

Judicial Inquiry Commission

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July 23, 1993

This is in response to your request for an advisory opinion from the Judicial Inquiry Commission. Your question concerns whether you may serve on and give "general advice regarding political matters" to a county committee formed to elect a political candidate to the office of governor.

As you recognize, under the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics, a judge is strongly discouraged but not prohibited from soliciting funds on behalf of a candidate for public office. Advisory Opinions 78-39, 82-154.

A judge is strongly discouraged but not prohibited from serving on the advisory committee for the election of a political candidate. "If the judge does serve on the committee in question, he should do so in his individual capacity and not identify himself or allow himself to be identified as a judge. He must not lend the prestige of his office to advance the campaign." Advisory Opinion 84-209. It must be emphasized that "a judge who becomes involved in any political campaign must exercise extreme caution to maintain the dignity of his office, to uphold the independence, integrity and impartiality of the judiciary, and to refrain from interjecting the prestige of his office into the campaign." Advisory Opinion 78-39.

Based upon these considerations, it is the opinion of this Commission that you are strongly discouraged but not prohibited from serving on and/or giving "general advice regarding political matters" to a county committee formed to elect a political candidate to the office of governor.

This opinion is the opinion of and has been adopted by the Judicial Inquiry Commission.