



FLORIDA FAMILY
ACTION

FLORIDA VOTER
ENDORSEMENT GUIDE
2024 **FLORIDA PRIMARY** JUDICIAL ELECTIONS

SELECTING JUDICIAL CANDIDATES

OUR RATING METHODOLOGY FOR PICKING TRIAL COURT JUDGES

Finding the best judicial candidate is more complicated and dynamic than picking elected officials for legislative races. In most elections, the main issue is, “Will the candidate vote for conservative policies?” However, the same cannot be asked when electing good Trial Court judges. *Ideally, a good trial judge will also have qualifications like an even-handed temperament, a strong intellect, jury trial experience, a sense of fairness, and a good reputation in the legal community.*

For instance, consider two judicial candidates: one claims to be a Christian and appears to have a conservative judicial philosophy, while the other does not attend church and appears to lean liberal. If the first candidate has been disciplined by the bar, lacks legal experience, has never tried cases, has a poor reputation, or is angered easily, then that candidate is probably not the best person to serve as a judge, especially if another otherwise highly qualified, though left-leaning, alternative exists.

While having a conservative judicial philosophy is always important, it is far more critical that Appellate and Supreme Court judges possess it than do lower Trial Court judges. This is true because if lower court judges behave as activists and insert their views in place of the law, they can usually have their rulings overturned by appellate courts.

These are just some of the considerations we have used in evaluating which Circuit Court and County Court judicial candidates that we have endorsed or rate as “acceptable.”

In evaluating judicial candidates, our team researched campaign websites, news articles, disciplinary records, church/synagogue affiliations, Florida Bar Judicial Candidate Statements and social media. We also interviewed local lawyers who know and work with these candidates to determine their reputation in the community. Often, we discover the differences between judicial candidates are too hard to compare and distinguish because they are either both very mediocre, or both equally qualified.



Our ENDORSEMENT rating (E) indicates we have a high confidence level that the candidate is the *best* judicial candidate among the other choices listed on the ballot.



Our ACCEPTABLE rating (A) indicates one or more judicial candidate(s) who we prefer as better overall than the other candidate(s) running in the same race but who, for some reason, we cannot endorse. An Acceptable status may also indicate that two judicial candidates are too close in qualifications, experience, and philosophy to recommend one over the other.

ELECTED TRIAL COURT JUDGES

CIRCUIT COURT

KEY: *Incumbent

COUNTIES	CIRCUIT	GROUP	NAME	COUNTIES	CIRCUIT	GROUP	NAME		
Clay, Duval, Nassau	4	34	 Nancy Cleaveland	Hardee, Highlands, Polk	10	27	 Catherine L. Combee*		
Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Sumter	5	7	 Erin Daly	Miami-Dade	11	8	 Jason Edward Bloch		
			 Derek Saltsman				29	 Heloiza Correa	
	13	 Heidi Davis*	38		 Cristobal David Padron				
		 Zach McCormick			20	 Ben Boylston			
Pasco, Pinellas	6	9	 Nicole Pearlman	Broward		17	1	 Carol-Lisa Phillips*	
			 Kate Spurlock		38			 Stephanie C. Moon*	
			14					 Jenn Dubbeld	18
Orange, Osceola	9	5		 Joy Goodyear	Brevard, Seminole	20	6	 Erik Leontiev*	
			15	 Chris Mack				28	 Michael Colombo
				37					 Tanya Davis Wilson*
			43					 Craig McCarthy*	



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ELECTED TRIAL COURT JUDGES

COUNTY COURT

KEY: *Incumbent

COUNTY	GROUP	NAME	COUNTY	GROUP	NAME		
BAKER		 Lorelie P. Brannan	GLADES	6	 Haley Brook		
		 Julie Crews Johnson			 Will Dorman		
BREVARD	6	 Clarissa Harrell	HAMILTON		 Sheena Rickerson		
		 Jacob Henry Speicher			 Jamie Tyndal*		
		 Margaret Wagner					
	10	 Jonathan Andrew Skinner	HILLSBOROUGH	11	 Christine Edwards		
		 Timi DeAnn Tucker					
	10	 Lauren Nichole Pepper					
BROWARD	6	 Kathleen Mary "Katie" McHugh	LAKE	1	 Franscheska Sabatini		
		 Samuel Ford Stark					
		 Kathleen Elaine Angione			LEON	4	 Robert Churchill
		 Corey Brian Friedman					
		 Lauren Nichole Pepper					
	32		MIAMI-DADE	29	 Scott Janowitz		
				31	 Christopher Green		
CHARLOTTE	1	 Kathryn Wallace	ORANGE	11	 Adam Keith McGinnis		
		 Scott Weinberg					
CITRUS	3	 Amber May Thomas	OSCEOLA	2	 Gabby Sanders-Morency		
		 Lisa Yeager					
DUVAL	9	 Andrew Bonderud	PALM BEACH	2	 Jean Marie Middleton		
		 Marcus Isom					
			PUTNAM	1	 Anne Marie Gennusa		



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