

commensurate with population. Perhaps the most questionable innovation of the new Constitution is the provision for single member legislative districts. The purpose here was to heighten legislative responsibility. However, I seriously question whether reduced representation elected by a reduced constituency will achieve a more responsive or less parochial Legislature.

Judicial reform is a most notable and necessary feature of the new Constitution. Maryland's present court system could presently be described as quasi-chaotic and the quality of adjudication in the lower courts varies deplorably among subdivisions. The draft Constitution provides for a unified, independent and professional judicial branch. A four tier court structure supplemented by District Court Commissioners should relieve current court congestion. All judges are required to be practising lawyers, a qualification omitted at the magistrate level in the 1867 Constitution. While the power of appointment remains in the Governor, he must select nominees from a list submitted by a Judicial Nominating Commission, composed equally of lawyers and lay members, all of whom serve without compensation. For a state where appointments to the bench — especially at the lower court level — have long been based on political rather than professional qualifications, this is indeed noteworthy reform.

In other important areas the draft Constitution responds to some definite needs of today and is designed to meet some definite needs of tomorrow. Maryland's voting age has been lowered to nineteen years, a just and realistic compromise considering the responsibilities required of our younger citizens. The referendum process has been revised to provide this citizens' safeguard in a method more consistent with Maryland's greatly increased population. Provision has also been made for legislative authorization of regional governments. While there is little indication of this need for the present, it is to the new Constitution's credit that it has paved the way for future governmental development.

Over all, Maryland's new Constitution is one of exceptional brevity, simplicity and clarity. The document demonstrates an exercise in restraint, consciously limiting subject and content, intentionally delegating detail to legislative statute. Obviously, it is not perfect altogether. Pragmatic compromises were made in order to assist ratification. But even the areas of concession were consciously limited and carefully chosen to prevent any wholesale consolidation of self-interested opposition. On a balance sheet the losses were minimal, the gains optimal, and the total document a rational blend of revision