Chicago Council
OF LAWYERS
Chicago's public interest bar association

The Chicago Council of Lawyers Judicial Evaluations for Judicial Candidates Seeking to Fill Judicial Vacancies in the March 17, 2026, Primary Election

The Chicago Council of Lawyers evaluates judges seeking retention, judicial candidates seeking to fill vacancies through the public election process, and judicial candidates seeking to fill Associate Judge vacancies.

JUDICIAL ELECTIONS TO FILL CIRCUIT JUDGE VACANCIES

Judicial candidates seeking election must run for specific vacancies. Candidates seeking election to the Circuit Court – which is the County's trial-level court for both civil and criminal matters – may run in either a countywide or a subcircuit race. Legislation creating the subcircuits provides that approximately one-third of the judges are elected by voters of the entire County, and each of the remaining judges elected by voters runs in one of 20 geographical districts into which the County has been arbitrarily divided. Once elected, there is no distinction between a "countywide" judge and a "subcircuit" judge. Either kind can be assigned to any judicial post in the County.

RETENTION ELECTIONS

Trial judges in Illinois are elected to six year terms. Appellate and Supreme Court Justices are elected to ten year terms. At the end of each term, their name goes on the November ballot with the following question: "Shall this judge be retained for another term in office." Judges receiving 60% or more affirmative votes among those voting on the question receive another term on the bench.

The retention elections provide the voter with an opportunity to remove those judges whose judicial performance has been, in some respect, unsatisfactory. Retention elections provide the only practical opportunity for the voters as a whole to focus on the performance of judges, with a realistic opportunity to defeat those candidates who deserve to be defeated.

ELECTION BY CIRCUIT JUDGES TO FILL ASSOCIATE JUDGE VACANCIES

About one-third of judges in Cook County are elected by the sitting Circuit Judges to the position of Associate Judge. The Council evaluates the candidates seeking to fill Associate Judge vacancies

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JUDICIAL STANDARDS AND METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The criteria for the Council's evaluations are whether judges seeking retention or judicial candidates seeking to fill vacancies have demonstrated the ability to serve on the relevant court in the following categories:

- fairness, including sensitivity to diversity and bias
- legal knowledge and skills (competence)
- integrity
- experience
- diligence
- impartiality
- judicial temperament
- respect for the rule of law
- independence from political and institutional influences
- professional conduct
- character
- community service

If a candidate has demonstrated the ability to perform the work required of a judge in all of these areas, the Council assigns a rating of "qualified." If a candidate has demonstrated excellence in all of these areas, the Council assigns a rating of "well qualified." If a candidate has not demonstrated that he or she meets all of the criteria evaluated by the Council, the Council assigns a rating of "not qualified." As part of the evaluation process, we require candidates to provide us with detailed information about their backgrounds, including any complaints filed against them with the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission ("ARDC") or the Judicial Inquiry Board ("JIB").

In conducting these evaluations, the Council has participated in a joint investigation and interview process with the Alliance of Bar Associations for Judicial Screening ("Alliance").

The Council's evaluation process includes:

(1) a review of a written informational questionnaire provided to the Alliance by the

candidate, including details of the candidate's career and professional development and information on any complaints filed against the candidate with the JIB or the ARDC;

(2) a review of the candidate's written responses to the supplemental essay questionnaire;

(3) interviews of judges, attorneys, and others with personal knowledge about the candidate, including those who have and those who have not been referred to the Alliance by the candidate, and not restricted to Council members;

(4) a review of the candidate's professional written work, where available;

(5) an interview of the candidate done jointly with the Alliance;

(6) review of any information concerning the candidate provided by the ARDC or the JIB;

(7) a review of any other information available from public records, such as the Board of Election Commissioners and prosecutorial agencies; and

(8) an evaluation of all the above materials by the Council's Judicial Evaluation Committee;

(9) submission of the proposed evaluation and write-up to the candidate prior to its public release, to provide an opportunity for comment, correction, or reconsideration.

