



Alaska Judicial Council

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Why Do Judges Appear on the Ballot?

The Alaska Constitution requires a vote of the people for sitting judges to be retained in office. This is referred to as a "retention election."

A majority of votes determines whether a judge remains in office for another term or is removed from office.

Why Does the Judicial Council Evaluate Judges Standing for Retention?

State law requires the Council to evaluate each judge standing for retention and to give voters information about the judges' performance.

Judicial retention elections are non-partisan. Judges standing for retention do not run "against" anyone; instead, they run to retain their positions, based on their record of judicial performance. Judges are not allowed to campaign unless someone actively opposes their bid to stay in office.

Who Serves on the Alaska Judicial Council?

Members of the Council are citizen volunteers who come from different areas of Alaska. Three are non-attorneys who are appointed by the governor, and three are attorneys appointed by the Alaska Bar Association. The chief justice of the Alaska Supreme Court serves as chairperson.

The Alaska Constitution provides that Council members be appointed "without regard to political affiliation."

How Does the Judicial Council Evaluate Judges?

The Council evaluates judges':

- ★ Integrity
- ★ Legal Ability
- ★ Impartiality and Fairness
- ★ Judicial Temperament
- ★ Diligence and Administrative Skills
- ★ Overall Judicial Performance

The Council uses many methods to collect information about judges' performance in these areas, including:

- ★ **Surveys** - The Council surveys all attorneys, peace and probation officers, jurors, court employees, and social services professionals.
- ★ **Questionnaires** - Attorneys who have recently appeared before a judge fill out questionnaires about that judge's abilities and performance.

Judges complete questionnaires about their work during the previous term.

- ★ **Records Review** - The Council reviews judges' financial disclosure statements from the Alaska Public Offices Commission and the court system, public ethics files from the Commission on Judicial Conduct, and credit reports. It also researches each judge's record of peremptory challenges, recusals, and how often trial judges were reversed or upheld by a higher court.

- ★ **Public Hearings and Input** - The Council asks the public to comment during statewide public hearings, and at any other time during the evaluation process.

★ **Other Investigations and Interviews** - The Council may carry out additional investigations and may talk with judges during its performance review.

Where Can People Find More Information About Judges?

The full performance evaluation for each judge, including survey results and other data gathered by the Council, is posted on the Council's web site. A summary of the Council's evaluations appear in the Lieutenant Governor's Election Pamphlet, which is delivered to registered voters before the election.

Which Judges are Standing for Retention in November 2022?

Twenty-nine judges throughout the state are standing for retention in 2022. In Anchorage, twenty judges will appear on the ballot:

APPELLATE COURTS

Court of Appeals

Bethany Harbison

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Superior Court

John C. Cagle – Palmer

Catherine Easter – Anchorage

Una Sonia Gandbhir – Anchorage

Josie Garton – Anchorage

Jason Gist – Kenai

Lance Joanis – Kenai

Kari Kristiansen – Palmer

Thomas A. Matthews – Anchorage

Andrew Peterson – Anchorage

Peter Ramgren – Anchorage

Kevin Saxby – Anchorage

Kristen C. Stohler – Palmer

Stephen Wallace – Kodiak

District Court

Jo-Ann M. Chung – Anchorage

Brian K. Clark – Anchorage

Martin C. Fallon – Kenai

Tom V. Jamgochian – Palmer

David A. Nesbett – Anchorage

Shawn Traini – Palmer

The Judicial Council found that all 20 of these judges met performance standards and therefore recommends that they all be retained in office.

How are Judges Chosen in Alaska?

Under Article IV of the Alaska Constitution, the Judicial Council evaluates the professional skills and accomplishments of individuals who apply to be judges, and forwards the most qualified names to the governor. The governor then chooses from the Council's list for appointment to the bench.

Alaska Judicial Council Members

Daniel Winfree is chair of the Council by virtue of his position as Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court. Chief Justice Winfree was appointed to the Alaska Supreme Court in 2007.

Lynne Gallant is a public member from Anchorage. She was appointed by Governor Bill Walker. (Term: 2017-2023)

Geraldine Simon is an attorney member from Fairbanks. She is in private practice in Fairbanks. (Term: 2018-2024)

Dave Parker is a public member from Wasilla. He was appointed by Governor Parnell, and then reappointed by Governor Dunleavy. (Term: 2019-2025)

Jonathon Katcher is an attorney member from Anchorage. He is in private practice in Anchorage. (Term: 2020-2026)

Kristie Babcock is a public member from Soldotna. She was appointed by Governor Dunleavy. (Term: 2021-2027)

Patricia Collins is an attorney member from Juneau. She is in private practice in Juneau. (Term: 2022-2028)

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