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Press Releases

March 10, 2008

Adam Smith Foundation Condemns Missouri Bar for Asking Judges to Engage in Political Activity

(Jefferson City) - Sources within the Missouri Bar have given The Adam Smith Foundation access to information being

distributed and sent via e-mail by appellate and circuit court judges urging legislators, business leaders and lawyers to oppose Missouri Plan reforms. Additionally, Foundation leaders have been told that some judges are visiting Jefferson City at the request of the Missouri Bar to pressure legislators on the issues. John Elliott, President of ASF, called this activity "a textbook violation of the doctrine of separation of powers found in Article II, Section 1 of the Missouri Constitution."

According to Elliott, "Legislators should not interfere in a judicial proceeding. But apparently the Missouri Bar is not concerned by the flip-side of that coin and is willing to ask judges to risk their independence and promote the appearance of impropriety by having them jump fully into the legislative and political process."

Elliott pointed to Article V, Section 25(f) of the Missouri Constitution, which states:

No judge of any court in this state, appointed to or retained in office in the manner prescribed in sections 25(a)-(g), shall directly *or indirectly*make any contribution to or hold any office in a political party or organization, *or take part in any political campaign*.

"I'm no lawyer," said Elliott, "but making strategic phone calls, hosting dinners or lunches and lobbying legislators all seem pretty political to me." "This activity promotes the impression that some of these judges feel beholden to the Missouri Bar, whether it is because of professional pressure or the promise of later promotion within the judiciary."

For more information on the Adam Smith Foundation and getting involved in this important issue, please visit www.AdamSmithFoundation.org.

Missouri Compromised!

Missouri is putting on the gloves for round two over the state's system of judge selection. Nominally designed to keep politics out of judicial appointments, the state's Appellate Judicial Commission has instead marched Missouri's courts steadily to the left.[\(read more...\)](#)

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