

Bathroom Reader

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In the last two years, the legislature has prioritized the judiciary in its law-making sessions. Last year saw a half-dozen bills proposing everything from judicial elections, to raiding judges' retirement. Thankfully they were all defeated due in large part to an outpouring of opposition from Hawai'i's tight knit legal community. Richardson also played a part by rallying students to write testimony and by holding a panel event featuring Governor Waihe'e and former Hawai'i Supreme Court Justice Steven Levinson.

The judicial selection process as it is today requires that all judicial vacancies be vetted by the Judicial Selection Commission (JSC) and voted on through secret ballot. The JSC is a body of nine members, composed of no more than four attorneys, with appointments from the Governor's office, Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court, Senate President, and House Speaker filling the remaining seats. The JSC makes the initial selections, which are then subject to senate hearings.

This year the legislature is taking aim at the retention procedures. Currently, retention only involves the JSC, not the Senate. But, SB328 & SB673 proposed constitutional amendments that would require the Senate to approve all judge or justice

retainments. So far they have received overwhelming opposition, but some form of the bills are still alive. We will have to remain vigilant to ensure they do not rear their heads again.

—Sean Aronson, 3L



ALASKA'S CLAWS CLAUSE

Alaska recently set tongues and tails wagging in animal law circles with a new provision in its divorce code. The new law, a country-first, allows judges in Alaska to take an animal's well-being into consideration when deciding the custody of pets in divorces. The law also allows courts to include pets in domestic violence protective orders and requires the owners of pets seized in abuse cases to pay for shelter costs.

Traditionally, and in the rest of the country, pets are considered just property, to be distributed in a divorce with the Vitamix and the Friends complete series DVD box set. So, this new approach has animal rights

supporters understandably excited and hopeful that this is the beginning of a nationwide change.

RBG AT WSRS

Justice Ginsburg's visit was a great success. While here, she shared her thoughts on various topics. On women in the draft, she said "To me the exclusion of women from the draft was a little like their exclusion from jury duty. That was regarded as a favor to women" She continued, saying that "Citizens have obligations as well as rights. And I would put a military draft in the same category as jury duty, as the right to vote, which should be an obligation, not just a right." A very low moment for her was the first time she participated in a death case. The execution was set for three in the morning. She stayed up and she cried. "To be part of what Justice Blackmun called 'the machinery of death' is difficult for me to this very day."

Ginsburg did tell students about lighter moments, like advice she received from her father-in-law that in every good marriage it helps sometimes to be a little deaf. Advice, she said, she also heeds at the Court. One student asked her privately about her ride on the elephant with Justice Scalia. She said that she's often asked why she is in back and explained with a laugh that it had to do with weight distribution.