(10) the candidate is given a reasonable period of time to submit a written appeal of the Council's rating and written findings. The appeal is a written response to concerns discussed in the proposed write-up. The appeal is reviewed by both members of the original committee and by individuals who work with the Committee exclusively for appeals. Appellate decision-making is done by consensus.

The Council places special importance on interviews with attorneys who practice before the judge, particularly those who were not referred to the Council by the candidate. Most evaluations are based on information gathered and interviews held during the few months just prior to the general election.

In evaluating candidates, the Council expresses written reasons for its conclusions. Without knowing the reason for a recommendation concerning a candidate, the public cannot use the bar's evaluations intelligently to draw its own conclusions.

The Council rates candidates as "*well qualified*," "*qualified*," or "*not qualified*." If a candidate refuses to submit his or her credentials to the Council, that candidate is rated "*not recommended*" unless the Council is aware of credible information that would justify a "not qualified" rating.

Because we believe a willingness to participate in bar association and other public evaluations is a key indicator of fitness for public office, no candidate who refuses to be screened can be found "qualified."

We apply higher standards to candidates for the Supreme Court and the Appellate Court. Because these Courts establish legal precedents that bind the lower courts, their work has a broad impact on the justice system. Moreover, qualities of scholarship and writing ability are more important to the work of the Supreme and Appellate Court justices than they are to satisfactory performance as a trial judge.

The Council does *not* evaluate candidates based on their substantive views of political or social issues. Nor do we take into account the particular race in which a candidate is running or the candidates against whom a candidate is running. We apply a uniform standard for all countywide and subcircuit elections because judges elected through either method can be assigned to any judicial position in the Circuit Court.

It should be noted that a lawyer might be performing well or even very well without being qualified to be a judge. A good lawyer may be unqualified to be a judge, for instance, because of a narrow range of prior experience, limited trial experience, or limited work doing legal research and writing. A lawyer may have the temperament and intelligence to be a judge without yet having worked in a position that would allow the candidate to demonstrate that capacity. Accordingly, it should be recognized and expected that we will rate some good lawyers "not qualified."

Samuel Bae—Qualified

Samuel S. Bae was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1999 and to the Texas bar in 2005. He has been in private practice. Mr. Bae is reported to have good legal ability and does a good job representing his clients. The Chicago Council of Lawyers previously found him not qualified but believes he has since gained sufficient additional experience.

On balance, the Council finds him Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Daniel Balanoff—Not Qualified

Daniel Balanoff was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2007. He has been in private practice since admission. Mr. Balanoff also served one year as Chief Legal Officer/Director of Special Projects in the Second District of the Cook County Board of Review (Property Tax Appeal Board).

Mr. Balanoff has some litigation experience, but the Council has concerns about his litigation skills in more complex cases. While he is described as professional and respectful, some concerns have been raised about his integrity.

The Council finds David Balanoff Not Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Tiffany Books—Not Recommended

The candidate did not participate in the evaluation process; therefore, the Council finds Tiffany Brooks Not Recommended for the Circuit Court.

Bianca B. Brown—Qualified

Bianca B. Brown was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2010. Her diverse career includes service at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, City of Chicago, Illinois Attorney General's Office CTA, and as an ARDC hearing board member. She is praised for her legal knowledge, integrity, and excellent temperament, though some concerns about attention to detail were noted. The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Michael Carbonargi—Well Qualified*

Michael Mario Carbonargi was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2001. He is currently Counsel to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee and brings extensive legal experience from the SEC, Cook County Board of Review, and ARDC hearing board.

Mr. Carbonargi received unanimous praise for his intelligence, ethics, and fairness.

The Council finds him Well Qualified for the Circuit Court.

*Since this rating was finalized, some additional information has come to light that has been summarized on the Injustice Watch website, at https://2026primary.injusticewatch.org/candidate/michael-cabonargi-34872 and was not covered in our prior investigation. Because we have not had an opportunity to investigate further and there is not sufficient time to do so or to provide due process to the candidate, our rating remains the same.

