

EVALUATING JUDICIAL CANDIDATES

A Program of the National Association of Women Judges



Informed
Voters
FAIR JUDGES

How should you decide on a judicial candidate?

Essential Qualities of a Good Judge:

- **Integrity & Ethics:**
 - Uphold honesty and impartiality
 - Dedicated to enforcing the rule of law
- **Experience:**
 - Proven track record of excellence in legal practice
 - Free from any disciplinary actions
- **Professional Competence:**
 - Possesses sharp intellect and broad legal knowledge
 - Demonstrates strong writing capabilities
- **Judicial Temperament:**
 - Maintains neutrality and respectfulness
 - Remains composed and decisive in all proceedings
- **Service:**
 - Shows a clear commitment to public service and justice

Judges, unlike legislators, must remain detached from political and partisan influences, focusing solely on resolving issues and disputes fairly. Evaluating a judge's character, integrity, and their dedication to making decisions based on law and evidence is crucial. They should remain uninfluenced by special interests or fear of job loss due to unpopular decisions with powerful groups.

To determine if a judicial candidate possesses the necessary qualities, consider the following steps:

- **Consult Nonpartisan Sources:** Explore websites and voter guides from unbiased organizations.
- **Check Local Bar Association Ratings:** Your local bar association might assess candidates or direct you to other performance evaluations.
- **Engage in Candidate Forums:** Attend or watch candidate forums and voter information sessions, and examine endorsements.
- **Gather Insights from Professionals:** Speak with lawyers, police officers, or courthouse staff who interact with judges.

Think critically about special interest groups who may distort facts or issues:

- Be cautious of special interest groups that might distort facts or issues.
- Investigate who is financing campaigns and external messaging.
- Beware of candidates who promise to make decisions based on personal or political agendas. Judges should rule based on the facts and the law, not preconceived notions.

**INFORMED VOTERS → IMPARTIAL
JUDGES → EQUAL JUSTICE**