



JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION COMMISSION

Post Office Box 1629
Charleston, West Virginia 25326-1629
(304) 558-0169 • FAX (304) 558-0831

January 12, 2000

JIC Advisory Opinion 2000-03

Dear Judge :

You have requested an advisory opinion from the Judicial Investigation Commission regarding whether the attendance at Elimination Dinners is permitted under the Code of Judicial Conduct. You state that the term "Elimination Dinner" refers to the selling and/or purchasing of one of several numbered tickets by a nonprofit group which are then drawn during the dinner in lottery fashion with the last ticket being drawn eligible to receive a large cash prize. It has become a common practice for many nonprofit groups which may or may not advocate a particular cause to raise money by use of this device. You asked whether a circuit judge, magistrate or judicial candidate could purchase a ticket and/or attend an Elimination Dinner for various nonprofit groups that may advocate a certain position (Democrat Executive Committee, Fraternal Order of Police, etc.) and/or groups that may not advocate a certain position but are seeking funding for a local sports team or for a charitable purpose such as paying the medical bills of an individual.

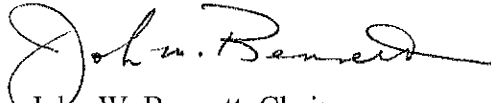
In addressing the request you have made the Commission reviewed Canon 4 and Canon 5 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

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Based on the language set forth in these Canons it is the opinion of the Commission that a judge or judicial candidate may attend an Elimination Dinner as you have defined it in your correspondence. However, the judicial officer or candidate must not solicit funds for the organization or for himself or herself and must be knowledgeable about the organization sponsoring the activity. The judge or judicial candidate should not attend an Elimination Dinner being sponsored by an organization which appears regularly before the judge or any court.

If there is any further question regarding this matter do not hesitate to contact the Commission.

Very truly yours,



John W. Bennett, Chairman

JWB:nb