



Title: **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor,

As a justice on our state's highest court, my duty is to stay above the fray of politics and ensure every decision I make from the bench is rooted in the law. That is why judges don't wear red or blue robes; our black robes symbolize impartiality and the belief that everyone should be treated equally under the law. The bipartisan support I have received throughout the Third Judicial District from Democrats, Independents, and Republicans like the late Governor James R. Thompson demonstrates my commitment to that duty.

Unfortunately, I've been attacked repeatedly, harshly, and falsely by special interests from Chicago who are trying to politicize our state's highest court. While I was hoping to let my record speak for itself, the continuing barrage of negative attacks necessitates a response.

Our court system rests on the sacred principles of judicial independence and fairness, and I've dedicated my career to upholding those principles. It is so disheartening to see the mischaracterizations of my judicial record by interest groups seeking to politicize our courts. Those attacks are nothing more than flat-out lies and distortions.

As The Dispatch-Argus aptly con-

cluded in their October 10th editorial supporting my retention, his "critics misconstrue or mislead on the issues at hand... The opinions he is being most criticized for are ones in which he was in the majority, or that were unanimous."

Let me be clear: a vote for Tom Kilbride is a vote for Tom Kilbride and no one else. The only people making decisions about the cases that come before the court are the seven justices. It is up to each of us to study the legal issues and to render our opinions based on the facts and the law, without any outside influences.

While some may disagree with my legal rulings, our state constitution is clear: retention is not supposed to be a litmus test on a judge's interpretation of the law. To preserve our system of checks and balances, judges should be removed from office only in very limited circumstances related to malfeasance or the inability to serve. Anything else would seriously undermine the separation of powers that is at the heart of our system of government.

Voters deserve judges who are thoughtful and fair, who listen to all the evidence, and who carefully deliberate before ruling based on the law. All judges should be held to that standard. It is the standard I adhere to. Now the voters of the Third District have

the opportunity to apply that same standard.

After you review the facts and my bipartisan endorsements, I hope you will allow me the great privilege of continuing to serve on the Illinois Supreme Court. If you would like more information, please go to www.Kilbride2020.com.

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Tom Kilbride was born in Kankakee and has lived in Rock Island for the last 39 years with his family. He started his legal career as a legal aid attorney, then in private practice then ultimately serving on the state's highest court. He had the distinct honor of serving as the Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court from 2010-2013 and is now seeking retention.

Justice Tom Kilbride

Editor,

National Teen Driver Safety Week is October 18-24. Beginning drivers occasionally make behind-the-wheel mistakes. Some can be easily corrected. Others result in crashes with property damage, injury, even death. The Illinois Insurance Association, a property-casualty trade organization, encourages parents, families, and local communities to get behind teen driver safety initiatives. Some ideas to consider: Support state graduated driver license laws and adopt house rules

to protect teen motorists. Illinois' GDL gives teens more supervised time behind the wheel, bans hand-held mobile devices while driving, limits passengers, restricts night driving, and more. These measures have reduced teen driving fatalities, but laws are only part of the answer.

Candid, open, and ongoing family discussions about driving safety, expectations, and responsibilities are equally important. Model and reinforce good driving habits. Obey traffic laws; never drink and drive; always wear a seatbelt; routinely scan the roadway for unexpected situations. Avoid distractions that take eyes, hands, or focus away from the task at hand. Cell phones are one example. Music settings, temperature controls, mapping, food, passengers, even scenery are others. Choose the right vehicle for your teen driver. A bigger, heavier car, truck, or SUV equipped with safety features is best. Avoid those with high horsepower engines, and always check NHTSA safety ratings. Fatal teen crashes are devastating.

Family members, friends, and entire communities are forever affected. We can help young motorists reach destinations intact and improve roadway safety for everyone by taking time to talk to teens about



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safe driving practices.

**Sincerely,
Kevin J. Martin
Executive Director
Illinois Insurance
Association**