



alaska judicial council

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Press Release

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Alaska Judicial Council Report to the Community about Judges on the Ballot September 9, 2020

The Council found that the 21 judges and one justice, who are eligible for retention in the November general election, met performance standards, and recommends that Alaskans vote **“YES”** to retain them. This press release explains the Council’s evaluation process and presents its recommendations.

In the general election on November 3, 2020, voters will be asked to vote “yes” or “no” on whether judges in their area, and two appellate judges, should serve another term in office. The Council’s report on the judges’ performances, and its recommendations based on this review, are for Alaskans to use when casting their vote.

The Alaska Judicial Council reviewed detailed performance information about each of the judges standing for retention to determine if each of the judges met performance standards. Based on the results of this review, the Alaska Judicial Council recommends the voters **vote “YES” to retain** these judges eligible to appear on the ballot in 2020:

- Supreme Court Justice Susan M. Carney;
- Court of Appeals Judge Tracey Wollenberg;
- Superior Court Judge Romano D. DiBenedetto, Nome (Second Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Paul A. Roetman, Kotzebue (Second Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Dani Crosby, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Andrew Guidi, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Jennifer S. Henderson, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Yvonne Lamoureux, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Gregory Miller, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Christina Reigh, Dillingham (Third Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Jennifer K. Wells, Kenai (Third Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Jonathan Woodman, Palmer (Third Judicial District);
- District Court Judge Leslie N. Dickson, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- District Court Judge Michael Franciosi, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- District Court Judge J. Patrick Hanley, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- District Court Judge Michael B. Logue, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- District Court Judge Kari McCrea, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- District Court Judge David R. Wallace, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- District Court Judge Pamela S. Washington, Anchorage (Third Judicial District);
- Superior Court Judge Nathaniel Peters, Bethel (Fourth Judicial District);
- District Court Judge Matthew Christian, Fairbanks (Fourth Judicial District);
- District Court Judge William T. Montgomery, Bethel (Fourth Judicial District).

The Alaska Judicial Council is an independent citizens' commission established in Article IV of Alaska's Constitution. The members include three public members who are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislature, and three attorney members who are appointed by the Alaska Bar Association Board of Governors:

- Loretta Bullard, public member from Nome;
- Lynne Gallant, public member from Anchorage;
- Jonathon A. Katcher, attorney member from Anchorage;

- Galen Paine, attorney member from Sitka;
- Dave Parker, public member from Wasilla;
- Geraldine Simon, attorney member from Fairbanks.

The Council members volunteer their time and serve staggered six year terms. The Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, currently Chief Justice Joel H. Bolger, presides as chair ex officio, and votes only when his vote can change the result.

The Alaska Judicial Council conducted an in-depth evaluation of the judicial performance of each judge standing for retention, and compiled that information in a report to the public (available on the Council's web site). The report to the public shows whether each judge or justice met performance standards for legal ability, impartiality and fairness, integrity, temperament, diligence, administrative skills, educational achievement, and ethical conduct. The report includes the following specific information:

- Survey ratings from justice system professionals familiar with the judges' work, including law enforcement and probation officers, court employees, attorneys, and social services professionals (social workers, court appointed special advocates, and guardians ad litem);
- Survey ratings and comments from jurors who served in a judge's courtroom;
- How often a trial judge's decisions were affirmed (deemed correct) by a higher court on appeal;
- Any instances when a judge's pay was withheld for an untimely decision; and
- Whether a judge was the subject of public disciplinary procedures before the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct.

The Council's analysis also included:

- Specific written feedback from attorneys who appeared before the judges in recent cases;
- An analysis of peremptory challenge data, which shows how often the parties disqualified a judge from presiding over a case;
- An analysis of recusal data, which shows how often a judge disqualified him or herself from a case because his or her impartiality might reasonably have been questioned;
- Financial disclosure statements from the Alaska Public Offices Commission, and separate conflict-of-interest forms filed with the court system, to evaluate whether a judge's financial interests may present a conflict of interest;
- Records relating to any criminal convictions, driving violations, and license actions;

- Credit history;
- Court personnel files and reports from presiding judges of the pertinent judicial districts; and
- A review of any court cases involving a judge as a party or witness.

The Council listened to court proceedings, and interviewed judges, attorneys, court staff, and others as necessary.

The Council received feedback from the public about the judges. Members of the public submitted feedback via the Council's website, and during a statewide public hearing held on May 12, 2020 (the statewide public hearing was held by teleconference this year in response to concerns about the spread of COVID-19).

Alaskan voters can learn more about the Alaska Judicial Council's evaluation of the performance of judges by visiting the Council's website at:

<http://ajc.alaska.gov/retention/current.html>

The State of Alaska's Official Elections Pamphlets, published by the Division of Elections in October, will include the Council's recommendations and summaries of the Council's evaluations.

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