ARIZONA JUDGES ON THE 2026 BALLOT FOR RETENTION

JPR 2026 Retention Judges

https://jpr.azcourts.gov/Portals/2/148/documents/2026RetentionJudges.pdf?ver=LlxZGta33JQUVYmsYwhFMQ%3D%3D

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

	Name	Appointed By	Election Rating 2022	LD Rating	Reasoning
1	LOPEZ IV, Hon. John R.	Ducey	72.7	NO	Not Running; no other candidate listed

MARICOPA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

	ASTROWSKY, Hon. Bradley	Brewer	62.2	YES
	BLAIR, Hon. Michael C.	Ducey	71.9	YES
	BLANCHARD, Hon. John L.	Ducey	64.8	NO
	Bad decisions			
	BRAIN, Hon. Mark H.	Brewer	72.6	NO
	Bad decisions			
	BROOKS, Hon. Robert I.	Ducey	75.3	YES
	Asst AZ Atty Gen 2012-2020			
	CAIRO, Hon. Sunita A.	Ducey		YES
	Asst AZ Atty Gen 2015-2022			
	CARSON, Hon. Michelle	Hobbs		NO
	Judicial Commission Mtg -Family Ct.			
	COMO, Hon. Gregory S.	Ducey	72.6	NO
	COOPER, Hon. Katherine M.	Brewer	71.1	YES
	COVIL, Hon. Max-Henri	Ducey	66.0	NO
	CULBERTSON, Hon. Kristin	Ducey	67.9	NO
	DAVIS, Hon. Marvin L.	Ducey	67.7	YES
	DUNNE, Hon. Pamela H	Brewer	74.8	RETIRED
	EDELSTEIN, Hon. Monica B.	Ducey	64.1	YES
	FINK, Dean M	Napolitano	68.2	RETIRING
	Napolitano appointee			
	FISH, Hon. Geoffrey	Brewer	73.4	YES
	FOX, Hon. Dewain	Ducey	72.6	YES
	FRANCIS, Hon. Jillian B.	Ducey		YES
	GILLA, Hon. Marisha H,	Hobbs		NO
	Hobbs appointee			
	GREEN, Hon. Jennifer	Brewer	78.1	YES
	GUYTON, Hon. Lauren R.	Hobbs		NO
	Hobbs appointee			
	HARMON, Hon. Melody Garland	Hobbs		NO
	Hobbs appointee			
	HERROD, Hon. Michael J.	Brewer	73.1	YES
	Family law			
	JACKSON, Hon. Charlene D.	Ducey		NO
	Judicial Commission-Family Ct.			

