

ARTICLE IV.

JUDICIARY DEPARTMENT.

Part I—General Provisions.

SECTION 1. The judicial power of this State shall be vested in a Court of Appeals, Circuit Courts, Orphans' Courts, such Courts for the city of Baltimore as are hereinafter provided for, and Justices of the Peace; all said Courts shall be Courts of Record, and each shall have a seal to be used in the authentication of all process issuing therefrom. The process and official character of Justices of the Peace shall be authenticated as hath heretofore been practiced in this State, or may hereafter be prescribed by law.

SEC. 2. The judges of all of the said courts shall be citizens of the State of Maryland, and qualified voters under this Constitution, and shall have resided therein not less than five years, and not less than six months next preceding their election or appointment in the judicial circuit, as the case may be, for which they may be respectfully elected or appointed. They shall be not less than thirty years of age at the time of their election or appointment, and shall be selected from those who have been admitted to practice law in this State, and who are most distinguished for integrity, wisdom and sound legal knowledge.

SEC. 3. The judges of the said several courts shall be elected in the counties by the qualified voters in their respective judicial circuits as hereinafter provided, at the general election to be held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November next, and in the city of Baltimore, on the fourth Wednesday of October next. Each of the said judges shall hold his office for the term of fifteen years from the time of his election, and until his successor is elected and qualified, or until he shall have attained the age of seventy years, whichever may first happen, and be re-eligible thereto until he shall have attained the age of seventy years, and not after; but in case of any judge who shall attain the age of seventy years whilst in office, such judge may be continued in office by the General Assembly for such further time as they may think fit, not to exceed the term for which he was elected, by a resolution to be passed at the session next preceding his attaining said age. In case of the inability of any of said judges to discharge his duties with efficiency, by reason of continued sickness, or of physical or mental infirmity, it shall be in the power of the General Assembly, two-thirds of the members of each House concurring, with the approval of the Governor, to retire said judge from office.