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George Soros' \$45 million campaign to end democratic judicial elections exposed

New study revealing the silent movement to reshape America's courts launched at the Heritage Foundation today

WASHINGTON, DC (September 9, 2010) — A study exposing billionaire hedge fund manager George Soros' \$45 million campaign to remake the judiciary and fundamentally change the way judges are selected in the United States was released today during an event sponsored by The Heritage Foundation.

Underwritten by the American Justice Partnership, the study, *Justice Hijacked*, examines a coordinated national campaign, funded by Soros, which poses as a grassroots effort and aims to fundamentally reshape America's state courts. The movement aims to abolish democratic judicial elections and replace them with a system known as "merit selection." "Merit selection" would end citizen participation in judicial elections and hand judicial selection over to small, unaccountable commissions comprised of legal elites, typically including representatives of state trial lawyers associations.

The study's author, attorney Colleen Pero, introduced the new study at the Heritage Foundation event. Former Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, the Honorable Clifford Taylor, joined Pero on a panel examining the arguments promoted by "merit selection" advocates. The panel was moderated by The Heritage Foundation's Center for Legal & Judicial Studies deputy director, Robert Alt.

"There is nothing wrong with George Soros or anyone else financing efforts to influence the public debate about America's judiciary. But the public ought to know about it," said Colleen Pero. "This movement to end citizen participation in state judicial elections has been moving swiftly and silently, below the radar of the citizens who would be impacted by Mr. Soros' millions, and it was time to bring this effort to the public's attention."

Currently, 39 states hold some form of judicial elections to ensure that state judges are held accountable to the people they serve. Under "merit selection," the power to select judges is transferred from the people (or their elected representatives) to a small commission that is unelected by voters, unaccountable to anyone and comprised primarily of legal elites. The commissions typically meet in secret with proceedings closed to the public.

"Elections have the virtue, to a greater degree than any other system, and surely more than merit selection does, of allowing the people to rise up and change their courts if they wish to," said the Honorable Clifford Taylor. "Such power for our citizens is entirely consistent with this nation's approach to governance and should not be abandoned for this largely unexamined system of merit selection."

Colleen Pero, the Honorable Clifford Taylor and American Justice Partnership President Dan Pero will be available for interviews following the press conference. To view the study, please visit <http://AmericanJusticePartnership.com/hijacked>.

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The American Justice Partnership is a national organization dedicated to promoting free enterprise, judicial accountability, and winning legal reform in the states. Headquartered in Lansing, Michigan, AJP typically enacts programs in partnership with a network of over 60 state and national partners. Visit the AJP website at www.americanjusticepartnership.com.