



PENNSYLVANIANS  
FOR MODERN COURTS

**PMCAction**

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Contact: Jeanette Krebs  
Phone: 717.214.2200  
Cell: 717.418.6106

## **PMC and PMCAction to Testify Before Senate Judiciary Committee in Support of Merit Selection Legislation**

*Bills are First Step to Eliminating Big Money Influence in Selection of Appellate Judges*

**WHAT:** Lynn A. Marks and Shira Goodman of **Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts (PMC)** and **PMCAction** will testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee in support of Senate Bills 1324 and 1325. Also testifying will be the Honorable Phyllis W. Beck, retired Pennsylvania Superior Court Judge and PMC board member, and other coalition members.

**WHEN:** **Tuesday, September 16, 9:30 a.m.**

**WHERE:** Hearing Room 1, North Office Building

**BACKGROUND:** PMC and PMCAction – along with a diverse coalition of civic, business and legal groups – are pushing for a constitutional amendment to reform the way Pennsylvania selects its appellate court judges.

Merit selection combines elements of elective and appointive systems and adds the new feature of a nonpartisan citizens nominating commission. Merit Selection is designed to get the most qualified, fair and impartial judges on the bench. It eliminates the need for judicial candidates to raise money from lawyers, law firms and entities that litigate in the state courts, a process that undermines public confidence in the impartiality and fairness of our courts. Merit selection creates opportunities for qualified applicants from all backgrounds from all over the state to reach the statewide appellate bench.

SB 1324 & 1325 would create the independent nominating commission to evaluate all applicants and recommend a list of the most qualified candidates to the governor. The governor would nominate judges from the list for Senate confirmation. Judges would stand before the public in a nonpartisan retention election after an initial four year term and every 10 years thereafter. A constitutional amendment must be passed by the legislature in two consecutive sessions and then by the voters.

PMC & PMCAction's blog, [www.judgesonmerit.org](http://www.judgesonmerit.org), features ongoing discussion on the issue, the legislation, and news about merit selection.

**Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts** is a statewide nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded to improve and strengthen the justice system in Pennsylvania by reforming the judicial selection process; improving the jury system, court administration and court financing; eliminating bias; and assisting citizens in navigating the courts and the justice system, whether as litigants, jurors, or witnesses. **PMCAction** is an affiliated nonprofit that lobbies for court reform initiatives.