

In his intercourse with prominent Democrats they had said that it was time they should go back to these rules of the past as the only proper way to secure an independent judiciary. He believed that this system, as reported by the committee, could not be bettered. He had practiced law for more than forty years, and the dearest wish of his heart when coming into this Convention was to secure an independent judiciary; and must he now go back and tell the people that this Convention had resolved to adhere to a system that had never worked well? He believed that on this very section the committee were more unanimous than on any other. He hoped that this small boon would not be denied them. He had hoped to be able to report to the people that the election of judges was to be abolished, but this hope had been abandoned, and now they asked for the next step. Make the judge's position depend on good behavior, and he will have every incentive to go to work for the good of the people; but make him dependent on popular elections, and every incentive will be removed to be impartial and just, and the scales of justice will not be evenly balanced.

Mr. Wickes knew that debate was not palatable, and did not expect to enlighten members, but believing that this question underlies the whole superstructure of our government, he felt that he would be derelict in his duty if he did not give utterance to his life-long convictions on this subject. It was their duty to secure to the State of Maryland an independent judiciary, and by this he meant one that was as far removed as possible from influences and bribes. In our form of government an essentially independent judiciary is required, one that is removed from every influence that may have any tendency to corrupt it, or bias its decision in any way. It is only through the judiciary that the great living principles of liberty and right secured to the people can be protected from the corruptions of the executive and legislative departments. One fact has been clearly demonstrated by the late war, that the only protection which the people of this country have from oppression and wrong is from the bench. Since 1861 he defied any one to put his hand on one single act by which the rights and privileges of the citizens have been secured except by the bench. Sometimes it has