



FLORIDA FAMILY
ACTION

FLORIDA VOTER

JUDICIAL ELECTION GUIDE

2026 FLORIDA **GENERAL** ELECTIONS

MERIT RETENTION OF APPELLATE COURT JUDGES

FLORIDA SUPREME COURT

BALLOT QUESTION FOR SUPREME COURT:

"Shall Justice _____ of the Supreme Court
be retained in office?"



Carlos G. Muniz

DISTRICT COURT OF APPEALS (DCA)

BALLOT QUESTION FOR ALL DCA RETENTION VOTES:

"Shall Judge _____ of the _____ District Court of Appeal be retained in office?"

1st DCA

- NO** Joseph Lewis, Jr.
- YES** Rachel Nordby
- YES** Tim Osterhaus
- NO** Clay Roberts
- YES** Raymond Treadwell

3rd DCA

- YES** Kansas R. Gooden
- YES** Monica Gordo
- YES** Fleur Jeannine Lobree
- YES** Thomas Logue
- NO** Bronwyn Catherine Miller

5th DCA

- YES** John M. Harris
- YES** Scott D. Makar
- YES** F. Rand Wallis

2nd DCA

- YES** Drew Atkinson
- YES** Morris Silberman
- YES** Daniel H. Sleet
- YES** Andrea Teves Smith

4th DCA

- YES** Alan O. Forst
- NO** Mark W. Klingensmith
- YES** Jonathan D. Lott
- YES** Shannon K. Shaw
- YES** Caroline Cahill Shepherd



Florida Family Action (FFA) is a separate 501(c)(4) organization affiliated with Florida Family Voice (FFV), a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan, biblical worldview organization, serving for more than 20 years as Florida's premier defender of life, marriage, family, and religious liberty, through legislative advocacy, church & pastoral engagement, next gen outreach, and voter education.

As Florida Family Action's advocacy mission includes candidate evaluations and endorsements, all candidate endorsements and ratings contained in this guide are solely those of FFA. Florida Family Voice does not endorse, oppose, rate, rank, score, or recommend candidates for public office, and FFV did not participate in preparing or approving the candidate endorsements or ratings contained in this guide.



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CIRCUIT COURT				ELECTED TRIAL COURT JUDGES				COUNTY COURT			
COUNTIES		CIRCUIT	GROUP	NAME		COUNTY		GROUP	NAME		
Orange, Osceola		9	1	Charles Hart		DUVAL		13	Octavius A. Holliday, Jr.		P
Miami-Dade		11	5	Monica Segura		LIBERTY		1	Elijah Lane Bentley		P
Miami-Dade		11	69	Rita Baez					Christopher Bufano		P
Broward		17	52	Tama Hamilton		SEMINOLE		6	Wayne Culver		P



SELECTING JUDGE 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.

- E

ENDORSEMENT indicates we have a high confidence level that the candidate is the *best* judicial candidate among the other choices listed on the ballot.
- P

PREFERRED 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.