



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  Derek Saltsman	Miami-Dade	11	8	 Jason Edward Bloch
		13	 Heidi Davis*  Zach McCormick			29	 Heloiza Correa  Cristobal David Padron
		20	 Ben Boylston	Broward	17	1	 Carol-Lisa Phillips*
Pasco, Pinellas	6	9	 Nicole Pearlman  Kate Spurlock			38	 Stephanie C. Moon*
		14	 Jenn Dubbeld	Brevard, Seminole	18	17	 Andrea Fant  Kristen Smith-Rodriguez
Orange, Osceola	9	5	 Joy Goodyear	Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee	20	6	 Erik Leontiev*
		15	 Chris Mack			28	 Michael Colombo  Elizabeth V. Krier*
		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		<div>A</div> Lorelie P. Brannan <div>A</div> Julie Crews Johnson	GLADES	6	<div>A</div> Haley Brook <div>A</div> Will Dorman
BREVARD	6	<div>A</div> Clarissa Harrell <div>A</div> Jacob Henry Speicher <div>A</div> Margaret Wagner	HAMILTON		<div>A</div> Sheena Rickerson <div>A</div> Jamie Tyndal*
	10	<div>A</div> Jonathan Andrew Skinner <div>A</div> Timi DeAnn Tucker	HILLSBOROUGH	11	<div>A</div> Christine Edwards
BROWARD	6	<div>A</div> Kathleen Mary "Katie" McHugh		21	<div>E</div> Matt Smith
	10	<div>A</div> Samuel Ford Stark	LAKE	1	<div>E</div> Franscheska Sabatini
	16	<div>A</div> Kathleen Elaine Angione	LEON	4	<div>A</div> Robert Churchill
	25	<div>A</div> Corey Brian Friedman	MIAMI-DADE	29	<div>A</div> Scott Janowitz
	32	<div>A</div> Lauren Nichole Pepper		31	<div>A</div> Christopher Green
CHARLOTTE	1	<div>A</div> Kathryn Wallace	ORANGE	11	<div>A</div> Adam Keith McGinnis
	3	<div>E</div> Scott Weinberg	OSCEOLA	2	<div>A</div> Gabby Sanders-Morency
CITRUS	3	<div>A</div> Amber May Thomas <div>A</div> Lisa Yeager	PALM BEACH	2	<div>A</div> Jean Marie Middleton
DUVAL	6	<div>A</div> Andrew Bonderud <div>A</div> Marcus Isom	PUTNAM	1	<div>A</div> Anne Marie Gennusa



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