

IOWA DISTRICT COURT

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C. H. PELTON
JUDGE

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Iowans Concerned About Judges
704 12th Street, Apt. 3
West Des Moines, IA 50265

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for your letter and questionnaire directed to Iowa judges. This letter is my response.

Iowa trial judges typically process more than 1,000 cases each per year. Most cases are family law or criminal. In a contested case, judges hear the facts with no predisposition, decide the facts, apply the generally accepted law, and reach a decision. Trial judges apply the law written by the legislatures and follow the precedence of appellate courts in their interpretation and construction of the State and Federal constitutions and statutes. Most people find this process fair, and it is generally accepted.

Your questionnaire appears to solicit responses that will give your interest group insight into a judge's predisposition on political issues best left to the legislative branches. It would be a rare occasion to be presented with an issue raised in your questionnaire. In 32 years of service to the public on the trial court, I cannot recall ever having been presented with a political issue you raise in your questionnaire. Thus, your questionnaire is not very relevant to what judges do year in and year out.

I subscribe to the general principle that judges should put aside their personal beliefs, likes, and dislikes and apply the law as it is to the facts of the case. To do otherwise would preclude one side or the other of a fair hearing and citizens' rights to a decision based upon an application of the law to the facts by an impartial tribunal.

Therefore, this letter is my response to your questionnaire.

Respectfully,

C. H. Pelton, Judge