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CED Issues Report on Reforming Selection of State Judges

November 19, 2015 – Washington, D.C. – Today, the Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board (CED) unveiled a report detailing the consequences of state judicial elections for America’s economy and democracy, and solutions to improve the judicial selection process. The report, [*Choosing Justice? The Need for Judicial Selection Reform*](#), was led and approved by a group of business executives who make up the nonpartisan, business-led organization’s Money in Politics Subcommittee.

“State judges make decisions in over 100 million cases annually, but their ability to handle these matters impartially is put at risk when floods of election money pour into the judiciary,” said Bob Kueppers, former Deputy CEO of Deloitte and Co-Chair of CED’s Money in Politics Subcommittee. “Appointing them based on merit will insulate them from the political pressures caused by campaigns and, ultimately, help to ensure that justice is fairly applied.”

The report also features case studies documenting the growing politicization of state judicial races, including past campaigns in Florida and Missouri that have drawn national attention. Included for state policymakers is a multi-step plan that would improve the integrity and objectivity of state courts. Recommendations include:

- Create a commission-based appointment process to hold judges accountable. Commissions should be independent and nonpartisan, and responsible for preparing a list of nominees for judicial appointments to be made by a state’s governor.
- Develop judicial performance evaluation commissions. These independent and nonpartisan entities would be responsible for recommending whether a judge should be retained in office. Recommendations would be made available to the public and the relevant appointing authority.
- Review current salaries to ensure that appropriate levels of compensation are provided to judges at all levels.
- Support stricter standards of recusal to help resolve conflict of interest or bias resulting from campaign donations.

“U.S. companies consistently rank states that appoint their judges as having better business climates than those in which they are elected,” said Jane Sherburne, Principal of Sherburne PLLC and Co-Chair of of CED’s Money in Politics Subcommittee. “A vibrant economy and vibrant democracy are interdependent, and CED’s recommendations lay the foundation to strengthen both.”

The executive summary can be viewed [here](#) and the report can be viewed [here](#).

About the Committee for Economic Development

Founded in 1942, the Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board (CED) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, business-led public policy organization that delivers well-researched analysis and reasoned solutions to our nation’s most critical issues. CED’s work is grounded on seven core principles: sustainable capitalism, long-term economic growth, efficient fiscal and regulatory policy, competitive and open markets, a globally competitive workforce, equal economic opportunity, and nonpartisanship in the nation’s interest. Learn more at www.ced.org.

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