

Voters To See Ballot Question On "Politically-Gerrymandered Subcircuits"

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EDWARDSVILLE— On Nov. 8th, all voters in Madison County will be able to voice their opinion on the new Judicial Subcircuit Law, which prevents 2/3 of Madison County voters from voting on the three upcoming judicial vacancies.

The following referendum question, which was approved on July 20 by the County Board by a vote of 23 to 2, will now appear on the Nov. 8th ballot:

"Should all Madison County voters have the right to vote for each Madison County Circuit Judge, instead of only being allowed to vote if they reside in a politically-gerrymandered subcircuit of the county created by the General Assembly in Springfield?"

Yes

No

Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine, who is opposing the Judicial Subcircuit Law in court on behalf of the County, congratulated the overwhelming and bipartisan County Board vote approving the referendum. "Last night's 23-2 vote shows that Madison County continues to stand united against this unfair and unwise judicial gerrymandering scheme," said Haine. "I'm glad that as we continue to fight this law in the court system, the citizens of Madison County will also be able to register their support for judicial fairness at the ballot box."

Circuit Clerk Tom McRae agreed. "I am in full support of this referendum, and am disappointed that the General Assembly did what they did here," said McRae. "Political gerrymandering should never be part of the selection of judges, which should be off-limits from blatant politicization. This is a pivotal issue in Madison County because judicial fairness goes to the core of our legal system. Everyone can now make clear where they stand on judicial gerrymandering."

Mike Walters, Chairman Pro Tem of the County Board and Chairman of the Judiciary Committee initiated the subcircuit referendum. "How Springfield insiders could think they could blatantly gerrymander Madison County's judiciary without a severe public backlash is beyond me," stated Walters. "We rely on fair judges. We want judges elected by all citizens in Madison County, not just a chosen group. The county board spoke with a near-unanimous voice approving this referendum. Now all citizens will have an opportunity on Nov. 8 to help take a stand against unfair judicial gerrymandering."

As background, the Resolution passed by the Board stated as follows:

RESOLUTION TO PRESENT AN ADVISORY REFERENDUM REGARDING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S IMPLEMENTATION AND DESIGN OF SUBCIRCUITS IN MADISON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the Illinois Election Code, 10 ILCS 5/28-1, et seq., and the Counties Code, 55 ILCS 5/5-1005.5, the corporate authorities of a county have the

authority to submit a public question to the electors of the county by means of a referendum; and

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2022, Governor Pritzker signed into law the Judicial Redistricting Act of 2022 (“the Act”), which divided Madison County, Illinois into three separate subcircuits for the purpose of selecting and electing Circuit Judges; and

WHEREAS, the Act disenfranchises two-thirds of the voters in Madison County, Illinois and immediately removes their right to vote for Circuit Judge in the upcoming November 2022 general election; and

WHEREAS, the Act prohibits Madison County attorneys who reside in the newly formed subcircuits 2 and 3 from running for Circuit Judge in the upcoming November 2022 election; and

WHEREAS, the Act allows for the political gerrymandering of our Judiciary in Madison County; and

WHEREAS, the Act removes the right of two-thirds of Madison County voters to choose the Circuit Judges who will preside over their cases; and

WHEREAS, the voters of Madison County should have the opportunity to express their views on this important issue where they pay taxes and reside; and

WHEREAS, 55 ILCS 5/5-1005.5 states, “By a vote of the majority of the members of the county board, the board may authorize an advisory question of public policy to be placed on the ballot at the next regularly scheduled election in the county.”; and

WHEREAS, the Madison County Board seeks to place an advisory public question before the electorate via a referendum on the November 8, 2022, countywide ballot as follows:

“Should all Madison County voters have the right to vote for each Madison County Circuit Judge, instead of only being allowed to vote if they reside in a politically-gerrymandered subcircuit of the county created by the General Assembly in Springfield?”

Yes

No

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Madison County Board that the aforementioned advisory question be presented to the electorate via a countywide advisory referendum on the November 8, 2022 ballot;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Madison County Clerk shall certify the advisory public question referenced herein and notify the Secretary of State, and the Attorney General of this request for action in accordance with Article 28 of the Election Code.