

How to Judge the Judges

Most candidates for public office campaign by stating their positions on issues and making political promises, but judicial candidates should not indicate their positions on issues that might later come before them in court. They may promise nothing except that their decisions will uphold the law and the constitution.

Therefore, voters must consider other factors in choosing among judicial candidates. Some qualifications and characteristics to consider are:

- ✓ education
- ✓ legal experience
- ✓ judicial character, integrity, commitment to the law, humaneness
- ✓ competence in legal and administrative skills
- ✓ civic and charitable involvement



Sources of Information on Judicial Candidates

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Voters Guide

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund (LWVPA-CEF) publishes a guide listing all candidates for Supreme, Superior and Commonwealth Court. The Voters Guide includes party affiliation and information provided by the candidates about their education, occupation and qualifications for office. Local Leagues that publish Voters Guides may add the same information on candidates for the Common Pleas Courts.

Candidates for **retention** (election to an additional 10-year term on the bench) are also listed in the Voters Guides. They provide the same information, but are listed in a separate section, without party label.

Visit <http://www.palwv.org> to view the Voters Guide.

Candidate Meetings

These may take the form of informal receptions for voters and candidates, or may be set up as panel discussions or forums. While judicial candidates cannot answer questions as to how they might rule in a particular case, their views on the administration of justice and the role of the courts can be part of the discussion. Often such panels or forums are aired on commercial and/or cable TV and on radio.

THE BAR ASSOCIATION

Appellate Courts

Before the primary election, the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) rates all candidates for the statewide appellate courts (Supreme Court, Superior Court and Commonwealth Court) in one of three categories:

- ✓ Highly Recommended
- ✓ Recommended
- ✓ Not Recommended.

The PBA Judicial Evaluation Commission, a group made up of lawyers and nonlawyers, rates the candidates on the basis of their education, legal experience, competence, judicial temperament and integrity. Appellate court candidates are expected to exhibit a high degree of overall excellence, academic strength and the ability to write well and give guidance to the trial courts for future cases.

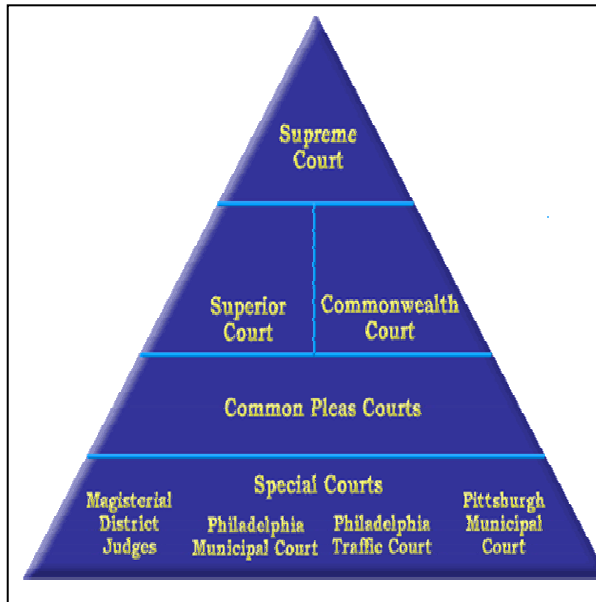
Trial Courts

Some county bar associations rate candidates for the Common Pleas Courts. Their evaluations take into account the many responsibilities of trial court judges, including dealing with witnesses, plaintiffs and defendants, jurors, live testimony and the total courtroom scene.

The PBA and some of the county bar associations also rate candidates running for retention. The criteria are the same, but evaluation also takes into account the record and reputation of judges who have already served at least one term. In the case of appellate judges, candidates are rated either Recommended or Not Recommended for retention.

Look for the bar association ratings in newspapers and on radio and TV. Call your county bar association for information on candidates for the Common Pleas Court. For information on the Pennsylvania Bar Association ratings for appellate court candidates, call the PBA at 717-238-6715 or check their website, www.pabar.org

<u>ELECTION CALENDAR FOR 2007</u>	
<u>Municipal Primary</u>	5-15-07
Last day to Register for Municipal Primary	4-16-07
<u>Municipal Election</u>	11-6-07
Last day to register for Municipal Election	10-9-07
Polls are open from 7 AM to 8P M	



Please Note:

The League of Women Voters does not rate candidates for election and does not endorse ratings provided by other organizations.

For information about Pennsylvania's Judicial System visit the LWVPA E-Library at <http://www.palwv.org> to view *The Courts of the Commonwealth*.

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Judicial Election Information For Voters



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PENNSYLVANIA

226 Forster Street
 Harrisburg, PA 17102-3220
 1-800-692-7281 ext. 10
 Email: info@palwv.org
<http://www.palwv.org>

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.