



APABA-PA

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January 24, 2021

APABA-PA Resolution Opposing Appellate Judicial Districts

WHEREAS APABA-PA is an advocate for the interests of Pennsylvania Asian Pacific American lawyers, judges, and Asian Pacific American communities; and

WHEREAS in 2020, the Pennsylvania Assembly passed HB 196 to create judicial districts for appellate judges with little or no discussion; and

WHEREAS HB 196, now HB 38 in the current legislative session, would create seven judicial districts for the Supreme Court, fifteen judicial districts for the Superior Court, and nine districts for the Commonwealth Court; and

WHEREAS currently the Pennsylvania Constitution requires all thirty-one appellate judges to be elected statewide, giving voters the opportunity to elect multiple judges of each court; and

WHEREAS HB 38 would amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to allow the Pennsylvania legislature to design judicial districts for appellate judges; and

WHEREAS currently the Pennsylvania appellate judges hear cases in multiple courthouses across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS all Pennsylvania appellate judges must uniformly apply the law of Pennsylvania to the cases they hear, regardless of where the case arises; and

WHEREAS HB 38, would undermine judicial independence of Pennsylvania appellate judges by subjecting them to the demands of regional or local constituencies similar to state legislators; and

WHEREAS HB 38 would not promote racial diversity of appellate judges and appellate judge candidates; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that APABA-PA opposes HB 38 and any similar legislation or constitutional referendum designed to subject Pennsylvania appellate judges to election from separate judicial districts; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APABA-PA authorizes its president to publish this resolution, and make other communications consistent with this resolution, to members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, to other bar associations, to community organizations and the general public, and to the Pennsylvania press and media as they deem necessary.