

Illinois Supreme Court Judicial Races

With terms that last 10 years, having two competitive Illinois Supreme Court contests in a single election cycle – as is the case in the suburbs outside of Cook County this November – is rare and the results will be extremely significant. In the General Election on Nov. 8, voters in Illinois Judicial District 2 (McHenry, Lake, DeKalb, Kane, and Kendall counties) and District 3 (Bureau, LaSalle, Grundy, Iroquois, Kankakee, Will, and DuPage counties) will have the opportunity to each elect a State Supreme Court justice.

Yet researching Judicial candidates is difficult because they are bound by a [code of conduct](#) that forbids them from openly taking stances on issues that may come before them. One place to start your research is with your local or regional bar association, such as this link for the DuPage Bar Association Ratings for Judicial Candidates:

<https://www.dcba.org/news/615964/DCBA-Ratings-for-Judicial-Candidates-in-the-2022-General-Election.htm>

In the 2nd District, former prosecutor and Lake County Sheriff Mark Curran, a Republican, is facing Democrat Elizabeth Rochford, who currently serves as a circuit court judge in Lake County. In the 3rd District, which includes DuPage County, incumbent Republican Supreme Court Justice Michael Burke is facing a challenge from Appellate Court Justice Mary Kay O'Brien, who is a Democrat.

<https://news.wttw.com/2022/10/12/balance-power-could-shift-illinois-supreme-court-here-are-candidates-running-november>

Rochford and O'Brien are both making abortion a key issue in their campaign ads, attacking their opponents for accepting support from anti-abortion groups while touting their pro-abortion credentials as an important qualification for the next justices.

<https://abc7chicago.com/illinois-supreme-court-justices-election-2022-judges/12301178/>

The non-profit organization Courts Matter Illinois, is concerned that many fellow Illinoisans skip over the judicial portion of their ballots. This is too important to skip. As a result, Courts Matter Illinois has created a Letter to the Editor campaign focused on ensuring that voters do not bypass this key part of their electoral ballot. Here are the instructions:

1. Pick one of the following four letters you'd like to send to your local or regional newspaper editor.
2. Complete the following google form to help us find the best local paper to send your letter to. We will use this information to match you to a paper in your county, as well as to keep track of who has contributed and where all letters have gone. [Click here to sign up](#). If the link does not work, try copying and pasting the following URL into your browser: <https://forms.gle/2wpv8nJTDeTREX3b6>
3. Customize your Letter to the Editor and send it.
4. Questions? Contact Carole Levine: CaroleLevine@comcast.net or Judi Myers: judimyvers@ameritech.net
5. Thank you for your help!

Sample IL Supreme Court Letters to the Editors (LTEs)

#1 (focused on reproductive healthcare rights, and freedoms)

TO: The Editor

The General Election this November will carry the rights and freedoms of every Illinoisan on the ballot. Area voters – like myself – will find candidates running for two openings on the Illinois Supreme Court.

In the past, too many voters in our state have failed to fill out their ballots fully, particularly when it comes to choosing judges. The stakes are too high for that to happen this year. Illinoisans must make their voices heard at the polls, especially in the Illinois Supreme Court races. Our rights and freedoms depend on it.

After the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, state courts and constitutions now play a much bigger role in determining reproductive healthcare, including abortion rights and freedoms. While reproductive healthcare is still legal in the state of Illinois, that access could be at risk if extremist special-interest groups take over our Court and install their chosen justices.

["As a resident of X County,"] I can tell you that my community believes our basic rights and freedoms shouldn't be up for grabs. Here in **[X]**, we trust our judges to defend our rights, along with our state Constitution. We've already seen in neighboring states like Indiana and Missouri how quickly those rights can evaporate. Illinois is a beacon of hope and freedom for those seeking reproductive healthcare and access to abortion in the Midwest and beyond. Let's keep it that way.

This State Supreme Court election will determine if reproductive healthcare is safe and accessible – for you, me, and the entire Midwest.

We deserve a state judiciary that defends our rights and freedoms, and voting is how we make that happen. It has never been more important.

