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Downers Grove Township Republican Organization

Will DuPage County Remain an Oasis of Safety? Why the Judicial Election Races are Critical.

Remember that sinking feeling when a teacher surprised you with a pop quiz? And you had no idea which answers to choose? Do you want to avoid that same sinking feeling when you reach the judges' races on the ballot? Don't skip these races or, worse, just guess. The judicial races are critical this November and it's easy to "ace" the Judge Quiz.

First, here is a quick overview of the judicial system in Illinois.

There are three levels of courts: Circuit, Appellate, and Supreme. Most cases enter the system through the circuit court, e.g., traffic, divorce, criminal, personal injury, contract cases. If the losing side doesn't agree with the decision in the circuit court, they have an automatic right to appeal to the appellate court. If a party does not like the appellate court decision, they can appeal to the Supreme Court, which only accepts 6% of the cases filed.

Who becomes a judge and how does that process work?

The circuit (trial) court has two types of judges: circuit judges who are elected by the people, and associate judges who are in turn appointed by the circuits after an extensive vetting process. Both circuit and associate judge candidates are examined by the local or state bar associations who rate the candidates based upon their qualifications and experience. The public should carefully consider these bar ratings. If we want judges with integrity, this process is vital.

Pay attention to the Illinois Bar Association ratings on judges. If we want judges with integrity, this rating system is vital

In DuPage County, there are 15 circuit (elected) judges and 30 associate (appointed) judges. Whenever an elected circuit judge resigns, the Illinois Supreme Court carefully selects a replacement who serves until election time. We need the right Supreme Court justices picking the right circuit judges. Once a circuit judge is elected, no one can run against that judge again; instead, that judge stands for retention every 6 years, and keeps her seat if 65% of the voting public say yes.

Appellate and Supreme Court Candidates run in multi-county districts. Once elected, they serve 10-year terms. Like the circuit judges, at the end of their term, they stand for retention and keep their seat if 65% of the voting public say yes.

Let's apply this basic knowledge to the current election race.

DuPage County is part of the Third District (DuPage, Will, Kankakee, LaSalle, Iroquois, Grundy and Bureau County) for electing Supreme and Appellate Judges. Justice Michael Burke has been a judge for over 30 years and was appointed in 2020 to fill a vacant Supreme Court. He is the only "Highly Recommended" candidate for

his race according to the Illinois State Bar Association and is standing for election this November as a Republican. If he wins, Republicans may capture one branch of government (the judiciary) in a very blue state for the first time since the 1950s. Balance, especially for Illinois, is desperately needed. This balance is also very important because the Illinois Supreme Court is responsible for ensuring fair election maps. Republican control of the Supreme Court would help bring back fair election maps, which would bring more balance to Springfield. So, a win for Justice Michael Burke is a win for the future of Illinois.

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Justice Michael Burke's election is also critical to ensure the continued appointment of quality Appellate and Circuit judges for DuPage County.

Two additional Republican judges on the ballot this November are also critical to ensuring the rule of law in DuPage County. Justice Liam Brennan, a judge for 14 years, is on the ballot as a Republican for the Third District Appellate Court. The Illinois State Bar Association found Brennan "Highly Recommended," unlike his opponent who was found "Not Recommended."

Judge Michael Reidy, an acclaimed judge for 5 years, is the Republican candidate for the circuit court this November. He has the Highest Bar Polls in his race and his opponent has no judicial experience.

Why is trial court experience crucial?

Justice Michael Burke, Justice Liam Brennan and Judge Michael Reidy are all former prosecutors who use that experience to balance the rights of individuals with the need for public safety. Imagine an eleven-year-old girl who is a victim of rape, brave enough to testify in court. An inexperienced judge, not familiar with court procedures, could cause a mistrial. That means this young victim would have to undergo the trauma of another trial. Inexperienced judges increase trauma, cost taxpayers money, and create backlogs as other cases await justice. Experience matters!

What about the abortion issue?

The most recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling returned the abortion question to state legislatures to decide. Moving forward, state legislatures, and not judges, will decide the abortion laws in the States. Illinois judges are required to follow the Illinois Reproductive Act as written, regardless of party or judicial philosophy. Abortion is a non-issue for the Illinois judiciary.

Now for some DuPage Judicial Seat Math...

Of the 15 DuPage circuit court judges, 3 are strong Democrats. Two more seats are currently up for election. If the Democrats flip those seats, they are only 3 seats away from controlling the circuit—a scary proposition given several upcoming retirements. If we lose the current races, we are that much closer to a judicial disaster for DuPage County.

What can we do to help?

This November, go into the election booth prepared for your judicial pop quiz. Remember to vote for the only judges with the judicial experience to keep us safe- Burke, Brennan, and Reidy. In the meantime, please share this article with your friends, join the judges' campaigns by walking door to door, or simply donate. Let's keep DuPage County safe for the next generation!