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Special Committee to Examine Judicial Recruitment, Selection in Idaho

The Idaho Supreme Court will appoint a special committee to examine ways to improve judicial recruitment in Idaho, including the processes of the Idaho Judicial Council.

Chief Justice G. Richard Bevan invited his counterparts in the executive and legislative branches to nominate members of the committee in a letter hand-delivered Monday to the offices of Gov. Brad Little, Senate Pro Tem Chuck Winder and House Speaker Scott Bedke.

Such a “thoughtful and deliberative” committee process has often been used to find consensus on evolutions of Idaho’s court system, the chief justice noted in his letter. The new committee’s breadth echoes one formed by the Legislative Council in the 1960s that with public input, helped usher in many significant changes — including the creation of the Judicial Council.

A Supreme Court-appointed committee in 1977 advised establishing Idaho’s Court of Appeals, and a similar task force in 2007 led to an additional judge for that court; both groups included the executive and legislative branches and members of the public. Now, Chief Justice Bevan wrote, “It is once again time to thoughtfully consider changes.”

The special committee so far will include two members each appointed by the governor, pro tem and speaker should they choose. The Court also plans to appoint two Idaho attorneys, a district judge and a magistrate judge. Past committees have ensured Idahoans could weigh in on changes to their state courts; to preserve that voice, the Court will also appoint two members representing the public.

More information on the committee will be released as it moves forward. A copy of Chief Justice Bevan’s letter can be found online at isc.idaho.gov under “Press Releases.”

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