[Add writer's name and contact information]

Sample IL Supreme Court Letters to the Editors (LTEs)

#2 (focused on constitutional rights, and freedoms)

TO: The Editor

This fall is essential that all Illinoisans vote for our state supreme court positions. I am concerned because, in the past, many voters in our state left their ballots incomplete, especially when it comes to the judicial ballot. But with two vacancies on our supreme court, this vote is crucial to maintaining our rights.

Illinois is becoming increasingly divided, with more and more state politicians pandering to the most-extreme people in their parties. In times like these, we need independent courts in our state to help protect regular, hard-working citizens and safeguard our freedoms—especially from politicians who only care about getting reelected instead of representing all the people.

We must elect leaders who are advocates for fair and free elections and will protect the rights and freedoms of ordinary people.

This fall the second and third judicial districts will vote for our new Supreme Court justices. We have the power to choose fair and independent state court judges and justices. But if we don't complete our ballots, we give up this ability.

["As a resident of X county,"] I know that my community cares deeply about our basic rights and freedoms and expects our judges to protect them, along with our state Constitution.

By voting, Illinoisans have the power to make sure our judges are fair and independent. Fill out your ballots all the way this November, and fight for a fair court.

[Add writer's name and contact information]

Sample IL Supreme Court Letters to the Editors (LTEs)

#3 (focused on other issues + rights, freedoms)

TO: The Editor

Day in and day out, our state's Supreme Court impacts our lives. Come November, we get a say in making that court work for us. So that the Illinois Supreme Court can do its job and represent our communities, let's fill out our ballots all the way and make our voices heard.

This year's election is not just about politics – it's about the problems Illinois families face every day. The Illinois Supreme Court can have the final say on critical issues like education funding, access to health care, worker protections, neighborhood safety, and the quality of our air and water. And we have a say in the justices who will decide how those issues will impact our rights and freedoms.

These decisions make an impact. Think about [*Rosenbach v. Six Flags*](#), which determined that companies cannot collect data like fingerprints without people's knowledge – that's a decision that directly protects us and our families! The court has dozens of cases lined up right now that could determine everything from neighborhood safety to air and water quality. That's why we must elect judges who will protect ordinary people in the court.

["As a resident of [X county]"] I know firsthand that Illinoisans care. We care about protecting our freedoms. We care about our children's futures. We care about safety and fairness in our daily lives. We care about the decisions made by the Illinois Supreme Court. Now, let's prove it with our vote.

With two vacancies, the second and third judicial districts of Illinois have the power to decide our state's future. We can vote to decide who sits on the Illinois Supreme Court. But if we don't fill out our ballots completely, we give up this power.

For the sake of my family, my community, and all Illinoisans, I will be voting to fill these Illinois Supreme Court vacancies. I urge you to do the same.

[Add writer's name and contact information]

Sample IL Supreme Court Letters to the Editors (LTEs)

#4 (focused on “big money”)

TO: The Editor

Whether you're from **[place], [place]**, or anywhere in the state, there's one thing I know Illinoisans agree on: We want our courts to be fair and independent. Illinois' courts should serve the people, not billionaires or corporate special interests. And this November, Illinois will vote for two new state Supreme Court justices to ensure that the courts do just that.

In the past, billionaires have dumped millions of dollars into Illinois Supreme Court races to install justices that care more about partisan politics than protecting our rights and freedoms. There is [a new ban on out-of-state and secret contributions to judicial candidates](#), but big money is still a threat to the independence of our courts. Big spending will come from both sides of the aisle in the Illinois state supreme court races.

Like sports referees, judges and justices should be impartial. To deliver on the promise of equal justice for all, we must have a state Supreme Court that is fair and independent. That independence is at risk when big money special interests dominate the elections that select our state's highest court. This fall, Illinois voters have the power to make their voices heard at the ballot box.

Living in [X county], I know that my community believes our freedoms are not up for grabs. We expect our judges to stay true to the constitution, not to politicians looking to make wealthy donors happy. So, this November, we must vote to fight big money and secure the independence of our courts. We can elect fair and independent Illinois Supreme Court Judges in November. Let's make sure we do it.

[Add writer's name and contact information]