

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

ORDER

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Supreme Court believes that, although not required by the Election Code, limiting the amount of unused campaign funds that judges and judicial candidates may retain is important to ensure the integrity, independence, and impartiality of the judiciary;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Legislature recently increased campaign contribution limits, effective January 1, 2025, pursuant to Act 664 of the 2024 Regular Session;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Legislature established closed party primaries for Supreme Court Justices, effective January 1, 2026, pursuant to Act 1 of the 2024 First Extraordinary Session; and

WHEREAS, acting in accordance with Article V, Sections 1 and 5 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, and the inherent power of this Court, and considering the need to amend the Code of Judicial Conduct,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED THAT:

1. Canon 7E is hereby deleted in its entirety and amended to read as follows:

E. Retention of Campaign Contributions. A judge or judicial candidate may retain campaign funds in the following amounts proportionate to the classification of the office to which the judge or judicial candidate seeks election:

<u>Class of Judicial Office</u>	<u>Amount of Campaign Funds That May Be Retained</u>
Major Office	\$600,000
District Office	\$400,000
Other Office	\$200,000

A judge or judicial candidate must, unlike other state elected officials, divest himself or herself of any unused campaign funds in excess of the amount listed above by pro rata refund to the campaign contributors or by donation to a charitable organization not later than one year after the beginning of the term of judicial office following an election in which a judge or judicial candidate participates as a contestant.

The definitions of “Major Office” and “District Office” are the same as those contained in La. R.S. 18:1483.

“Other Office” shall mean any judicial office that is not a Major Office or a District Office.

2. The Commentary to Canon 7 is hereby amended to add as follows:

COMMENTARY TO CANON 7 (2025)

Although not required by the Election Code, Canon 7E limits the amount of unused campaign funds that a judge or judicial candidate may retain after an election in order to protect the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary, while at the same time recognizing the need of judges and judicial candidates to conduct campaigns for judicial office. Canon 7E was amended in 2025 to increase these retention limits due to the Louisiana Legislature’s increase in campaign contribution limits and introduction of closed party primaries for Louisiana Supreme Court Justices. It was also amended in 2025 to make the definitions of “Major Office” and “District Office” consistent with the Election Code.

This rule change shall become effective upon signing, and shall remain in full force and effect thereafter, until amended or changed through future Orders of this Court.

New Orleans, Louisiana, this _____ day of January, 2025

FOR THE COURT:

John L. Weimer, Chief Justice