John P. Carroll, Jr. -- Qualified

John P. Carroll, Jr. was admitted to practice in Illinois in 1999. He has been the Executive Assistant State's Attorney for the Legislative Unit since 2012. He has worked in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office since 2000, and has experience in the Sex Crimes and Intern

Crimes Against Children Task Force, the Felony Review Unit, the Sex Crimes Division, the Narcotics Division, and the Traffic Division.

Mr. Carroll is considered to have good legal ability and is praised for his knowledge of the law. He is reported to have good litigation skills and respondents especially praised his listening skills and professional demeanor. The Council finds him Qualified for the Circuit Court.

John Carrozza—Qualified

John Carrozza was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2005. He has been in private practice since 2009.

Everyone interviewed stated that Mr. Carrozza has impeccable character and integrity. He is described as "professional, prepared and polite". He is calm and even-tempered. He has a wide perspective of the law and a wide range of clients.

The Council finds Mr. Carrozza qualified for the Circuit Court.

David Richard Condron — Qualified

David Richard Condron was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2001. He currently supervises federal civil rights litigation for the Chicago Department of Law and previously spent over 16 years as a Cook County Assistant State's Attorney. He is praised for his intelligence, preparation, and even temperament. The Council finds him Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Julian Sanchez Crozier—Qualified

Julian Sanchez Crozier was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2013. Evaluators consistently describe him as exceptionally intelligent, deeply knowledgeable, and possessing strong legal judgment and integrity. He is praised for his even temperament, diligence, and commitment to community outreach.

The Council finds Julian Sanchez Crozier Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Amari Dawson—Not Recommended

The candidate did not participate in the evaluation process; therefore, the Council finds Amari Dawson Not Recommended for the Circuit Court.

Elizabeth Christine Dibler—Qualified

Elizabeth Dibler was admitted to practice in 2003. She serves as an Assistant Cook County

State's Attorney in the Criminal Prosecutions Bureau. She has been a First Chair prosecutor since 2018. Ms. Dibler has substantial litigation experience in complex matters. Elizabeth Dibler is considered to have good legal ability and knowledge of criminal law. She is praised for her integrity in dealings with judges and opposing counsel. She is praised for her litigation skills and for her temperament.

The Council finds Ms. Dibler Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Lester Finkle—Qualified

Admitted to the Illinois bar in 1982, Lester W. Finkle was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 1982. He served in the Cook County public defender's office until 2021 when he entered private practice. Mr. Finkle was appointed to the Circuit Court in 2025.
He has long taught appellate advocacy and legal writing as an adjunct professor at University of Illinois Chicago School of Law and Loyola University Chicago School of Law. He currently serves as a judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

The Council finds Hon. Finkle qualified for the Circuit Court.

Garson Fischer—Qualified

Garson Fischer was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2005. He has worked at the Illinois Attorney General's Office since 2006 and currently serves as Deputy Chief of Criminal Appeals.
Mr. Fischer has extensive trial and appellate experience, as well as significant managerial experience. He is described as professional, even-keeled, and highly qualified to serve as a judge.

The Council finds Mr. Fischer Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Ava Monique George-Stewart -- Qualified

Ava Monique George-Stewart was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 2003. Currently, she serves as Chief of the Lake County State's Attorney Office (2021-present) and teaches Advocacy and Appellate Advocacy at the UIC Law School (2018-present). From 2005 to 2021, she practiced felony and misdemeanor criminal defense at her own law firm, the Law Office of

Ava George Stewart, P.C. She also worked for the City of Chicago in traffic prosecutions (2003-2005). She is a member of numerous bar associations, including the Illinois State Bar Association, the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, the Black Women's Law Association, and the Chicago Bar Association.

Ms. George-Stewart is considered to be a respected practitioner with good legal ability. She has substantial litigation experience with command of the legal issues involving traffic cases. She is described as an honest lawyer who treats people with respect. The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Robert Groebner—Qualified

Robert Groebner receives praise for legal ability, integrity, temperament, and punctuality. He appears to have a strong reputation among the defense bar. Mr. Groebner has significant litigation experience and the experience to run a courtroom.

The Council finds Mr. Groebner Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Meredith Hammer—Not Qualified

Meridth Hammer was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2020 and the Indiana Bar in 2001. Since 2024, she has been First Deputy General Counsel for the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County. Previously, she has been an administrative law judge for the Illinois Department of Employment Security and in private practice.

