

CONSTITUTION OF ALABAMA OF 1901 (Recompiled)
Article VI

Sec. 156 Judicial Inquiry Commission

(a) A Judicial Inquiry Commission is created consisting of nine members. The Supreme Court shall appoint one appellate judge who shall not be a Justice on the Supreme Court; the Circuit Judges' Association shall appoint two judges of the circuit court; the Governor shall appoint three persons who are not lawyers, who shall be subject to Senate confirmation before serving; the Lieutenant Governor shall appoint one district judge who shall be subject to Senate confirmation; and the governing body of the Alabama State Bar shall appoint two members of the state bar to serve as members of the commission. Provided, however, that on January 1, 2005, the appointment authority granted to the Lieutenant Governor shall revert to the Governor and the Governor shall thereafter be entitled to appoint three persons who are not lawyers and one district judge, all subject to Senate confirmation. The commission shall select its own chair. The terms of the members of the commission shall be four years. A vacancy on the commission shall be filled for a full term in the manner the original appointment was made.

(b) The commission shall be convened permanently with authority to conduct investigations and receive or initiate complaints concerning any judge of a court of the judicial system of this state. The commission shall file a complaint with the Court of the Judiciary in the event that a majority of the members of the commission decide that a reasonable basis exists, (1) to charge a judge with violation of any Canon of Judicial Ethics, misconduct in office, failure to perform his or her duties, or (2) to charge that the judge is physically or mentally unable to perform his or her duties. All proceedings of the commission shall be confidential except the filing of a complaint with the Court of the Judiciary. The commission shall prosecute the complaints.

(c) The Supreme Court shall adopt rules governing the procedures of the commission.

(d) The commission shall have subpoena power and authority to appoint and direct its staff. Members of the commission who are not judges shall receive per diem compensation and necessary expenses; members who are judges shall receive necessary expenses only. The Legislature shall appropriate funds for the operation of the commission.

Sec. 157 Court of the Judiciary

(a) The Court of the Judiciary is created consisting of one judge of an appellate court, other than the Supreme Court, who shall be selected by the Supreme Court and shall serve as Chief Judge of the Court of the Judiciary; two judges of the circuit court, who shall be selected by the Circuit Judges' Association; and one district judge who shall be selected by the District Judges' Association. Other members of the Court of the Judiciary shall consist of two members of the state bar, who shall be selected by the governing body of the Alabama State Bar, two persons who are not lawyers who shall be appointed by the Governor, and one person appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. Members appointed by the Governor and Lieutenant Governor shall be subject to Senate confirmation before serving. Provided, however, that on January 1, 2005, the appointment authority granted to the Lieutenant Governor shall revert to the Governor and the Governor shall thereafter be entitled to appoint three persons who are not lawyers, subject to Senate confirmation. The court shall be convened to hear complaints filed by the Judicial Inquiry Commission. The court shall have authority, after notice and public hearing (1) to remove from office, suspend without pay, or censure a judge, or apply such other sanction as may prescribed by law, for violation of a Canon of Judicial Ethics, misconduct in office, failure to perform his or her duties, or (2) to suspend with or without pay, or to retire a judge who is physically or mentally unable to perform his or her duties.

(b) A judge aggrieved by a decision of the Court of the Judiciary may appeal to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court shall review the record of the proceedings on the law and the facts.

(c) The Supreme Court shall adopt rules governing the procedures of the Court of the Judiciary.

(d) The Court of the Judiciary shall have power to issue subpoenas. The Legislature shall provide by law for the expenses of the court.

Sec. 159 Disqualification

A judge shall be disqualified from acting as a judge, without loss of salary, while there is pending (1) an indictment or an information charging him in the United States with a crime punishable as a felony under a state or federal law, or (2) a complaint against him filed by the judicial inquiry commission with the court of the judiciary.