



JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION COMMISSION

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March 10, 2000

JIC Advisory Opinion 2000-16

Dear Magistrate :

Your recent request for an advisory opinion has been reviewed by the Commission. In that request you asked whether you can use the State Seal as part of your campaign material for reelection as a magistrate.

To address the question which you have raised, the Commission reviewed Canon 2 which states in relevant part:

Canon 2. - A judge shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all of the judge's activities.

B. A judge shall not allow family, social, political, or other relationships to influence the judge's judicial conduct or judgement. A judge shall not lend the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others; nor shall a judge convey or knowingly permit others to convey the impression that they are in a special position to influence the judge. . . .

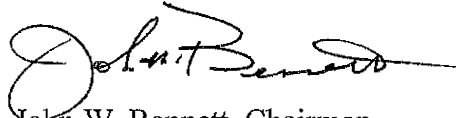
It is the opinion of the Commission that this provision of Canon 2 prohibits a judge from using the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or anyone else. All official judicial letterhead bears the State Seal. It is the feeling of the Commission that to use the State Seal on campaign material would be confusing to the public and give the appearance that official letterhead was being used to further a political campaign. This would violate the relevant provisions of Canon 2.

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It is hoped that this fully addresses the question which you have raised. If you have any further question regarding this matter do not hesitate to contact the Commission.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John W. Bennett". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

John W. Bennett, Chairman

JWB:nb