

Judicial Inquiry Commission

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MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104

August 1, 1983

The Judicial Inquiry Commission has considered your request for an opinion concerning whether, under the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics, a judge may serve as a member of the League of Women Voters. You state that the organization is impartial as to political candidates but does from time to time take stands on certain national issues.

A judge's membership in a political organization is governed by Canon 7 of the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics. That Canon explicitly discourages but does not prohibit membership in such organizations.

In this instance, a judge also should be ever mindful of Canon 5 which provides:

“A judge should regulate his extra-judicial activities to minimize the risk of conflict with his judicial duties.”

Such a conflict could arise if the organization of which a judge is a member, i.e., the League of Women Voters, frequently takes a public stand on issues coming before the judge in the judge's judicial capacity.

Yours very truly,

JUDICIAL INQUIRY COMMISSION