

1 AN ACT proposing an amendment to Sections 110, 111, 117, 119, and 122 of the
2 Constitution of Kentucky relating to Supreme Court Districts.

3 ***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

4 ➔Section 1. It is proposed that Section 110 of the Constitution of Kentucky be
5 amended to read as follows:

6 (1) The Supreme Court shall consist of the Chief Justice of the Commonwealth and
7 ***an additional number of*** ~~six~~ ***associate Justices equal to the number of United States***
8 ***congressional districts apportioned to this State.***

9 (2) (a) The Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction only, except it shall
10 have the power to issue all writs necessary in aid of its appellate jurisdiction, or the
11 complete determination of any cause, or as may be required to exercise control of the
12 Court of Justice.

13 (b) Appeals from a judgment of the Circuit Court imposing a sentence of death or
14 life imprisonment or imprisonment for twenty years or more shall be taken directly to the
15 Supreme Court. In all other cases, criminal and civil, the Supreme Court shall exercise
16 appellate jurisdiction as provided by its rules.

17 (3) A majority of the Justices of the Supreme Court shall constitute a quorum for
18 the transaction of business. If as many as two Justices decline or are unable to sit in the
19 trial of any cause, the Chief Justice shall certify that fact to the Governor, who shall
20 appoint to try the particular cause a sufficient number of Justices to constitute a full court
21 for the trial of the cause.

22 (4) The ***United States congressional districts apportioned to this State*** ~~Court of~~
23 ~~Appeals districts existing on the effective date of this amendment to the Constitution]~~
24 shall constitute the ~~initial~~ Supreme Court districts. ~~The General Assembly thereafter~~
25 ~~may redistrict the Commonwealth, by counties, into seven Supreme Court districts as~~
26 ~~nearly equal in population and as compact in form as possible.]~~ There shall be ***one Chief***
27 ***Justice and*** one Justice from each Supreme Court district.

1 (5) (a) The Justices of the Supreme Court **and the Chief Justice** shall **be**
2 **elected**~~elect one of their number to serve as Chief Justice~~ for a term of **eight**~~four~~ years
3 **by the qualified voters of this State in a year of a regular election on a statewide,**
4 **nonpartisan basis as provided by law.**

5 (b) The Chief Justice of the Commonwealth shall be the executive head of the
6 Court of Justice and he shall appoint such administrative assistants as he deems
7 necessary. He shall assign temporarily any justice or judge of the Commonwealth, active
8 or retired, to sit in any court other than the Supreme Court when he deems such
9 assignment necessary for the prompt disposition of causes. The Chief Justice shall
10 submit the budget for the Court of Justice and perform all other necessary administrative
11 functions relating to the court.

12 ➔Section 2. It is proposed that Section 111 of the Constitution of Kentucky be
13 amended to read as follows:

14 (1) The Court of Appeals shall consist initially of **twelve**~~fourteen~~ judges, **with two**
15 **judges**~~an equal number~~ to be selected from each Supreme Court district. The number of
16 judges thereafter shall be determined from time to time by the **number of Supreme Court**
17 **Districts with an equal number to be selected from each district, or by the** General
18 Assembly upon certification of necessity by the Supreme Court.

19 (2) The Court of Appeals shall have appellate jurisdiction only, except that it may
20 be authorized by rules of the Supreme Court to review directly decisions of administrative
21 agencies of the Commonwealth, and it may issue all writs necessary in aid of its appellate
22 jurisdiction, or the complete determination of any cause within its appellate jurisdiction.
23 In all other cases, it shall exercise appellate jurisdiction as provided by law.

24 (3) The judges of the Court of Appeals shall elect one of their number to serve as
25 Chief Judge for a term of four years. The Chief Judge shall exercise such authority and
26 perform such duties in the administration of the Court of Appeals as are prescribed in this
27 section or as may be prescribed by the Supreme Court.

1 (4) The Court of Appeals shall divide itself into panels of not less than three
 2 judges. A panel may decide a cause by the concurring vote of a majority of its judges. The
 3 Chief Judge shall make assignments of judges to panels. The Court of Appeals shall
 4 prescribe the times and places in the Commonwealth at which each panel shall sit.

