

Does it really matter if I vote for judges?

Absolutely! Judges make decisions about fundamental issues that affect all of us (family life, education, health care, housing, employment, discrimination, civil rights, public safety, etc.), and those decisions can have long-lasting impact. It is critical that our judges make fair decisions. Judges must know the law, be independent, and be free from political and economic influences. Voting for qualified judges really does protect the courts—for all of us!

Want to know more?

Go to our website to see all of the evaluations of candidates running for judge.



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**Vote for
Qualified
Judges
and
Protect
Our
Courts**





What is VoteForJudges.org?

VoteForJudges.org, a program run by Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice, is a nonpartisan group, supported by many non-profit organizations to provide voter education for the upcoming judicial elections. In Illinois, judges are elected. This November, sixty-nine people are running for various judge positions in Cook County; almost all of them are current judges running for retention. By reading this brochure and looking at our website, you can become better informed about the people running for judge. By voting for qualified judges, you can help protect our courts.

About Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice (CAFFJ)

Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice is an impact research, education and advocacy organization that works to achieve fundamental, systemic reform by addressing policies and practices that relate to social justice and government effectiveness issues such as fair criminal justice systems and equal access in financial institutions. For more information, please visit: www.ChicagoAppleseed.org or call 312.988.6565

What is a retention election?

In Illinois, judges are elected to a six-year term. When their term is up, those judges must be elected in order to serve another term. The only way they can serve another term is if they receive at least 60% of the vote. Since the judges running for retention have a track record of being a judge, it is easier for voters to evaluate their candidacy. Lawyers and bar groups receive information about judges' performance and recommend whether or not a judge should be retained.

Why should I vote for judges?

Judges make all kinds of decisions, from the very personal, such as child custody decisions, to those with much broader impact such as the nature of O'Hare expansion. The decisions that judges make affect our lives, both directly and indirectly, often for many years to come. It is our responsibility to vote for judges we can trust to make impartial decisions based on fair consideration of the facts and law. In some cases, this means that judges may make unpopular or controversial decisions. We need to trust that our judges can make those right decisions without regard to political or economic pressure. That's why it is so important to vote for qualified people to be judges.

How could I possibly know enough to vote for all these people?

There are at least a dozen bar groups that interview the judicial candidates and evaluate their experience and temperament. Those bar associations issue opinions about candidates' qualifications.

How am I going to remember all this on Election Day?

Prior to each election, local newspapers (including the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Daily Southtown*, *Daily Herald* and many local community papers) will publish a summary chart of all the bar groups' recommendations regarding the judicial candidates. You may take this chart with you into the voting booth. For detailed information on individual judges as well as the whole election process, visit our website at www.VoteForJudges.org.

