



The Alaska Judicial Council Recommends Alaskans Vote "YES" to Retain all Judges on the 2012 Ballot

What is the Alaska Judicial Council?

The Alaska Judicial Council is a non-partisan independent citizens' commission created by the Alaska Constitution. Three non-attorney members are appointed by the governor subject to confirmation by the legislature. Three members are attorneys appointed by the Alaska Bar Association. These appointments are for staggered six year terms, must be spread over different areas of the state, and must be made without regard to political affiliation. The chief justice of the supreme court serves as chairperson. The chief justice only votes when his or her vote can make a difference.

The Judicial Council screens applicants for judicial vacancies and nominates the most qualified applicants for appointment by the governor, evaluates the performance of judges and recommends whether voters should retain judges for another term. It also conducts research to improve the administration of justice in Alaska.

Who is on the Alaska Judicial Council?

Walter L. Carpeneti as Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, was chair of the Judicial Council when it evaluated the performance of judges on the ballot in 2012. Before his appointment to the supreme court, he had served as a superior court judge in Juneau for seventeen years. (Term: 2009 - 2012). Dana Fabe became Chief Justice in July 2012 and currently chairs the Council.

William F. Clarke is a public member from Chugiak. He is a retired Air Force pilot and engineering marketing manager and has been a resident of Alaska for thirty-two years. (Term: 2008 - 2013)

Kevin Fitzgerald is an attorney member from Anchorage. He is a partner in Ingaldson, Maassen & Fitzgerald. He has practiced law since 1987 and is a second generation Alaskan. (Term: 2008 - 2014)

Ken Kreitzer is a public member from Juneau. Mr. Kreitzer has more than 27 years of public safety experience, including work as an airport safety officer, a corrections officer, a firefighter, EMT, a police officer and a court security officer. (Term: 2011 - 2017)

Almee Oravec is an attorney member from Fairbanks. Ms. Oravec has practiced law since 1999, and is a shareholder in Oravec Law Group. (Term: 2012 - 2018)

Kathleen Tompkins-Miller is a public member from Fairbanks. She is a schoolteacher and has been a resident of Alaska for sixteen years. (Term: 2009 - 2015)

Julie Willoughby is an attorney member from Juneau. Ms. Willoughby is in private practice in Juneau. She has practiced law since 1998 and is a second generation Alaskan. (Term: 2010 - 2016)

How Does the Judicial Council Evaluate Judges in Order to Make Recommendations to Voters?

The Judicial Council thoroughly reviews a judge's performance before the retention election. The Council surveys thousands

of Alaskans including police, peace and probation officers, court employees, attorneys, jurors, social workers and those who serve as guardians ad litem for children, asking them about their experience with the judges on the ballot. Those who appear frequently before the judges rate them on a number of criteria, including their legal ability, diligence, temperament, and fairness and may submit narrative comments about the judge's performance. The Council also solicits specific feedback from attorneys who appeared before the judge in recent cases and considers the ratings and observations of the Alaska Judicial Observers, an independent, community-based group of volunteers who attend courtroom proceedings and rate a judge's performance.

Among other materials, the Council also reviews how often the judge was disqualified from presiding over a case, how often a trial judge was affirmed or reversed on appeal, whether the judge has been involved in any disciplinary proceedings, and whether the judge's pay was withheld for an untimely decision. The Council may perform detailed follow-up investigations of any potential problem areas, and may conduct personal interviews with presiding judges, attorneys, court staff, and others about the judge's performance. The Council also holds a statewide public hearing to obtain comments about judges.

Council members meet before the retention election to discuss the information gathered for these judicial evaluations, and at the conclusion of the meeting, the Council publicly votes on its retention recommendations. Four votes by Council members are necessary for the Council to recommend for or against the retention of a judge.

Please see below for information about the Judicial Council's evaluations of individual judges. The Council's recommendations and summaries of its evaluations are included in the Official Election Pamphlet issued by the Division of Elections and distributed to Alaskan households statewide.

Where Can I Read about the Judicial Council's Evaluation of a Judge?

The following judges are on the ballot in 2012. Click on the name of a judge to read about the Council's evaluation of that judge.

Appellate Justices/Judges

Supreme Court Justice Daniel E. Winfree
Court of Appeals Judge Joel H. Bolger

First Judicial District

Superior Court Judge William Barker Carey - Ketchikan
District Court Judge Keith B. Levy - Juneau
District Court Judge Thomas G. Nave - Juneau

Second Judicial District

Superior Court Judge Michael I. Jeffery - Barrow

Third Judicial District

Superior Court Judge Steve W. Cole - Kodiak
Superior Court Judge Gregory Louis Heath - Palmer
Superior Court Judge Charles T. Huguelet - Kenai
Superior Court Judge William F. Morse - Anchorage
Superior Court Judge Frank A. Pfiffner - Anchorage
Superior Court Judge Eric Smith - Palmer
Superior Court Judge John Suddock - Anchorage
Superior Court Judge Sen K. Tan - Anchorage
Superior Court Judge Phillip R. Volland - Anchorage
Superior Court Judge Michael L. Wolverton - Anchorage
District Court Judge J. Patrick Hanley - Anchorage
District Court Judge Margaret L. Murphy - Homer
District Court Judge Daniel Schally - Vaidez
District Court Judge Alex M. Swiderski - Anchorage
District Court Judge David R. Wallace - Anchorage
District Court Judge Pamela Scott Washington - Anchorage
District Court Judge David L. Zwink - Palmer

Fourth Judicial District

Superior Court Judge Paul R. Lyle - Fairbanks
Superior Court Judge Michael P. McConahy - Fairbanks
District Court Judge Patrick S. Hammers - Fairbanks

Frequently Asked Questions

[Click here for answers to frequently asked questions.](#)