

KEY RACES

LEGISLATIVE

JUDICIAL

CLARK COUNTY

WASHOE

Judicial

Welcome to the 2026 Indy Judicial Race project for the general election. This is our annual effort to help voters make good choices on races where most folks – even most political junkies – don't know much about candidates except their big signs and hollow slogans.

Here's how it works: A group of enterprising Boyd Law School students research the candidates and present their findings. I then convene a panel of superb lawyers to give their takes on who is running. No panel is perfect, obviously, but these attorneys take the task seriously and want to provide the best analysis they can. This year's panel is: [District Attorney Steve Wolfson](#), [Public Defender Nancy Lemcke](#), [Dayvid Figler](#), [David Westbrook](#), [Caleb Green](#), [Bailey Bortolin](#), [Ed Kainen](#) and [Africa Sanchez](#).

Their discussions were robust and spirited, and I have distilled them to make it easy for you. I can't thank them and the students enough for their commitment to this project. **You can view a condensed version of the recommendations [here](#).**

One note for this year's panel: DA Wolfson was invaluable during the primary version of this project but at the last moment could not participate in the general election version. It was too late to replace him with another prosecutor, which is unfortunate. Nevertheless, I think these panelists, including two experts in Family Court, did their best to evaluate the judges and candidates on their merits, their biases notwithstanding. I will tell you that most of the assessments were unanimous or nearly so.

As I do every year, I also must thank CJ Keeney, our amazing chief technical officer who takes on the task of assembling all of this information and in a short time frame puts it on the site so you can benefit from it.

Below you will see the fruits of the students' research and the panel's deliberations. I hope you find it useful, and please feel free to give me feedback at ralston@thenvindy.com.

Editor's Note: This project only features judicial races with more than one candidate. For a full list of judicial races, including ones where candidates are running unopposed, [click here](#).

CLARK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 5 >

INDY ANALYSIS

The panel suggested that Hibbets, recruited by personal injury lawyers, has done a lot to educate herself on being a judge. Barisich has not done anything egregious, in the panel's view, to merit being ousted. They eventually decided it is a toss-up....

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Veronica Barisich INCUMBENT

Barisich was a longtime civil litigation and family law attorney before being

elected as a district judge in November 2021.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Tracy Hibbetts

Hibbetts is currently a chief deputy district attorney in Clark County and is assigned to the Special Victims Unit/Vehicular Crimes Unit.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 8 >

INDY ANALYSIS

The panel saw this as a pretty clear choice – Peterson over Beaumont, who did not have the respect of the panel. The lawyers did have a problem with Judge Peterson's conduct in [this case](#), but did not find it disqualifying.

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Jessica K. Peterson INCUMBENT

A private-practice attorney for two decades, Peterson, who was also a lawyer in Michigan, was elected as a district judge in November 2021.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

Austin Beaumont

Currently a chief deputy in the district attorney's major fraud unit, Beaumont has more than a decade of experience in criminal, civil and appellate law.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 12 >

INDY ANALYSIS

Nice words about Gilliam from the panel – thoughtful and experienced, they said. Judge Leavitt was seen as having been around for a long time but still getting reversed too often and often not disclosing rationale. Clear unanimity for Gilliam....

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Michelle Leavitt INCUMBENT

Leavitt was first appointed as a District Court judge in 2002 by Gov. Kenny Guinn. She previously was in private practice and served as a City of Las Vegas

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

Dan Gilliam

Gilliam has worked in the Clark County Public Defender's Office since 2005, representing individuals charged with crimes ranging from minor misdemeanors to major felonies.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 17 >

INDY ANALYSIS

Schwartz was seen as an excellent judge and Villani is barely running a campaign. Clear choice.

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Jennifer Schwartz INCUMBENT

Schwartz was a private practice attorney before joining the Clark County Public Defender's office in 2004. She was elected to the District Court in a 2022 special election.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

Jake Villani

Villani has been a criminal prosecutor with the Clark County District's office for more than 10 years, including three years on the Special Victims Unit.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 21 >

INDY ANALYSIS

Judge Newberry was roundly derided by the panel, saying she does not treat criminal defendants well and blows up hard-wrought deals with prosecutors. But it was also said that she does a good job on the civil side – very fair. Hubert was seen as very smart and would be patient and thoughtful. Hubert...

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Tara Clark Newberry

INCUMBENT

Clark Newberry was elected to the seat in 2021. She was previously a trial attorney and mediator for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and the Clark County

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

Alex Hubert

An attorney with the Clark County Public Defender's Office since 2007, Hubert has assisted on the homicide and sexual assault defense teams.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 23 >

INDY ANALYSIS

Lily Spells was seen as having done a good job on the bench, while Balhaus, a former counsel for the police department, was unsurprisingly not viewed very favorably by these lawyers. Their choice was Lily-Spells.

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Jasmin Lilly-Spells INCUMBENT

Before being elected to the seat in 2021, Lilly-Spells spent more than 10 years with the Clark County Public Defender's Office, rising to chief deputy public defender

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

Martina Bauhaus

Bauhaus has 20 years of legal experience in civil and criminal law and is currently assistant general counsel for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 28 >

INDY ANALYSIS

DeMonte was seen as having an excellent work ethic and as being very smart, but she was marked down for being too activist on the bench after a very well respected career in the district attorney's office. Tarmu was cited as smart and an excellent attorney. Lean Tarmu....

