



FLORIDA FAMILY ACTION

FloridaFamilyAction.org

FLORIDA VOTER

# JUDICIAL ELECTION GUIDE

2020 FLORIDA GENERAL ELECTION

## MERIT RETENTION OF APPELLATE COURT JUDGES

### FLORIDA SUPREME COURT

BALLOT QUESTION FOR SUPREME COURT:

"Shall Justice Carlos G. Muñiz of the Florida Supreme Court be retained in office?"



Carlos G. Muñiz

### 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	2nd DCA	3rd DCA	4th DCA	5th DCA
Joseph Lewis, Jr.	J. Drew Atkinson	Monica Gordo	Alan O. Forst	Kerry I. Evander
Scott Makar	Morris Silberman	Eric William Hendon	Mark W. Klingensmith	*  Jamie Grosshans
Rachel Nordby	Daniel H. Sleet	Fleur Jeannine Lobree	Martha C. Warner	John M. Harris
Tim Osterhaus	Andrea Teves Smith	Thomas Logue		Richard B. Orfinger
L. Clay Roberts		Bronwyn Catherine Miller		Meredith Sasso
Adam S. Tannenbaum				F. Rand Wallis

\* Judge Jamie Grosshans has withdrawn from the 5th DCA because she was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court by Governor Ron DeSantis. While her name may be on some ballots, a vote cast for her will not count.



# SELECTING JUDICIAL CANDIDATES

## OUR RATING METHODOLOGY FOR PICKING TRIAL COURT JUDGES

by John Stemberger

Finding the best trial court judge 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.

### CIRCUIT COURT ELECTED TRIAL COURT JUDGES KEY: \*Incumbent

COUNTIES	CIRCUIT	GROUP	NAME	COUNTIES	CIRCUIT	GROUP	NAME
Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla	2	4	<b>A</b> Amanda P. Wall	Palm Beach	15	30	<b>A</b> Jaimie Goodman *
Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, Volusia	7	14	<b>A</b> Dan Hilbert	Broward	17	16	<b>A</b> Dennis Daniel Bailey *

### COUNTY COURT ELECTED TRIAL COURT JUDGES KEY: \*Incumbent

COUNTY	GROUP	NAME	COUNTY	GROUP	NAME
HILLSBOROUGH	7	<b>E</b> Monique Scott	NASSAU	1	<b>A</b> John Joseph Cascone
MANATEE	4	<b>E</b> Kristy Zinna	SEMINOLE	1	<b>A</b> John L. Woodard III *