5 ➔Section 3. It is proposed that Section 117 of the Constitution of Kentucky be
 6 amended to read as follows:

7 **Justices of the Supreme Court shall be elected by the qualified voters of this State**
 8 **on a statewide, nonpartisan basis as provided by law. Judges**~~Justices of the Supreme~~
 9 ~~Court and judges~~ of the Court of Appeals, Circuit and District Court shall be elected
 10 from their respective districts or circuits on a nonpartisan basis as provided by law.

11 ➔Section 4. It is proposed that Section 119 of the Constitution of Kentucky be
 12 amended to read as follows:

13 Justices of the Supreme Court and judges of the Court of Appeals and circuit court
 14 shall severally hold their offices for terms of eight years, and judges of the district court
 15 for terms of four years. All terms commence on the first Monday in January next
 16 succeeding the regular election for the office. No justice or judge may be deprived of his
 17 term of office by redistricting, or by a reduction in the number of justices or judges.

18 **Whenever the boundaries of the Supreme Court districts are changed as a result of**
 19 **redistricting, the justices and judges serving prior to the redistricting shall continue in**
 20 **office, and the law providing for the redistricting shall, where necessary, specify the**
 21 **newly established districts which they shall represent for the remainder of their terms.**

22 ➔Section 5. It is proposed that Section 122 of the Constitution of Kentucky be
 23 amended to read as follows:

24 **(1) To be eligible to serve as Chief Justice or as a Justice of the Supreme Court,**
 25 **a person shall be a citizen of the United States, licensed to practice law in the courts of**
 26 **this Commonwealth, and have been a resident of this Commonwealth and, except for**
 27 **the Chief Justice, of the district from which he seeks the office of Justice of the**

1 **Supreme Court for two years next preceding his taking office.**

2 **(2) To be eligible to serve as**~~or~~ a judge of the Court of Appeals, Circuit Court
3 or District Court a person must be a citizen of the United States, licensed to practice law
4 in the courts of this Commonwealth, and have been a resident of this Commonwealth and
5 of the district from which he is elected for two years next preceding his taking office.

6 **(3)** In addition, to be eligible to serve as **Chief Justice or as** a Justice of the
7 Supreme Court or judge of the Court of Appeals or Circuit Court a person must have been
8 a licensed attorney for at least eight years. No district judge shall serve who has not been
9 a licensed attorney for at least two years.

10 ➔Section 6. It is further proposed as a part of this Act and as a schedule of
11 transitional provisions, for the purposes of this amendment and any other provisions of
12 the Constitution of Kentucky notwithstanding:

13 (1) The candidates for judge of the Court of Appeals shall be elected from
14 districts existing on November 3, 2021, and those who receive a certificate of election
15 following the regular election in November 2022 shall serve for a term of eight years. The
16 candidates for judge of the Court of Appeals shall thereafter be elected from the newly
17 drawn Supreme Court districts for a term of eight years.

18 (2) Residency of the candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current
19 Districts 1, 2, 4, and 6 shall be determined according to those district boundaries as they
20 exist on November 3, 2021, and those who receive a certificate of election following the
21 regular election in November 2022 shall serve for a term of eight years. Residency of the
22 candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current Districts 1, 2, 4, and 6 shall
23 thereafter be determined according to the boundaries of the newly drawn Supreme Court
24 districts, if applicable, for a term of eight years.

25 (3) Residency of the candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current
26 District 5 shall be determined according to those district boundaries as they exist on
27 November 8, 2023, and the candidate who receives a certificate of election following the

1 regular election in November 2024 shall serve for a term of eight years. Residency of the
2 candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current District 5 shall thereafter be
3 determined according to the boundaries of the newly drawn Supreme Court districts, if
4 applicable, for a term of eight years.

5 (4) Residency of the candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current
6 District 3 shall be determined according to those district boundaries as they exist on
7 November 5, 2025, and the candidate who receives a certificate of election following the
8 regular election in November 2026 shall serve for a term of eight years. Residency of the
9 candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current District 3 shall thereafter be
10 determined according to the boundaries of the newly drawn Supreme Court districts, if
11 applicable, for a term of eight years.

12 (5) The Justices of the Supreme Court shall elect one of their number to serve as
13 Chief Justice for a term of four years upon ratification of this amendment by the voters of
14 this Commonwealth. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall thereafter be elected
15 by the qualified voters of this State, beginning with the regular election in November
16 2024 for a term of eight years.

