

Why Judges Matter

When the day comes that you or someone you love has dealings with a court, the Judge will be the most important person in the room.

Judges interpret the law. Judges believe that their core beliefs don't sway their judgments. But judges are human, so they can't block those core beliefs out.



Sometime in your life, a judge may make decisions about your most personal issues--your divorce, your child's support or living circumstances, your inheritance, your property, your debts or the debt somebody owes you.

Even if you personally never stand before a judge, judges will make decisions that affect your privacy, your safety, your children's safety and the quality of their education, your voting rights, your equality under the law.

In the next year or two, NC judges will make final decisions about

- voting policies and rights
- birth control
- school vouchers
- whether to honor existing teacher contracts
- fracking
- the safety of our drinking water

We all need to learn about judges, and vote for judges who share our core attitudes and beliefs.

So How Do You Judge Judges?

For first-time District or Superior Court judicial candidates, look at:

- their public service record
- organizations they belong to
- political party affiliation, if any
- church affiliation, if any
- who endorses them
- their ratings by the NC Bar Association <http://jpe.ncbar.org/> Phase 2 results (available mid-April)

For sitting District or Superior Court judges, look at all the above, plus:

their ratings by the NC Bar Association <http://jpe.ncbar.org/> Phase 1 results
decisions they have made

Biographies of NC Supreme Court Justices: <http://appellate.nccourts.org/Bios/?c=1>

Biographies of NC Court of Appeals Judges: <http://appellate.nccourts.org/Bios/?c=2>

TELL YOUR FRIENDS: FIVE REASONS TO VOTE FOR JUDGES

1. **DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO VOTE:** The fight over the laws governing voting rights is coming to NC courts – judges elected in 2014 will determine whether hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians will face new and unnecessary barriers that will operate to deny their right to vote.
2. **COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC EDUCATION:** Education issues including whether public funding for private schools will be expanded to the detriment of public school budgets, and whether charter schools are meeting student diversity requirements or will they become an instrument to re-segregate North Carolina schools?
3. **PROTECTING NATURAL RESOURCES:** North Carolina judges will decide cases related to environmental devastation from North Carolina polluters. How these cases are decided will affect the quality of life and the integrity of our communities and waterways for decades to come.
4. **PRESERVING JUSTICE FOR ALL:** Republicans in the North Carolina General Assembly repealed the Racial Justice Act, an act which ensured that all North Carolina citizens stand equally before the law. Without the protections of the RJA, Judges elected in 2014 will be called on to respond to racial bias in our judicial system.
5. **ENSURING GOVERNMENT BY AND FOR CITIZENS:** North Carolina courts are increasingly the last line of defense in keeping government open to its citizens – Governor McCrory's selective denial of protestors' right to rally on Capitol grounds, charging exorbitant fees for making copies of documents subject to freedom of information disclosure, and extreme ideological judicial appointments are examples of the need for protection.

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