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Noreen C. DeMonte

DeMonte is the presiding judge in Las Vegas Justice Court, Dept. 10, having been elected in 2022. She spent several decades as a chief deputy district

attorney and defense attorney.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Danielle A. Tarmu

Tarmu has been in private law practice for nearly 20 years, focusing on complex litigation cases involving catastrophic injury, wrongful death and insurance bad faith cases.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 29 >

INDY ANALYSIS

Quagge is seen as very smart and thoughtful. He was roundly praised by all of the panel. (Note: He is panelist Bailey Bortolin's husband and she abstained during this discussion.) Judge Reynolds was seen as doing well in civil cases by one law firm. And he was praised by another panelist, too, for being a...

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Jacob Reynolds INCUMBENT

Reynolds was elected to the seat in a 2024 special election. He had previously worked as a private practice attorney, focusing on complex commercial litigation.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Alex Quagge

Quagge is a criminal prosecutor in the Clark County District Attorney's Office. He also served as a military attorney in the U.S. Army.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 30 >

INDY ANALYSIS

Wiese has received mixed reviews, and he does get overturned. He also was not popular as chief judge. He was given credit for being out there and campaigning to retain his seat. Having not much experience or knowledge of the challenger, the panel took a pass on this one....

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Jerry A. Wiese II INCUMBENT

Wiese became a district judge in 2011 after working as a trial attorney in private practice, a court appointed arbitrator and a pro-tem justice of the peace in North Las Vegas.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Josh Santeramo

Santeramo has practiced law for 15 years, including 10 years in private practice and five years with the Nevada Attorneys for Injured Workers, a state agency.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department 31 [➤](#)

INDY ANALYSIS

Kishner received pretty good reviews, although panelists noted that she sometimes berates people in court. A good judge who needs to improve her temperament, but got the panel's endorsement.

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Joanna S. Kishner INCUMBENT

Kishner was first elected to the seat in 2010. Before joining the bench, she was in private law practice for two decades, including time as senior counsel at Warner Bros.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Alexandra Beth McLeod

McLeod has been in private law practice with various firms since 2003, handling civil litigation, criminal defense and personal injury cases.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)

CLARK COUNTY FAMILY COURT

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Family Division,
Dept. D [>](#)

INDY ANALYSIS

Smith, a child welfare district attorney, was seen as smart, eager to learn, very capable and knowledgeable. The panel saw Smith as clearly the choice in this race, even though she is not as experienced as Marr.

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Patricia A. Marr

Marr has been a family law attorney with trial experience for more than two decades. She also has a background in psychology.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Gwynneth Smith

Smith is the chief deputy district attorney in the juvenile division, having worked in the office for 12 years. She also holds a Ph.D in Clinical Psychology.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)

District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Family Division, >
Dept. E

INDY ANALYSIS

The panel was effusive about the incumbent, calling him the gold standard among family court judges. This was a clear choice.

[Click here for a deep dive](#) >



Charles "Chuck" Hoskin INCUMBENT

Hoskin has been a family court judge for 17 years. He initiated the review and overhaul of the guardianship system and served as presiding judge of the family division.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Timothy Treffinger

Treffinger does not have a campaign website. He is listed on LinkedIn as having his own private practice. He was the Republican candidate for Clark County District Attorney in 2022.

[District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Family Division, Dept. N](#) >

INDY ANALYSIS

This was seen as a clear choice, too, for Maxey. Several panel members cited [this story](#) as evidence that Gaudet was a lesser candidate.

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Kerri Jean Maxey INCUMBENT

Maxey was elected to the seat in 2024. She spent 16 years as a Clark County public defender in the juvenile division and later served as a guardianship attorney.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Michel Gaudet

Gaudet, a family law attorney, was appointed to the seat in 2023 by Gov. Joe Lombardo. However, Maxey defeated him in the 2024 special election.

**District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Family Division,
Dept. P** >

INDY ANALYSIS

The panel was not that enthusiastic about Perry as a judge, but suggested Isso would be worse. It was more of a hold-your-nose choice, though.

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Mary Perry INCUMBENT

Perry was a domestic and family law attorney in her own law firm until she was elected to the Department P seat in 2020.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#) 



Jennifer Isso

Isso is a long-time family law attorney who handled a range of complex family law matters, including high-conflict custody disputes.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#) 

[District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Family Division, Dept. R](#) >

INDY ANALYSIS

Caston is seen as a smart, young lawyer, but Henderson, while he takes some time to decide cases and thinks out loud too much, was seen as the slightly better choice.

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Bill Henderson INCUMBENT

Henderson, who does not have a campaign website, was first elected to the seat in 2008. He spent nearly two decades as a family law attorney prior to becoming a judge.



Marilyn A. Caston

Caston has practiced family law for more than 16 years. She is a junior partner at Nevada Family Law Group.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)

**[District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Family Division,
Dept. S](#)** >

INDY ANALYSIS

Forman was seen as the clear choice by the panel.

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Kristine Brewer

Brewer has specialized in family law for more than 20 years, with experience as a truancy diversion judge, parent coordinator and pro bono settlement master.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Randall Forman

Forman has practiced family law for more than 15 years, including five years as a family court commissioner presiding over sensitive matters such as domestic violence protection orders.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)

LAS VEGAS MUNICIPAL COURT

Municipal Court Judge, