



Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications

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ADVISORY OPINION

Code of Judicial Conduct
Canon 7

#6-91

The Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications issues the following advisory opinion concerning the Code of Judicial Conduct. The views of the Commission are not necessarily those of a majority of the Indiana Supreme Court, the ultimate arbiter of judicial disciplinary issues. Compliance with an opinion of the Commission will be considered by it to be a good faith effort to comply with the Code of Judicial Conduct. The Commission may withdraw any opinion.

ISSUE

The issue is whether a judge may be a member of or hold office in the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association, the Indiana Republican Editorial Association, or any similar organization.

ANALYSIS

The Editorial Associations, according to the judge who made this inquiry, are non-profit groups in support of the ideals of their respective political parties. The groups meet twice a year with politicians and newspaper editors of the same political persuasion and discuss their positions on political issues, which, apparently, help formulate the content of newspaper editorials throughout the state.

Pursuant to Canon 7, an elected judge may be identified as a member of a political party and may attend political gatherings. Canon 7A(2). However, according to Canon 7A(1)(a), no judge may "act as a leader...in a political organization." Therefore, the Commission members believe that a judge may be a member of an Editorial Association but should not hold office. And, in participating as a member, the judge must act cautiously to avoid violations of other Code provisions, such as Canon 7B(1)(c) which provides that a judge should not announce views on disputed legal or political issues.

CONCLUSION

A judge may be a member of a political Editorial Association but may not hold office in the organization.