.e., urban or rural.
- *Restructuring* - The League found that a uniform structure of the court system, with flexibility to meet local needs, is important. Making the jurisdiction of the courts uniform throughout the state, having similar types of cases heard in the same type of court in each county or judicial district, would eliminate confusion and difficulty of access. Consolidation of trial-level courts would alleviate overlapping jurisdiction by combining the functions of these various courts into one trial court. The need for flexibility to meet local needs might be filled by the use of specialized judges rather than special courts and could be handled administratively by assignment.
- *Selection of Judges* - The merit-based selection and retention plan for selection of judges at the appellate level should be retained. Qualifications of residence and citizenship are valid, but also of importance is the requirement of license to practice law in the state. (This latter is not, however, intended to exclude law professors.)

Adopted 1978, Amended 2009