

PENNSYLVANIA

ARE YOU PREPARED TO ✓ VOTE FOR JUDGES?

LDF
DEFEND EDUCATE EMPOWER

PREPARED TO
✓ VOTE
NON-PARTISAN
VOTER EDUCATION

THERE IS AN IMPORTANT ELECTION IN PENNSYLVANIA THIS YEAR!

Soon, voters in Pennsylvania will elect new judges to the Commonwealth Court, the Superior Court, and the state's Supreme Court—as well as, in some areas, magisterial district courts and the Court of Common Pleas.

Those judges will then make decisions that will have the power to impact countless aspects of Pennsylvanians' lives.

HOW LONG DO JUDGES SERVE IN PENNSYLVANIA?

Judicial candidates run for **10-year terms** and can be re-elected an unlimited number of times.

YOUR VOTE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!

Turnout for judicial elections is often very low. In the past two judicial elections, **for example, only 20 percent of eligible voters cast their ballots.** That means your vote—and your perspective—will carry more weight in the ballot box than usual, and have a real influence over life in the Keystone State!



This is your chance to vote for people who you think will best interpret state laws about criminal justice, housing, employment, and so much more.

To find out more about judicial elections in your area, check out [Ballotpedia](#).

PENNSYLVANIA'S COURT STRUCTURE

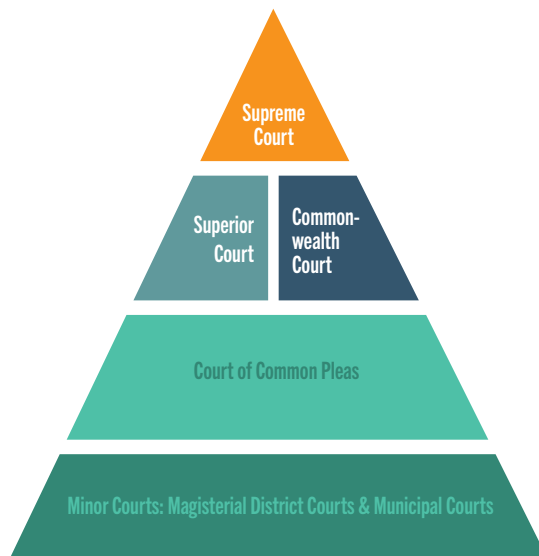
What do “minor” courts do? Judges in these courts may decide minor cases, such as traffic disputes, landlord-tenant disputes, and small claims. They also hold preliminary hearings for criminal cases, set bail for most felony cases, and decide whether serious criminal cases go to the next level of the judiciary.

What is the Court of Common Pleas? There are 60 different Courts of Common Pleas, with more than four hundred total judges. These judges hear jury trials, plus criminal and civil cases (and sometimes minor pleas). If you have ever been called for jury duty, you likely went to one of these courts.

What is the difference between the Superior Court and the Commonwealth Court?

Pennsylvania has two appellate courts: the Superior Court, which hears appeals from most criminal and civil cases and has fifteen judges, and the Commonwealth Court, which hears appeals in cases brought against the state and local government and has nine judges.

What is the state Supreme Court? The highest level of Pennsylvania's court system is the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, which hears appeals from all of the lower courts, is the ultimate authority on Pennsylvania law, and has seven justices.



ARE JUDICIAL CANDIDATES PARTISAN?

Pennsylvania is one of the few states that has partisan judicial elections, which means that the candidates are affiliated with a political party and can raise money through campaign committees. Judicial candidates cannot promise to rule in lock-step with their party, but that does not make it any less important to learn about candidates' political views. **You can do that by going to [Ballotpedia](#).**