

authorizing any municipal corporation or any county to carry out urban renewal projects prevails over the restrictions contained in Article XI-A "Local Legislation" and in Article XI-E "Municipal Corporations" of this Constitution.

ARTICLE IV.

JUDICIARY DEPARTMENT.

Part I—General Provisions.

SECTION 1.⁹² The Judicial power of this State is vested in a Court of Appeals, such intermediate courts of appeal as the General Assembly may create by law, Circuit Courts, Orphans' Courts, and a District Court. These Courts shall be Courts of Record, and each shall have a seal to be used in the authentication of all process issuing from it.

SEC. 1A.⁹³ The several Courts existing in this State at the time of the adoption of this Constitution shall, until superseded under its provisions, continue with like powers and jurisdiction, and in the exercise thereof, both at Law and in Equity, in all respects, as if this Constitution had not been adopted; and when said Courts shall be so superseded, all causes, then depending in said Courts shall pass into the jurisdiction of the several Courts, by which they may, respectively, be superseded.

SEC. 2.⁹⁴ 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, as the case may be, in the city, county, district, judicial circuit, intermediate appellate judicial circuit or appellate judicial circuit for which they may be, respectively, 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. 3.⁹⁵ Except for Judges of the District Court, the Judges of the several Courts other than the Court of Appeals or any intermediate courts of appeal shall, subject to the provisions of Section 5 of this Article of the Constitution, be elected in Baltimore City and in each county, by the qualified voters of the city and of each county, respectively, all of the said Judges to be elected at the general election to be held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, as now provided for in the Constitution. 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. 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.

⁹² Amended by Chapter 10, Acts of 1966, ratified Nov. 8, 1966; Chapter 789, Acts of 1969, ratified Nov. 3, 1970; Chapter 681, Acts of 1977, ratified Nov. 7, 1978; Chapter 523, Acts of 1980, ratified Nov. 4, 1980.

⁹³ Transferred from Article XV, sec. 2, and amended by Chapter 681, Acts of 1977, ratified Nov. 7, 1978.

⁹⁴ Amended by Chapter 10, Acts of 1966, ratified Nov. 8, 1966; Chapter 789, Acts of 1969, ratified Nov. 3, 1970; Chapter 542, Acts of 1976, ratified Nov. 2, 1976.

⁹⁵ Amended by Chapter 479, Acts of 1931, ratified Nov. 8, 1932; Chapter 607, Acts of 1953, ratified Nov. 2, 1954; Chapter 10, Acts of 1966, ratified Nov. 8, 1966; Chapter 542, Acts of 1976, ratified Nov. 2, 1976; Chapter 681, Acts of 1977, ratified Nov. 7, 1978.

SEC. 3A.⁹⁶ (a) Any former judge, except a former judge of the Orphans' Court, may be assigned by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, upon approval of a majority of the court, to sit temporarily in any court of this State, except an Orphans' Court, as provided by law.

(b) The provisions of this section apply, notwithstanding provisions appearing elsewhere in this Article pertaining to retirement of judges upon attaining age 70.

SEC. 4. Any Judge shall be removed from office by the Governor, on conviction in a Court of Law, of incompetency, of wilful neglect of duty, misbehavior in office, or any other crime, or on impeachment, according to this Constitution, or the Laws of the State; or on the address of the General Assembly, two-thirds of each House concurring in such address, and the accused having been notified of the charges against him, and having had opportunity of making his defence.

SEC. 4A.⁹⁷ There is created a Commission on Judicial Disabilities composed of seven persons appointed by the Governor of Maryland. The members of the Commission shall be citizens and residents of this State. Four members of the Commission shall be appointed from among the judges of the appellate courts, the Circuit Courts, and the District Court; two members shall be appointed from among those persons who are admitted to practice of law in the State, who have been so engaged for at least fifteen years, and who are not judges of any court; and one member shall represent the public, who shall not be a judge, active or retired, and who is not admitted to the practice of law in this State. The term of office of each member shall be for four years commencing on January 1 following the expiration of his predecessor's term. Whenever any member of the Commission appointed from among judges in the State ceases to be a judge, when any member appointed from among those admitted to practice law becomes a judge, when any member representing the public becomes a judge or is admitted to the practice of law in this State, or when any member ceases to be a resident of the State, in such case the membership of this member shall forthwith terminate. Any vacancies on the Commission shall be filled for the unexpired term by the Governor in the same manner as for making of appointments to the Commission and subject to the same qualifications which were applicable to the person causing the vacancy. No member of the Commission shall receive any compensation for his services as such but shall be allowed any expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of his duties as such member.

SEC. 4B.⁹⁸ (a) The Commission on Judicial Disabilities has the power to investigate complaints against any judge of the Court of Appeals, any intermediate courts of appeal, the Circuit Courts, the District Court of Maryland, or the Orphans' Court; and to conduct hearings concerning such complaints, administer oaths and affirmations, issue process to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of evidence, and require persons to testify and produce evidence by granting them immunity from prosecution or from penalty or forfeiture. The Commission has the power to issue a reprimand and the power to recommend to the Court of Appeals the removal, censure or other appropriate disciplining of a judge or, in an appropriate case, retirement. All proceedings, testimony, and evidence before the Commission shall be confidential and privileged, except as provided by rule of the Court of Appeals; the record and any proceeding filed with

⁹⁶ Added by Chapter 546, Acts of 1976, ratified Nov. 2, 1976.

⁹⁷ Amended by Chapter 773, Acts of 1965, ratified Nov. 8, 1966; Chapter 789, Acts of 1969, ratified Nov. 3, 1970; Chapter 681, Acts of 1977, ratified Nov. 7, 1978; Chapter 523, Acts of 1980, ratified Nov. 4, 1980.

⁹⁸ Amended by Chapter 773, Acts of 1965, ratified Nov. 8, 1966; Chapter 789, Acts of 1969, ratified Nov. 3, 1970; Chapter 886, Acts of 1974, ratified Nov. 5, 1974; Chapter 523, Acts of 1980, ratified Nov. 4, 1980.