



Alaska Judicial Council

Judicial Retention Evaluation – May 2020

510 L Street, Suite 450, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-1295
<http://www.ajc.state.ak.us>

(907) 279-2526 FAX (907)276-5046
E-Mail: postmaster@ajc.state.ak.us

Why Do Judges Stand in Retention Elections?

The Alaska Constitution requires a vote of the people for sitting judges to be retained in office. Trial judges appear on the ballot in their judicial district; appellate judges appear on the statewide ballot. A majority of votes determines whether a judge remains in office for another term or is removed from office. Judges who are removed from office cannot hold any judicial position for the following four years.

Why Does the Alaska Judicial Council Evaluate Judges Standing for Retention?

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.

To give voters information about judges’ performance, state law requires the Council to evaluate each judge standing for retention. The law also says that the Council will make its evaluations and any recommendations public.

What is 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.”

The Constitution also gives the Council an important role to play in the selection of judges. Under Alaska’s merit selection system, the 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.

How Does the Alaska 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 also 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.

**How Do Voters Know
How Well Judges Are Doing?**

The Council publicizes its evaluations statewide through media and internet coverage and community meetings. Its evaluations appear in the Lieutenant Governor's Election Pamphlet, which is delivered to registered voters about three weeks before the election. Detailed information on each judge, including survey results and other data considered by the Council in its evaluations, is available on the Council's web site, or by contacting the Council.

**How Can I Be Involved in the
Judicial Evaluation Process?**

- ★ Send a letter or email to the Council;
- ★ Comment at the Council's public hearing held in the spring before the general election.

**Which Judges Stand for
Retention in November 2020?**

Twenty-two judges are eligible to be on the ballot in November:

APPELLATE COURTS

Supreme Court

Susan M. Carney
Court of Appeals
Tracey Wollenberg

SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Superior Court

Romano D. DiBenedetto – Nome
Paul A. Roetman – Kotzebue

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Superior Court

Dani Crosby – Anchorage
Andrew Guidi – Anchorage
Jennifer S. Henderson – Anchorage
Yvonne Lamoureux – Anchorage
Gregory Miller – Anchorage
Christina Reigh – Dillingham
Jennifer K. Wells – Kenai
Jonathan A. Woodman – Palmer

District Court

Leslie N. Dickson – Anchorage
Michael Franciosi – Anchorage
J. Patrick Hanley – Anchorage
Michael Logue – Anchorage
Kari L. McCrea – Anchorage
David R. Wallace – Anchorage
Pamela S. Washington – Anchorage

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Superior Court

Nathaniel Peters – Bethel

District Court

Matthew Christian – Fairbanks
William T. Montgomery – Bethel

Alaska Judicial Council Members

Joel H. Bolger is chair of the Council by virtue of his position as Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court. Chief Justice Bolger was appointed to the Alaska Supreme Court in 2013 and prior to this he served as an Appeals Court judge for four years, a superior court judge in Kodiak for five years, and a district court judge in Valdez for six years.

Loretta Bullard is a public member from Nome. She was appointed by Governor Bill Walker. (Term: 2015-2021)

Galen Paine is an attorney member from Sitka. She is in private practice in Sitka. (Term: 2016-2022)

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)

Alaska Judicial Council

510 L Street, Suite 450
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 279-2526

Email: postmaster@ajc.state.ak.us

FACEBOOK – Alaska Judicial Council

Website: www.ajc.state.ak.us

or

www.knowyouralaskajudges.org