Many attorneys were positive about her temperament and consider her capable and forthright. Although there are some concerns about the level of complexity of matters she has handled in her career, we believe the candidate has shown sufficient experience to find her qualified as a candidate. However, significant concerns about Ms. Hammer's residency have been raised and the Council is not comfortable recommending her for the Circuit Court of Cook County at this time.

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The Council finds Meridith Hammer Not Qualified for the Circuit Court

John Harkins—Not Recommended

The candidate did not participate in the evaluation process; therefore, the Council finds John Harkins Not Recommended for the Circuit Court.

Natalie Howse – Not Recommended

The candidate did not participate in the evaluation process; therefore, the Council finds Natalie Howse Not Recommended for the Circuit Court.

Belle Katubig – Qualified

Belle Katubig was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1999. She has over 25 years of litigation experience as a Cook County Assistant State's Attorney and former law firm partner trying complex civil cases.

The Council finds Belle Katubig Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Stephanie Kelly—Qualified

Stephanie Kelly was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2001. She has been in both private practice and in-house in the field of Labor and Employment law.

Ms. Kelly's career has included extensive experience in handling administrative hearings similar to litigation in other courts and experience supervising litigation in various courts. She is described as diligent and professional. While her courtroom experience is from earlier in her career, we believe she is qualified to transition to the bench.

The Council finds Stephanie Kelly Qualified for the Circuit Court.

William Kelley—Qualified

William Kelley was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1980. He served in a clerkship with the Louisiana Supreme Court in the Criminal Appeals Division for one year. Since 1982, he has been in private practice.

Mr. Kelley is considered to have a fine temperament and very good legal knowledge. He has extensive experience supervising cases.

The Council finds Mr. Kelley qualified for the Circuit Court

Jarrett Knox—Qualified

Jarrett Knox was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 2008. He is an Assistant State's Attorney in the Child Protection Division. Previously, he was an Assistant Public Guardian and staff attorney in legal aid.

Mr. Knox is described as smart, knowledgeable, and thorough. He is also praised for his honesty, fairness, and impartiality. The Council finds him Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Sara McGann—Qualified

Sara McGann was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2009. She serves as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, focusing on appellate law.

Ms. McGann is described as thoughtful and intelligent. She is consistently composed and professional. She is considered a mentor because of her knowledge, communication skills and approachability.

The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Rachel Marrello—Qualified
Rachel Marrello was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2000. She is considered to have good legal ability and a good judicial temperament. The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Steven Quaintance McKenzie—Qualified
Steven Quaintance McKenzie was admitted to practice in 1997. He has worked as an Assistant Corporation Counsel in the Chicago Department of Law for most of his career and currently serves in a supervisory position in the Housing Division. Mr. McKenzie is considered to have good legal ability and temperament. He has litigation experience and is well respected for his work.

The Council finds him Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Natalia Moore—Not Recommended
The candidate did not participate in the evaluation process; therefore, the Council finds Natalia Moore Not Recommended for the Circuit Court.

Katherine Morrison—Qualified
Katherine Carole Morrison was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2012. Since 2018, she has been a partner in private practice, handling medical malpractice defense cases and defense of section 1983 civil rights cases. She has been in private practice since admission to the bar.

Ms. Morrison is considered to have good legal ability. She is praised for her diligence

and work ethic. She is reported to have good temperament.

The Council finds Ms. Morrison Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Daniel Naranjo—Qualified

Daniel Naranjo was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2000. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he worked as an Assistant Public Defender III in the Cook County Public Defender's Office for 25 years, and prior to that he worked in private practice for three years.

Mr. Naranjo is praised for his legal knowledge and ability, and described as an excellent trial attorney. He is considered sensitive to bias, with good character, and temperament.

The Council finds him Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Ginger Odom – Qualified

Ginger Odom was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 2003. Since 2004, she has worked for the Office of the State Appellate Defender, where she has served as Director of the Expungement Unit (2020-present), and Assistant Appellate Defender (2004-2020). She is a volunteer attorney for Dorothy Brown's Annual Expungement Summit (2014-present) and a volunteer for the Chicago Community Bond Fund (2019-present). She is a member of the Appellate Lawyers Association and the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice.

