



NASHVILLE SCHOOL of LAW

From the office of the
PRESIDENT AND DEAN

March 25, 2026

[By email to: Erin.Merrick@tn.gov]

The Honorable Bill Lee
Office of the Governor
1st Floor, State Capitol
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Re: Third Judicial District Vacancy

Dear Governor Lee:

On March 9, 2026, your office notified the Trial Court Vacancy Commission of the creation of a circuit court vacancy in the Third Judicial District resulting from the General Assembly's confirmation of Judge William Phillips' nomination to the Court of Appeals. The Commission announced the position and began accepting applications on March 9, 2026, and set March 25, 2026 as the deadline for submitting applications. The Commission also made arrangements to hold a public hearing on April 27, 2026, in Morristown.

The application deadline has now passed, and the Commission has received only two applications. The purpose of this letter is to notify you that the Commission cannot provide you with the names of three persons qualified to fill this vacancy as required by Tenn. Code Ann. § 17-4-308(h) because only two persons have applied. Accordingly, Tenn. Code Ann. § 17-4-310(a) permits you to fill the vacancy with any person of your choosing who is duly licensed to practice law and otherwise fully qualified to serve as a circuit court judge in the Third Judicial District.

For your information, I have included with this letter the redacted applications of the two persons who filed timely applications for this position. The Administrative Office of the Courts is prepared to provide your staff with unredacted versions of these applications upon request.

Very truly yours,

William C. Koch, Jr.
Chair, Trial Court Vacancy Commission

cc: Erin Merrick, Esq.
Michelle J. Long, Esq.

Enclosures