



SAN DIEGO COUNTY
BAR ASSOCIATION®

GUIDE FOR VOTERS:

How Judges Become Judges and Why Your Vote Matters

In the upcoming election, there are 18 judges on the ballot in San Diego. Judges serve in one of the highest positions in our community and the decisions they make every day may impact your life both directly and indirectly. It is vital for you to understand why your vote is important in these elections, and for you to learn about each of the candidates for judicial office before casting your vote. Here is a brief overview of how judges are elected or appointed to their position:

Trial Court:

In California, trial court judges are appointed by the Governor after an extensive review process. Every six years, the judicial office that each trial court judge occupies is up for re-election. Those judicial officers are automatically retained if no one seeks to challenge them in a nonpartisan election. If they are challenged by another candidate for that judicial position, the electorate votes to determine who should hold that judicial office.

Court of Appeals:

Appellate Court justices are also appointed by the Governor after an extensive review process. Their judicial positions are also up for election every twelve years. But unlike trial court judges, those “retention elections” are not contested. And unlike trial court judges, Court of Appeal justices are not automatically retained, but require a majority of voters to cast “yes” votes for them to maintain their position. Thus, participation by the electorate in these retention elections is critical.

California Supreme Court:

California’s Supreme Court is comprised of a Chief Justice and six Associate Justices. The justices are all appointed by the Governor after extensive screening, just like Court of Appeals justices. Supreme Court justices also serve a 12-year term, and are subject to the same nonpartisan, uncontested “retention elections,” requiring a majority of voters to cast “yes” votes for them to maintain their position.

NOVEMBER 2018 JUDICIAL ELECTION INFORMATION

Trial Courts:

For the November 6, 2018 election, there is only one contested trial court election. In contested trial court elections, the San Diego County Bar Association (SDCBA) evaluates candidates as a service to voters. Our 2018 evaluations for that one contested election are as follows:

Matthew Brower – Qualified

Hon. Gary G. Kreep – Lacking Qualifications

To learn more about how the candidates are evaluated by the SDCBA, please visit www.sdcba.org/judicialevaaluations.

Court of Appeals:

There are 14 judges on the ballot for the Court of Appeals. For retention elections – i.e. elections where you are voting for a justice who is already serving to retain their position – a majority of voters must vote “yes” in the election. If more than half of the voters leave this blank or vote “no,” the justice will not retain their position and the Governor will nominate somebody new to fill their spot. Here are the 14 Court of Appeals justices on the ballot for retention:

Division One

- Justice Joan Kathleen Irion
- Justice Judith L. Haller
- Justice Richard D. Huffman
- Justice Patricia D. Benke
- Justice Cynthia Aaron
- Justice William S. Dato
- Justice Patricia Guerrero

Division Two

- Justice Douglas P. Miller
- Justice Richard T. Fields
- Justice Art W. McKinster
- Justice Marsha G. Slough

Division Three

- Justice David A. Thompson
 - Justice Raymond J. Ikola
 - Justice Thomas M. Goethals
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California Supreme Court:

There are two California Supreme Court justices on the ballot for retention in the upcoming election. Like the Court of Appeal justices on the ballot, Supreme Court justices require a majority of voters to cast “yes” votes in order for them to retain their position. Not voting for this position may mean that there is not the majority necessary for the justice to keep their position.

There are two justices on the ballot for the California Supreme Court:

Justice Carol A. Corrigan

Justice Leondra R. Kruger

For more information on California’s courts and how judges are selected for each court, please visit:

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/>

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