JULIAN, Hon. Melissa I.	Ducey	68.5	NO	Always sides with Mayes; ruled against GOP Election integrity
KALMAN, Hon. Amy M.	Hobbs		NO	Hobbs appointee
KIEFER, Hon. Joseph S.	Ducey	73.6	YES	
KORBIN STEINER, Hon. Ronee	Ducey	71.3	NO	Family & Juvenile Ct; Fink, Keshel, Finchem
KREAMER, Hon. Joseph C.	Napolitano	72.6	NO	Napolitano appointee
LEMAIRE, Hon. Kerstin G.	Ducey	67.5	YES	
MARTIN, Hon. Daniel G.	Napolitano	72.7	NO	Rules against AZ GOP-Election Integrity
MATA, Hon. Julie A.	Ducey	75.8	NO	Judicial Commission-Family Ct.
McCARTHY, Hon. Steven W.	Hobbs		NO	Hobbs Appointee
MOSKOWITZ, Hon. Frank W.	Brewer	70.9	YES	
MYERS, Hon. Samuel J	Napolitano	69.9	NO	Napolitano appointee
NICHOLLS, Hon. Suzanne M.	Ducey	70.6	YES	
O'DONNELL SMITH, Hon. Colleen E.,	Hobbs		NO	Family & Juvenile Ct; Fink, Keshel, Finchem
PINEDA, Susanna C.	Napolitano	63.1	RETIRING	Napolitano appointee
POLK, Hon. Jay	Brewer	73.5	YES	
RASSAS, Hon. Michael Z.	Ducey	69.5	NO	Family & Juvenile Ct; Fink, Keshel, Finchem
ROGERS, Hon. Joshua D.	Ducey	71.3	NO	Family & Juvenile Ct; Fink, Keshel, Finchem
RUETER, Hon. Jeffrey	Ducey	71.4	YES	
RYAN-TOUHILL, Hon. Jennifer	Brewer	66.5	YES	
SCHWARTZ, Hon. Aryeh D.	Ducey	64.9	YES	
SINCLAIR, Hon. Joan M.	Brewer	70.3	YES	Juvenile, Civil, Fm. Ct., Criminal, Juvenile
VASQUEZ, Garye L.	Napolitano	80.1	RETIRING	Napolitano appointee
VIOLA, Hon. Danielle J.	Brewer	75.9	YES	Civil, Fm Ct., Criminal, Tax
WARNER, Hon. Randall H.	Napolitano	69.5	NO	Napolitano appointee
WELTY, Hon. Joseph C.	Napolitano	72.9	NO	Napolitano appointee
WESTERHAUSEN, Hon. Tracey	Ducey	68.7	RETIRING	Judicial Commission Mtg-Family Ct
WHITEHEAD, Hon. Chuck	Ducey	72.9	YES	
WILLIAMS, Hon. Paula A.	Hobbs		NO	Hobbs appointee-
WINGARD, Hon. William R.	Hobbs		NO	Hobbs appointee

WOO, Hon. Cassie B	Ducey	76.9	NO Family & Juvenile Ct; Fink, Keshel, Finchem
ZABOR, Hon. Melissa M.r	Hobbs		NO Family & Juvenile Ct; Fink, Keshel, Finchem

COURT OF APPEALS DIVISION I

CATLETT, Hon. Michael S.	Ducey		YES
HILL FOSTER, Hon. Anni L.	Ducey		NO Ducey appointee
HOWE, Hon. Randall M.	Brewer	73.7	YES
JACOBS, Hon. Andrew M.	Hobbs		NO Hobbs appointee
KILEY, Hon. Daniel J.	Brewer-Ducey	76.2	YES
MORSE, Hon. James B	Ducey	68.0	YES
PERKINS, Hon. Jennifer M.	Ducey	65.9	YES
THUMMA, Samuel A.	Brewer-Ducey	75.3	YES
WEINZWEIG, Hon. David	Ducey	62.3	YES

COURT OF APPEALS DIVISION II

BEARCLIFFE, Hon. Sean	Brewer-Ducey	69.0	NO
EPPICH, Hon. Karl C.	Brewer-Ducey	79.6	YES
GARD, Hon. Lacey Stover	Ducey		YES
KELLY, Hon. Michael F.	Ducey		YES
O'NEIL, Hon. Christopher J.	Hobbs		NO Hobbs appointee
SKLAR, Hon. Jeffrey L.	Ducey		YES

COCONINO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT (Part of the Merit System)

REED, Hon. Ted	Ducey		
STEINLAGE, Hon. Joshua C.	Hobbs		NO Hobbs appointee

PIMA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT (Part of the Merit System)

Hon. Sandra M. Bensley	Hobbs		NO Hobbs appointee
Hon. Jeffrey T. Bergin	Ducey		YES
Hon. Janet C. Bostwick	Ducey		YES
Hon. Randi L. Burnett	Hobbs		NO Hobbs appointee
Hon. J. Alan Goodwin	Ducey		YES
Hon. Cynthia Kuhn	Ducey		YES
Hon. Danelle Liwski	Brewer/Ducey		NO Family & Juvenile Ct; Fink,
Hon. Kathleen A. Quigley	Brewer		YES
Hon. Laurie B. San Angelo,	Brewer		YES
Hon. Catherine M. Woods	Ducey		YES

PINAL COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT (Part of the Merit System)

Hon. Jessica K. Dixon Hobbs appointee	Hobbs	NO
Hon. Steven J. Fuller	Ducey	YES
Hon. Danielle Harris Hobbs appointee	Hobbs	NO
Hon. Delia R. Neal	Ducey	YES
Hon. Karen F. Palmer Hobbs appointee	Hobbs	NO

Color Coding Meanings

No Highlighting: recommending a YES vote to retain the Judge.

