SAN DIEGO COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION ISSUES EVALUATIONS FOR JUDICIAL CANDIDATES
IN JUNE 7, 2022 PRIMARY ELECTION

SAN DIEGO (May 2, 2022) —The San Diego County Bar Association (SDCBA) announced its evaluations for seven candidates vying for three San Diego Superior Court judicial seats in the June 7, 2022 primary election.

For more than 40 years, the SDCBA has evaluated candidates in judicial elections as a public service because there is very little information on judicial candidates that is readily available to the public. The SDCBA’s evaluations do not compare opposing candidates, nor do they endorse or oppose the election of particular candidates or imply the SDCBA’s support of a particular candidate. In accordance with the SDCBA’s Judicial Election Evaluation Committee (JEEC) Rules, each candidate is evaluated on that candidate’s individual merit and given one of five evaluations:

“Exceptionally Qualified”: Presently possessing exceptional professional ability, experience, competence, integrity and/or temperament to perform the judicial function.

“Well Qualified”: Presently possessing a high-level professional ability, experience, competence, integrity and/or temperament indicating high-level ability to perform the judicial function.

“Qualified”: Presently possessing professional ability, experience, competence, integrity and/or temperament indicating ability to perform the judicial function.

“Lacking Qualifications”: Presently not possessing professional ability, experience, competence, integrity and/or temperament indicating ability to perform the judicial function.

“Unable to Evaluate”: If the Committee does not receive sufficient information from persons who know a candidate to fairly and adequately evaluate a candidate’s ability to perform the judicial function, the candidate may be deemed Unable to Evaluate.

Here are the SDCBA JEEC evaluations for the candidates in judicial elections for 2022:

San Diego County Superior Court Judge – Office No. 32
Com. Pennie McLaughlin  EXCEPTIALLY QUALIFIED

San Diego County Superior Court Judge – Office No. 35
Michael Flemming  WELL QUALIFIED
Rebecca Kanter  WELL QUALIFIED
Mike Murphy  QUALIFIED

San Diego County Superior Court Judge – Office No. 36
Chris Lawson  QUALIFIED
Pete Murray  WELL QUALIFIED
Com. Peter Singer  QUALIFIED

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State court judges in California serve six-year terms and are elected by county voters on a nonpartisan ballot at a general election, and vacancies are filled through appointment by the Governor. At the end of each term, judges must seek re-election, and attorneys seeking judgeships are able to run for one of the positions up for re-election.

The JEEC, comprised of attorneys with widely diverse backgrounds and professional experiences to provide a comprehensive set of perspectives, prepares its evaluations by actively gathering information on each candidate from a wide variety of sources, including broad feedback from the community and information received from each candidate. The JEEC follows a detailed and confidential process in determining its evaluations, modeled after the California State Bar’s Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation process used when candidates are appointed by the Governor. Judicial candidates may choose not to participate in the evaluation process, however, the JEEC will provide an evaluation if there is enough information available.

Judicial candidates are evaluated on 15 different factors including fairness and objectivity; integrity and honesty; decisiveness; judgment and common sense; judicial temperament; knowledge of the law; professional reputation; trial experience; intellect and ability; tolerance and lack of bias; caseload management; courtesy and patience; writing and research skills; and compassion and understanding. Factors that are not part of the evaluation process: religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, race, gender, disability, nor type of law practiced.

"Often, little information is publicly available to voters to help them make an informed decision about who to elect to the bench -- and that’s where the San Diego County Bar Association, the region’s largest legal organization, comes in,” said SDCBA President David Majchrzak. "Our judicial evaluations process underscores our commitment to serving not only the legal community, but the general public too. Our judiciary has a tremendous impact on San Diegans’ day-to-day lives, and it is crucial that voters have access to a neutral evaluation of those candidates that is based on a meticulous, comprehensive, and time-tested process."

The JEEC was first established in 1978 and comprises 23 SDCBA members who represent a diverse cross-section of San Diego’s legal community and come from a variety of practice areas, including lawyers from the public and private sectors, civil and criminal law practitioners, sole practitioners and members of small, medium, and large law firms. For more on the SDCBA’s judicial candidate evaluation process, please visit www.sdcba.org/judicialevaluations.

The San Diego County Bar Association is the region’s largest law-related organization, dedicated to serving the needs of all attorneys and the legal community in San Diego County.

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