Ms. Odom is considered to have very good legal knowledge and ability. She is reported to be an excellent legal researcher and writer and she is seen as a mentor for other appellate lawyers. She receives high marks for integrity, temperament, and diligence.

The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Kathleen Cunniff Ori—Qualified

Kathleen Ori was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2007. Since 2017, she has served as an Assistant State's Attorney in Cook County. Previously, she was in private practice.

The Council finds Ms. Ori Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Brittany Pedersen—Qualified

Brittany Pedersen was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2009. She began her career in the Kane County Public Defender's office. In 2012, she began working as a solo practitioner in private practice and has focused her practice on criminal defense, family law, civil litigation, real estate and contract disputes.

Ms. Pedersen is described as a passionate and zealous advocate. She was called a skilled attorney and is considered an excellent litigator. She has been described as knowledgeable with a professional demeanor.

The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Juan Ponce de Leon—Qualified

Juan Ponce de Leon was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2009. Since 2010, he has been a Public Defender in Cook County.

The Council finds Juan Ponce de Leon Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Kim Przekota—Qualified

Kimberly Przekota was admitted to practice in 2008 and is a career Assistant Cook County State's Attorney. She is a First Chair prosecutor in the Criminal Division.
Ms. Przekota is praised for her legal ability and knowledge. She is reported to have a good temperament and trial skills. She has substantial litigation experience in more complex matters.

The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Martin Douglas Reggi – Qualified

Martin Reggi was admitted to practice in 1980. He served for five years as an Assistant States Attorney in Cook County. Since 2001 he has had a solo practice in the western and southern suburbs of Cook County, and in surrounding counties, primarily practicing in the Municipal courts. His practice focuses on Felony, Civil Litigation, Misdemeanors, Real Estate Closings, Secretary of State hearings and evictions. Although the extent of recent practice appears to have been somewhat limited he is said to have good knowledge of the law. He receives good marks for his demeanor and punctuality from individuals contacted during his investigation.

The Council finds Mr. Reggi Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Ashonta C. Rice – Qualified

Ashonta C. Rice was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 2005. She is the Sole Practitioner at Akiwowo Law Group, P.C., where she focuses on family law and abuse/neglect law. From 2004 to 2007, she served as an Assistant Public Guardian in the Office of the Cook County Public Guardian, where she represented minors in abuse/neglect court proceedings. Ashonta C. Rice enjoys a reputation of being a smart and knowledgeable practitioner. She is praised for her temperament which is often described as respectful and professional. She reports a significant number of trials. In a previous evaluation the Council said: "The Council is concerned, however, because of the combination of depth and breadth of her experience, particularly in light of the relatively few years she has been a lawyer." However, Ms. Rice has now been practicing for over 13 years. She has acquired more litigation experience in more complex matters. Lawyers and judges report that she is a solid practitioner with good skills.

The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court

Hon. Judith Rice—Qualified

Judith Rice was admitted to practice law in 1988. She was elected to the bench in 2104 and served in both First Municipal and Domestic Relations. Since 2021, she has served as Presiding Judge of the Domestic Violence Division.

Judith Rice is considered to be very smart and has extensive experience as a government official and in the banking sector. She is reported to have a very good temperament and a high degree of professionalism. She is praised as an excellent administrator and dedicated public servant.

The Council finds her Qualified for the Appellate Court.

Linda Sackey—Qualified

Linda Sackey was admitted to practice in 2006. Ms. Sackey has served as a judicial law clerk for Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Mary Jane Theis, since 2019. She served from 2013 to 2018 as an Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Appeals Division of the Illinois Attorney General's Office, from 2008-2013 as an associate with a law firm, and from 2006-2008 as a staff law clerk for the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Linda Sackey has exceptional legal ability and knowledge. She is praised for her writing ability and for her integrity, and is reported to have a good temperament. She has substantial appellate litigation experience.

The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Jessica Scheller—Qualified

Jessica Scheller was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2004. She has extensive civil litigation experience and currently serves as Deputy Chief of the Civil Actions Bureau at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office.

Evaluators praise her legal knowledge, thoroughness, and professionalism. While some past colleagues raised concerns about her treatment of junior women, those who currently work with her report she is an excellent mentor who proactively addresses workplace bias.

The Council finds Jessica Scheller Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Ashley Green Shambley—Qualified

Ashley Nicole Shambley was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2010. She serves as a Cook County Public Defender and was previously in private practice.

Ms. Shambley has a good reputation with regard to her legal ability and knowledge.

The Council finds her Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Monica Gail Somerville—Qualified

Monica Gail Somerville was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1990. Ms. Somerville is presently a staff attorney with Cabrini Green Legal Aid. She has had a varied career, including service in a variety of capacities with the City of Chicago, as an Administrative Law Judge with the Illinois Department of Employment Security, a senior attorney with the Cook County Forest Preserve, litigation counsel with the ARDC, and an attorney with the USPS Law Department.

Ms. Somerville is considered to have good legal ability. She is praised for her supervisor skills and for her ability to manage complex government programs. She has litigation experience. She is reported to have a good temperament.

The Council finds Ms. Somerville Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Jon K. Stromsta—Qualified

Jon K. Stromsta was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1985. He is currently an Administrative Law Judge with the Illinois Department of Employment Security and is a panel arbitrator with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority. Previously, he was with the Office of the State Appellate Defender and an attorney for the Central States, Southeast and Southwest Areas Health and Welfare and Pension Funds.

Mr. Stromsta is praised for his demeanor and integrity. Mr. Stromsta is considered to have good legal ability and is widely respected for his knowledge of the law in a variety of areas.

The Council finds Jon Stromsta Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Andre Thapedi—Not Recommended

The candidate did not participate in the evaluation process; therefore, the Council finds Andre Thapedi Not Recommended for the Circuit Court.

D'Anthony "Tony" Thedford —Qualified

D'Anthony "Tony" Thedford was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1997. He served as a Cook County Assistant Public Defender for eight years before practicing criminal defense and civil rights law for over a decade. In December 2024, he was appointed as a Circuit Court Judge by the Illinois Supreme Court.

The Council finds D'Anthony "Tony" Thedford Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Luz Maria Toledo—Qualified

Luz Maria Toledo was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2006. She has worked with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office since 2007. She is currently assigned to the Civil Actions Bureau, Real estate litigation practice, where she handles real estate tax matters. Prior to that, she spent over 10 years in the criminal division, where she prosecuted traffic, misdemeanor, and felony cases.

Ms. Toledo received high marks from all who were interviewed. She has a vast amount of trial experience in both criminal and civil matters and is considered to have good legal ability and knowledge. She is reported to have "outstanding character," to treat everyone fairly and impartially, and to have a good disposition.

The Council finds Ms. Toledo Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Jesica Velez—Not Qualified

Ms. Velez is considered calm, pleasant and bright. However, she lacks trial experience and it is difficult to assess her legal ability at this time. It is possible the candidate has the ability to become a good judge but on balance, she has not demonstrated that ability sufficiently to be recommended at this time.

The Council finds Ms. Velez Not Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Radiance Ward—Well Qualified

Radiance Ward was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2008. She is an assistant public defender and adjunct professor of law. Previously, she has worked in the Office of the Chief Judge and in legal aid.

Ms. Ward has an excellent reputation for diligence, impeccable integrity and grasp of the rules of evidence. She is considered attentive to issues of bias and a strong but fair advocate. She is considered calm and professional and capable.

The Council finds Radiance Ward Well Qualified for the Circuit Court.

Michael Zink—Qualified

Michael Zink was admitted to practice in 2004. Since then, he has been in private practice. Michael Zink is considered to have good legal ability and knowledge. He is praised for his professionalism and for his work with the community. He is reported to have good litigation skills and has a calm demeanor. Mr. Zink is a well-respected practitioner.
The Council finds Michael Zink Qualified for the Circuit Court.