

## A justice's farewell

# Weaver: Rescue highest court from special interests' grasp

*The following is excerpted from state Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth Weaver's statement of resignation Thursday:*

After considerable deliberation, thought and prayer, I have concluded that I have done all that I can do as a justice and now believe that I can be of most use as a citizen in helping further the critically needed reforms of the judicial system.

The present system of dual processes by which we elect and appoint Supreme Court justices is deeply flawed and in need of an overhaul. Specifically, we need to promptly reform the process of how we select justices, and we need transparency and accountability in the administration of the people's judicial business by the Michigan Supreme Court.

The open discord on this court over the last 10 years is not really so much about clashes of strong personalities, but rather is the result of the formation of power blocks of justices usually joining together to promote agendas of political parties and special interests.

(The) independent-thinking judge is not agenda-driven and does not hold to political party lines, philosophies or ideologies. We need justices and judges who are dedicated to the rule of law, who are independent, impartial, exercise judicial restraint, apply common sense, and who are wise, honest, orderly, competent, fair, civil and professional, open, not secretive, and who are nonpartisan. Our current system of political party nominations does not advance

these qualities.

Independent justices cannot "go along to get along" when doing the people's judicial business. Supreme Court justices must fulfill their duty to the people to inform them of what they need to know — no more or no less — about not only what the Michigan Supreme Court decides and does, but how, when and where. The Michigan Supreme Court should not be a secret club,

but should instead act in a transparent, open and accountable manner.

To be absolutely clear, when I say "reform," I do not mean the elimination of elections of justices, I mean specific reforms of the election and appointment processes in Michigan's dual system for selection of justices.

My six specific proposals for reform of the system of selection of justices appear on my personally

funded Web site: [www.justiceweaver.com](http://www.justiceweaver.com). They are:

- 1) Elect justices by district.
- 2) Remove the political party nomination for justice candidates.
- 3) End the governor's unchecked appointment power.
- 4) End lack of rotation in office.
- 5) Reform campaign finance reporting requirements.
- 6) Implement public financing requirements.

I remain committed to actively helping to reform Michigan's judicial system, specifically including prompt reform of the selection process for justices and the administration of the people's judicial business by the Michigan Supreme Court with needed transparency and accountability.

**"WE NEED TO PROMPTLY REFORM THE PROCESS OF HOW WE SELECT JUSTICES."**