

# NEWS



MASSACHUSETTS  
BAR | ASSOCIATION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

March 16, 2006

**CONTACT:**

Tricia M. Oliver

(617) 338-0677

**STATEMENT FROM MASSACHUSETTS BAR ASSOCIATION  
PRESIDENT WARREN FITZGERALD**

**RE: Gubernatorial candidate Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey's proposal on a  
Judicial Review Board and seven-year terms for judges**

BOSTON, Mass. — Gubernatorial candidate Lt. Governor Kerry Healey's plans to amend the Massachusetts Constitution in order to establish a judicial review board and appoint judges for seven year terms is an ill-considered proposal. This idea ignores the basic elements of the state Constitution and its underlying principles. It displays a disrespect for the judiciary, a mindset that is at the very heart of much of our society's troubles today. I hope our schoolchildren are being taught a greater respect for judges and the courts than what is shown by this proposal.

There already exists a constitutional and statutory process for the removal of judges who violate the law and fail to fulfill their duties. In all of our history, judges who actually do so are very few and far between. Lt. Governor Healey's plan demonstrates the weakness of many common complaints about judges who impose lawful sentences and take other permitted judicial actions that the media and some of the public dislike. The legislature and the governor establish the laws, including criminal sentences. If people don't like lawful sentences ordered by judges, their complaint is not with the judges, but with the legislature. They should seek tougher laws.

Massachusetts judges are appointed until they reach age 70. This removes them from the political arena and relieves them from the need to campaign, fundraise and run for office. We want our judiciary to continue to make tough decisions to the best of their abilities, free and independent of political pressures. That is what our Massachusetts Constitution has guaranteed for 225 years, and that is what our citizens continue to deserve.

*Incorporated in 1911, the Massachusetts Bar Association is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence and respect for the law. The MBA represents a diverse group of attorneys, judges and legal professionals across the commonwealth.*