17 ➔Section 7. This amendment shall be submitted to the voters of the
18 Commonwealth for their ratification or rejection at the time and in the manner provided
19 for under Sections 256 and 257 of the Constitution of Kentucky. The following shall be
20 printed on the ballot:

21 "Are you in favor of amending Sections 110, 111, 117, 119, and 122 of the
22 Constitution of Kentucky to reduce the number of Supreme Court Districts, currently
23 seven, to the number of Congressional Districts apportioned to Kentucky, currently six,
24 with the boundaries for the Supreme Court Districts being the same boundaries of the
25 Congressional Districts, with each Justice being a resident of each Supreme Court District
26 but elected statewide, and to further provide for the election of one additional Supreme
27 Court Justice, to be elected statewide, to serve as Chief Justice, all for a term of eight

1 years, and with the number of judges for the Court of Appeals reduced from fourteen to
2 twelve, as follows?

3 **Section 110**

4 (1) The Supreme Court shall consist of the Chief Justice of the Commonwealth and
5 an additional number of ~~six~~ associate Justices equal to the number of United States
6 congressional districts apportioned to this State.

7 (2) (a) The Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction only, except it shall
8 have the power to issue all writs necessary in aid of its appellate jurisdiction, or the
9 complete determination of any cause, or as may be required to exercise control of the
10 Court of Justice.

11 (b) Appeals from a judgment of the Circuit Court imposing a sentence of death or
12 life imprisonment or imprisonment for twenty years or more shall be taken directly to the
13 Supreme Court. In all other cases, criminal and civil, the Supreme Court shall exercise
14 appellate jurisdiction as provided by its rules.

15 (3) A majority of the Justices of the Supreme Court shall constitute a quorum for
16 the transaction of business. If as many as two Justices decline or are unable to sit in the
17 trial of any cause, the Chief Justice shall certify that fact to the Governor, who shall
18 appoint to try the particular cause a sufficient number of Justices to constitute a full court
19 for the trial of the cause.

20 (4) The United States congressional districts apportioned to this State~~{Court of~~
21 ~~Appeals districts existing on the effective date of this amendment to the Constitution}~~
22 shall constitute the~~{initial}~~ Supreme Court districts.~~{The General Assembly thereafter~~
23 ~~may redistrict the Commonwealth, by counties, into seven Supreme Court districts as~~
24 ~~nearly equal in population and as compact in form as possible.}~~ There shall be one Chief
25 Justice and one Justice from each Supreme Court district.

26 (5) (a) The Justices of the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice shall be
27 elected~~{elect one of their number to serve as Chief Justice}~~ for a term of eight~~{four}~~ years

1 by the qualified voters of this State in a year of a regular election on a statewide,
2 nonpartisan basis as provided by law.

3 (b) The Chief Justice of the Commonwealth shall be the executive head of the
4 Court of Justice and he shall appoint such administrative assistants as he deems
5 necessary. He shall assign temporarily any justice or judge of the Commonwealth, active
6 or retired, to sit in any court other than the Supreme Court when he deems such
7 assignment necessary for the prompt disposition of causes. The Chief Justice shall
8 submit the budget for the Court of Justice and perform all other necessary administrative
9 functions relating to the court.

10 **Section 111**

11 (1) The Court of Appeals shall consist initially of ~~twelve~~^{fourteen} judges, with two
12 judges~~[an equal number]~~ to be selected from each Supreme Court district. The number of
13 judges thereafter shall be determined from time to time by the number of Supreme Court
14 Districts with an equal number to be selected from each district, or by the General
15 Assembly upon certification of necessity by the Supreme Court.

16 (2) The Court of Appeals shall have appellate jurisdiction only, except that it may
17 be authorized by rules of the Supreme Court to review directly decisions of administrative
18 agencies of the Commonwealth, and it may issue all writs necessary in aid of its appellate
19 jurisdiction, or the complete determination of any cause within its appellate jurisdiction.
20 In all other cases, it shall exercise appellate jurisdiction as provided by law.

21 (3) The judges of the Court of Appeals shall elect one of their number to serve as
22 Chief Judge for a term of four years. The Chief Judge shall exercise such authority and
23 perform such duties in the administration of the Court of Appeals as are prescribed in this
24 section or as may be prescribed by the Supreme Court.

