

**Senate File 171 - Introduced**

SENATE FILE 171  
BY GARRETT

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to the membership of district judicial  
2 nominating commissions.  
3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 46.3, subsections 1 and 3, Code 2023, are  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 1. The governor shall appoint ~~five~~ six eligible electors  
4 of each judicial election district to the district judicial  
5 nominating commission.

6 3. No more than a ~~simple majority~~ half of the commissioners  
7 appointed shall be of the same gender.

8 Sec. 2. Section 46.6, subsection 2, Code 2023, is amended  
9 to read as follows:

10 2. ~~The judge of longest service in the district shall serve~~  
11 ~~as the chair of a particular district judicial nominating~~  
12 ~~commission. If the judges of longest service in the district~~  
13 ~~are of equal service, the eldest of such judges shall be~~  
14 ~~chairperson of the particular judicial nominating commission~~  
15 commissioners of the district judicial nominating commission  
16 shall elect a chairperson from their own number. The  
17 chairperson shall serve a two-year term that expires on April  
18 30 of even-numbered years. A commissioner may be reelected  
19 for a second or third term as chairperson. If a chairperson  
20 of a judicial nominating commission desires to be relieved  
21 of the duties of chairperson while retaining the status of  
22 commissioner, the chairperson shall notify the governor and the  
23 other commissioners of the commission. At the next meeting of  
24 the commission, the commissioners shall elect a new chairperson  
25 for the remainder of the two-year term.

26 EXPLANATION

27 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
28 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

29 This bill relates to the membership of district judicial  
30 nominating commissions. Under current law, the governor  
31 appoints five eligible electors of each judicial district to  
32 the 11-person commission. The bill changes the amount of  
33 electors appointed by the governor to six and provides that no  
34 more than half of the commissioners appointed shall be of the  
35 same gender, rather than a simple majority.

1 Under current law, the most senior judge in the district  
2 serves as a commissioner and as the chairperson of that  
3 particular district judicial nominating commission. The  
4 bill removes the judge from the commission and from being  
5 chairperson and requires the members of each district judicial  
6 nominating commission to elect a chairperson from their own  
7 number.

8 District judicial nominating commissions are responsible  
9 for screening applicants and selecting nominees for district  
10 court judicial vacancies. There is a nominating commission for  
11 each of Iowa's 14 judicial election subdistricts. District  
12 nominating commissions provide the governor with a slate of  
13 two nominees from which to make an appointment to the district  
14 court.