

selection process for those individuals who will serve as judges, state judges, the state court judges, county court, district court and Supreme Court judges. I think that's all well and good and those are nice words to suggest that we're going to keep politics out of the process. As you may recall, before that system was adopted, there was a process where judges were elected directly by the electorate, the old so-called Missouri plan for the selection of judges. A couple points, first of all, the merit system is an important system. It's important that we select meritorious people or people who are distinguished in their profession to serve as judges, but I would suggest to you that that can be...that merit system can be preserved by the Legislature as well as by the Merit Commission or the merit system that we now have, number one. Number two, the Legislature is asked, on a continuous basis and is asked this year, for example, to increase the pay for judges, to add, in this case, an appellate court, an additional court. We are asked to change or to increase the retirement benefits for judges. We approve, on a regular basis, laws which affect the administration of justice in our state; very similar to what the Senate of the United States does with the federal judicial system. It seems to me that we should have the prerogative, as representatives of the citizens of the state, to also have some input into the process of selection of judges. It's worked well on the federal level. I believe on the federal level what happens is that the Bar Association recommends certain individuals to serve as judges or not recommend, as the case may be, and that that information is provided to, in the initial case, to the Judiciary Committee of the United States Senate and that the Senate then makes a determination as to whether or not it wishes to suggest that there be confirmation or not confirmation, and that information then goes to the full body for decision. I don't see any reason why that system should not work as well here. Now the third reason is that we, I believe at least, that we should or the people of the state should have some input and some idea as to what judges do think philosophically about certain issues. We are asking, for example, in the parental notification bill, we are asking judges to make determinations about the issues of abortion. We are asking the judges to make that kind of determination. And in the case of the appellate court, LB 769, or parental notification appeals, I believe under this structure would go from the district court directly to the appellate court. They would not go to the Supreme Court, I don't believe, but would go to the appellate court. At least that's how I read LB 769, if