25 (4) The Court of Appeals shall divide itself into panels of not less than three
26 judges. A panel may decide a cause by the concurring vote of a majority of its judges. The
27 Chief Judge shall make assignments of judges to panels. The Court of Appeals shall

1 prescribe the times and places in the Commonwealth at which each panel shall sit.

2 **Section 117**

3 *Justices of the Supreme Court shall be elected by the qualified voters of this State*
 4 *on a statewide, nonpartisan basis as provided by law. Judges*~~Justices of the Supreme~~
 5 ~~Court and judges~~ of the Court of Appeals, Circuit and District Court shall be elected
 6 from their respective districts or circuits on a nonpartisan basis as provided by law.

7 **Section 119**

8 Justices of the Supreme Court and judges of the Court of Appeals and circuit court
 9 shall severally hold their offices for terms of eight years, and judges of the district court
 10 for terms of four years. All terms commence on the first Monday in January next
 11 succeeding the regular election for the office. No justice or judge may be deprived of his
 12 term of office by redistricting, or by a reduction in the number of justices or judges.
 13 *Whenever the boundaries of the Supreme Court districts are changed as a result of*
 14 *redistricting, the justices and judges serving prior to the redistricting shall continue in*
 15 *office, and the law providing for the redistricting shall, where necessary, specify the*
 16 *newly established districts which they shall represent for the remainder of their terms.*

17 **Section 122**

18 *(1) To be eligible to serve as Chief Justice or as a Justice of the Supreme Court,*
 19 *a person shall be a citizen of the United States, licensed to practice law in the courts of*
 20 *this Commonwealth, and have been a resident of this Commonwealth and, except for*
 21 *the Chief Justice, of the district from which he seeks the office of Justice of the*
 22 *Supreme Court for two years next preceding his taking office.*

23 *(2) To be eligible to serve as*~~or~~ a judge of the Court of Appeals, Circuit Court
 24 or District Court a person must be a citizen of the United States, licensed to practice law
 25 in the courts of this Commonwealth, and have been a resident of this Commonwealth and
 26 of the district from which he is elected for two years next preceding his taking office.

27 *(3) In addition, to be eligible to serve as Chief Justice or as a Justice of the*

1 Supreme Court or judge of the Court of Appeals or Circuit Court a person must have been
2 a licensed attorney for at least eight years. No district judge shall serve who has not been
3 a licensed attorney for at least two years.

4 **As a schedule of transitional provisions, for the purposes of implementation of**
5 **this amendment,**

6 (1) The candidates for judge of the Court of Appeals shall be elected from
7 districts existing on November 3, 2021, and those who receive a certificate of election
8 following the regular election in November 2022 shall serve for a term of eight years. The
9 candidates for judge of the Court of Appeals shall thereafter be elected from the newly
10 drawn Supreme Court districts for a term of eight years.

11 (2) Residency of the candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current
12 Districts 1, 2, 4, and 6 shall be determined according to those district boundaries as they
13 exist on November 3, 2021, and those who receive a certificate of election following the
14 regular election in November 2022 shall serve for a term of eight years. Residency of the
15 candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current Districts 1, 2, 4, and 6 shall
16 thereafter be determined according to the boundaries of the newly drawn Supreme Court
17 districts, if applicable, for a term of eight years.

18 (3) Residency of the candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current
19 District 5 shall be determined according to those district boundaries as they exist on
20 November 8, 2023, and the candidate who receives a certificate of election following the
21 regular election in November 2024 shall serve for a term of eight years. Residency of the
22 candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current District 5 shall thereafter be
23 determined according to the boundaries of the newly drawn Supreme Court districts, if
24 applicable, for a term of eight years.

25 (4) Residency of the candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current
26 District 3 shall be determined according to those district boundaries as they exist on
27 November 5, 2025, and the candidate who receives a certificate of election following the

1 regular election in November 2026 shall serve for a term of eight years. Residency of the
2 candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court from current District 3 shall thereafter be
3 determined according to the boundaries of the newly drawn Supreme Court districts, if
4 applicable, for a term of eight years.

5 (5) The Justices of the Supreme Court shall elect one of their number to serve as
6 Chief Justice for a term of four years upon ratification of this amendment by the voters of
7 this Commonwealth. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall thereafter be elected
8 by the qualified voters of this State, beginning with the regular election in November
9 2024 for a term of eight years. "