

A. The Maryland judicial system reform that's been in the mill for five or six years has been all directed toward the idea that proper nominees to judicial positions should be screened by persons expert in the area, and then should be submitted later to the electorate for confirmation or ratification. The idea of having judges elected from districts without any screening — by the bar associations or any citizens' groups that have some particular knowledge in the area — makes it very easy for strong political groups, in an area like Baltimore County, to name the nominees of their party or even on a non-partisan basis to support the nominees who will be responsive to the party. I think we're going back to the Tammany Hall type operation of judicial office if we do this. I think it's a step into the past. Not only do I feel this way, the Maryland State Bar Association feels this way. I understand the Baltimore County Bar Association feels this way, and certainly the Constitutional Convention leadership concurs that this would be a very bad bill.

Eddie Fenton: May I suggest that it is very close to 2 o'clock.

[At this point the Governor recessed his regular news conference (scheduled with other news conferences in a memorandum issued by his press secretary on February 23, 1968) in order to view and hear with the press a televised statement by Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York about the latter's availability for the Republican presidential nomination. Thereafter the Governor's conference resumed, as printed below. — Ed.]

(Remarks on the Rockefeller Statement)

First of all, I think what the Governor said today is that he meant it several months ago, and as he said consistently, that he will not be a candidate for the nomination. Again, he has not ruled out the possibility of being a candidate for election if a legitimate draft develops in the sense that the delegates to the Convention would name him as their choice to run against a Democratic nominee. I think that his position is entirely consistent. I confess that I am tremendously surprised. I also frankly add that I am greatly disappointed, because as an advocate and enthusiast for his candidacy, a person who has seen the sentiment that's being expressed over the country, I felt that there was a good chance that he could enter the campaign actively without becoming divisive to the party. Apparently, he doesn't feel this way. It may well be — and I conjecture at my own initiative on this — that he feels that some of the support that is being expressed for him is contingent upon his adoption of a dove-like stance in