Yellow Highlighting: The Judge retiring or not running for office for some reason. Will NOT retain.

Green Highlighting: Recommending a NO Vote to NOT retain the Judge.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Appellate court judges as well as superior court judges in Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties stand for retention.[2]

Retention election

In counties with populations greater than 250,000—Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties—superior court judges are chosen through a merit selection system. In these counties, judges are appointed by the governor with the help of a selection commission.

At the end of their term, the judges remain in office through uncontested retention elections every four years.[1][2]

Counties with populations less than 250,000 have the option to adopt the merit selection process through ballot initiative.[2]

State Supreme Courts

Each state within the United States, plus the District of Columbia, has at least one **supreme court**, or **court of last resort**. Oklahoma and Texas both have two courts of last resort, one for civil appeals and one for criminal appeals.

The supreme courts hear appeals of the decisions made in the lower trial or appellate courts. The number of justices on each court varies between five and nine. The length of a justice's term can be as short as six years or a lifetime appointment.

In eight states, the partisanship of the courts is explicitly labeled as a result of partisan elections. Democrats control three of these states, and Republicans control five. The remaining 42 states do not have explicitly partisan courts. Ballotpedia uses three methods to determine a state court's partisan balance:

1. How many justices were registered members of a political party;
2. The partisan affiliation of the governor who appointed each justice
3. If those methods didn't work, we survey media coverage of the court and its decisions to determine partisan leanings

On this page, you will find:

Overview of state supreme courts

There are **346** justices across all 52 state supreme courts, including Oklahoma and Texas' courts of criminal appeals. Each state has a different method for appointing justices and a different length of their terms. Each court also has a different partisan makeup.

The following areas of interest will show various differences of supreme courts among states:

1. The area "List of courts" lists each state's court of last resort and information about how many justices sit on the court, how a justice is selected, how long their term is, if there's a retirement age, and what the court's partisan control is.
2. The area "Partisan makeup" breaks down which courts have explicitly partisan ones, and visualizes what the make up of the courts were after the 2024 elections based on Ballotpedia's criteria in determining partisanship.

List of courts

Arizona Supreme Court

A. 7 Seats
B. Governor appoints through nominating commission
C. Length of Full Term: 6 years
D. Mandatory Retirement Age: 70
E. Partisan Control: Republican

Selection methods

States may have different methods of selection depending on whether it is for a full-term or to complete an unfinished term. On re-election, justices may be re-elected in a different type of election from the initial type they were elected under. The following tabs break down the differences in selection methods, with reference to when a justice is appointed.

- The "Selection methods (full-term)" shows how each state selects a justice for a complete term, such as when a justice is appointed to replace a retiring justice, or a regularly scheduled election is held.
- The "Selection methods (to fill vacancies)" shows how each state selects a justice to complete a term when a vacancy happens at an irregular interval.
- The "Re-election methods" shows how each state renews a justice's term once the initial term ends.
- Arizona is done through **Gubernatorial appointment with legislative confirmation**: The governor picks the justice, with legislative approval. AZ is one of 22 states using this method of selecting Judges.

