

Bill would force state court judges to write candidate statements

A bill proposed last week would require state Supreme Court and appellate justices to file candidate statements when standing in a retention election.

A bill proposed last week would require judges to file candidate statements for the Secretary of State's online voter guide. The up-to-250-word statements would apply to all superior court candidates as well as Supreme Court and appellate justices standing in retention elections.

AB 265 is authored by Assemblyman Steven Choi, R-Irvine. He said no interest group lobbied him for the change. Instead, the idea came from his own experience as a voter and inquiries from several constituents, some of whom said they opted not to vote in some judicial elections due to a lack of information.

"Many people don't know whom to vote for," Choi said. "What an uninformed way of selecting a judge."

Including the information only in the online guide, he added, is a "cost effective" solution that would avoid increasing printing expenses while giving people the option to find the information.

"My personal preference would be eliminating selecting judges through voting, but I may face a lot of resistance because this is a way of giving an opportunity to voters to participate," Choi added.