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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. announced today that the *Ad Hoc* Committee to Study the Creation of a Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee, established by the Louisiana Supreme Court in April 2000, will hold a **Public Hearing on Thursday, November 16, 2000 at 1:00 p.m. in the Courtroom of the Louisiana Supreme Court, 301 Loyola Avenue, New Orleans.** The public is invited to comment on the possibility of the Supreme Court establishing a permanent judicial campaign oversight committee and related issues. Written or oral comments are welcome.

The Study Committee has been charged with studying and making recommendations to the Louisiana Supreme Court regarding the benefits and feasibility of establishing a permanent judicial campaign oversight committee. A permanent judicial campaign oversight committee would presumably be charged with helping facilitate ethical judicial campaigning and with assisting judges and judicial candidates with ethical concerns which often arise during the course of judicial campaigns. It is anticipated that the public would benefit from the creation of a permanent judicial campaign oversight committee, since such a committee would help judges and candidates observe and comply with the high standards of ethical conduct required by the Louisiana Code of Judicial Conduct. The Study Committee has been informed that seven states (Alabama, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, and South Dakota) have in place committees that engage in some form of judicial campaign oversight.

The members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee to Study the Creation of a Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee are: Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr., Co-Chair; Retired Judge Graydon K. Kitchens, Jr., Co-Chair; Retired Judge Melvin A. Shortess; Judge Anne Lennan Simon; Judge Wilson R. Ramshur; Judge Eugene W. Bryson, Jr.; Judge Jimmy N. Dimos; Judge Ronald D. Cox; Judge Ernestine S. Gray; Senator Jay Dardenne; Representative Arthur A. Morrell; Harry S. Hardin,

III; John S. Keller; John B. Scofield; Professor T. Wayne Parent; Barry Irwin; James C. Brandt; E. Phelps Gay; Peter Babin, III; and Frank P. Simoneaux.

The Study Committee is presently disposed toward recommending the creation of a permanent judicial campaign oversight committee, since the creation of such a committee would help facilitate ethical judicial campaigning in Louisiana. In addition to considering whether or not to recommend the creation of a permanent judicial campaign oversight committee, a number of other ancillary issues have been considered. Among these issues are the following:

- (a) **Composition.** Should the permanent committee be composed of judges, lawyers and citizens, or should it consist only of lawyers and judges?
- (b) **Size.** What is the optimum size of the permanent committee?
- (c) **Terms of Office.** Should permanent committee members be appointed for definite terms of office and if so, what should the optimum term be?
- (d) **Jurisdiction.** Should the permanent committee's jurisdiction extend to campaigns for justice of the peace seats?
- (e) **Campaign Conduct Pledge.** Should the permanent committee be charged with creating a campaign conduct pledge that judicial candidates would be asked to sign?
- (f) **Enforcement Authority.** Should the permanent committee be given the power to issue, or have issued, cease and desist orders?
- (g) **Educational Role.** Should the permanent committee be charged with educating judges and judicial candidates about ethical campaigning?
- (h) **Complaint Form.** Should the permanent committee be charged with developing a written complaint form which would be completed by persons who feel aggrieved by purportedly unethical campaign conduct?
- (i) **Availability of Written Complaints.** Should written complaints directed to the permanent committee be subject to public inspection?
- (j) **Public Discussions of Complaints and Campaign Conduct.** Should the permanent committee be given the authority to, or be allowed to, publicly discuss particular campaign conduct, as well as complaints which have been made?
- (k) **Campaign Advertisements.** Should the permanent committee be given the authority to review and comment upon judicial campaign advertisements?

- (l) **Problems occurring during the last two weeks of Judicial Campaigns.** Should the permanent committee be charged with developing procedures for handling problems which occur during the last two weeks of judicial campaigns?
- (m) **Immunity.** Should rules be developed to confer immunity in favor of permanent committee members?
- (n) **Advisory Opinions.** Should the permanent committee be authorized to issue written advisory opinions, and if so, should those opinions be made available to the public?
- (o) **Autonomy.** Should the permanent committee be autonomous, or should it be affiliated with the Judiciary Commission of Louisiana? (The Judiciary Commission is constitutionally charged with investigating complaints of judicial misconduct and recommending judicial discipline where appropriate).
- (p) **Public Acknowledgment of Referrals to the Judiciary Commission.** Should the Study Committee recommend appropriate rule changes so as to authorize the permanent committee to publicly discuss referrals it makes to the Judiciary Commission?
- (q) **Expedited Handling of Judicial Campaign Matters.** Should the Study Committee recommend the amendment of Judiciary Commission Rules and procedures to allow for the expeditious handling of complaints referred to the Judiciary Commission when the complaints involve campaign conduct?

Should interested persons or groups wish to comment in writing, such comments may be offered at the public hearing or may be forwarded to Deputy Judicial Administrator/General Counsel Timothy F. Averill c/o Judicial Administrator's Office, Louisiana Supreme Court, 1555 Poydras Street, Suite 1540, New Orleans, Louisiana 70112 or via e-mail to [vsw@lajao.org](mailto:vsw@lajao.org). Written comments should be forwarded no later than Thursday, November 16, 2000. Seating in the Courtroom is limited. Reserve a seat by calling (504) 599-0319.