Assisted appointments

- Number of Seats – 7
- Commission Controlled – Governor- controlled commission
- 6-year terms
- Mandatory Retirement Age: 70
- Democratic Governor (2026)

Judicial selection in Arizona

1. **Arizona Supreme Court**

Qualifications

To serve on this court, a justice:[6]

“
- Must be admitted to the practice of law in Arizona and be a resident of Arizona for the 10 years immediately before taking office;
- May not practice law while a member of the judiciary;
- May not hold any other political office or public employment;
- May not hold office in any political party;
- May not campaign, except for him/herself; and,
- Must retire at age 70.[7]

”

Chief justice

The court's chief justice is selected by peer vote. He or she serves in that capacity for five years.[8]

Vacancies *See also:* ***How vacancies are filled in state supreme courts***

If a midterm vacancy occurs on the court, the seat is filled as it normally would be if the vacancy occurred at the end of a justice's term. Potential justices submit applications to the Arizona Commission on Appellate Court Appointments, and once the commission has chosen a slate of nominees, the governor picks one from that list. After occupying the seat for two years, the newly appointed justice stands for retention in the next general election. The justice then serves a full six-year term if he or she is retained by voters.[9]

2. Arizona Court of Appeals

The 28 judges of the Arizona Court of Appeals are appointed by the governor from a list of names compiled by the Arizona Commission on Appellate Court Appointments. The commission is composed of 16 members who serve staggered four-year terms. The membership includes 10 non-attorneys, five attorneys, and the chief justice of the supreme court, who chairs the commission.[10]

The initial term of a new judge is at least two years, after which the judge stands for retention in an uncontested yes-no election. Subsequent terms last six years.[11] For more information on these retention elections, visit the Arizona judicial elections.

The court of appeals is divided into two divisions. Nineteen judges are in Division One and are based in Phoenix, Arizona. The other nine judges are in Division Two and are based in Tucson, Arizona.[12]

Qualifications

To serve on this court, a judge must be:

- a state resident;
- licensed to practice law in Arizona for at least five years;

- of good moral character; and,at least 30 years old and under the age of 70 (retirement by 70 is mandatory).[12]

Chief judge

The chief judge of each division is selected by a peer vote. He or she serves in that capacity for one year.[13]

Vacancies

If a midterm vacancy occurs on the court, the seat is filled as it normally would be if the vacancy occurred at the end of a judge's term. Potential judges submit applications to the Arizona Commission on Appellate Court Appointments, and once the commission has chosen a slate of nominees, the governor picks one from that list. After occupying the seat for two years, the newly appointed judge stands for retention in the next general election. The judge then serves a full six-year term if he or she is retained by voters.[14]

3. **Superior Courts** ***See also: Arizona Superior Courts***

Judges of the Arizona Superior Court are selected in one of two ways:

- Counties with a population exceeding 250,000, judges are appointed by the governor from a list of names compiled by the Arizona Commission on Appellate Court Appointments.
  - Coconino, Pima, Pinal, and Maricopa counties use this method. The state constitution provides for other counties to adopt merit selection through a ballot initiative, which Coconino County did in 2018.[15]
  - After an appointment, judges serve for two years and then must run in a yes-no retention election in the next general election. If retained, judges will go on to serve a four-year term.[16][17]

- If a vacancy occurs in the middle of a judge's term in a county with a population of less than 250,000, the governor appoints a judicial candidate to serve until the next general election. The winner of the nonpartisan election will serve the remainder of the unexpired term. If a vacancy occurs at the end of a judge's term, the vacancy will be filled through a nonpartisan election and the winner will serve a four-year term.[18]

Presiding judge

A presiding judge is chosen by the supreme court for each superior court that has two or more superior court judges.[16]

4. **Limited jurisdiction courts**

Arizona has two types of limited jurisdiction court(s):

justice courts and municipal courts.

A. Arizona Justice Courts

Judges of the Arizona Justice Courts are each elected to four-year terms. The elections for this court are partisan contested elections. To serve on this court, a judge must be a registered voter in Arizona, a resident of the justice court precinct, and able to read and write English. A law degree is not required.[19]

B. Arizona Municipal Courts

Judges of the Arizona Municipal Courts are appointed to terms of varying lengths by the governing body of their municipality, except in Yuma, Arizona. In Yuma, judges on these courts are elected.[20]