

**Witness:** Jean Miceli Benhoff  
**Jurisdiction:** Baltimore County  
**Bill:** -SB863: State Administrator of Elections - Removal From Office  
**Position:** FOR with Amendment

As I began my research this morning to determine if lifetime appointments were as I feel, not to the advantage of the taxpayers of Maryland. The only position that has such a distinct honor and trust are federal judges including the Supreme Court.

As important as the MD Board of Elections (BOE) is to the integrity and honesty of Maryland elections, this position does not support a lifetime appointment. The current woman, Mrs. Linda Lamone has a Bachelor Degree not a law degree, per her public records.

I introduce this article to support my position to end this appointment and make this position to change each time the 24 jurisdictions change over at the time a new governor is elected.

AMENDMENT: Though I would introduce for your consideration the governor should NOT be the only one selecting this candidate for MD BOE. I propose that the election directors for each and ALL 24 jurisdictions, not just the top 3 which are dominantly of the democrat party.

The MD BOE director must be non-partisan and thus each and EVERY jurisdiction needs to have their voices heard, as per our Constitution.

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## The problem with lifetime judicial appointments

By Jamelle Bouie

July 5, 2013 at 1:10 p.m. EDT

In an interview with Reuters [this week](#), Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg—who turned 80 this year—emphasized her good health and vowed to resist liberal pressure to retire from the bench. Here’s more:

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. (TIM SLOAN/AFP/Getty Images)

In her interview, Ginsburg referred to past liberal commentary and predicted, “That’s going to start up again.”

Brushing off political calculations, she said, “It really has to be, ‘Am I equipped to do the job?’ ... I was so pleased that this year I couldn’t see that I was slipping in any respect.” She said she remains energized by her work as the senior liberal, a position she has held since 2010 when Justice John Paul Stevens retired, and calls being a justice “the best job in the world for a lawyer.”

On one end, if Justice Ginsburg feels equipped to handle the job for another 10 years—she cites Stevens, who retired at 90, as example—then she has every right to stay. If there’s anything else worth saying, it’s that the entire conversation over whether Ginsburg should stay or go highlights the problem of lifetime judicial

appointments, especially to the Supreme Court. Depending on what happens in the 2016 presidential election, the future of the country—its direction on issues ranging from labor organizing to reproductive rights—rests on the career judgment of a single person. You can hold a tremendous amount of respect for Ginsburg and still see this as a problem for governance and the legitimacy of the Supreme Court.

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Indeed, lifetime tenure encourages behavior that isn't ideal for an institution like the court, which is supposed to be removed from partisan politics. To wit, the current arrangement pushes presidents to look for younger, ideological candidates to fill vacancies—as was the case with Samuel Alito—in an effort to game the system and ensure maximum influence.

What we need are term limits for judicial appointees—from district and appeals court judges to Supreme Court justices. Of course, given the heavy lifting involved—a constitutional amendment—and the current composition of Congress, this just isn't possible. What's more, no one in either party will want to give up the possibility of securing big judicial victories through partisan politics. But for the rest of us, eliminating some of the randomness of which party gets to appoint judges—and avoiding large swings in public policy—is a good idea.

*Jamelle Bouie is a staff writer at [The American Prospect](#), where he writes a [blog](#).*

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2013/07/05/the-problem-with-lifetime-judicial-appointments/>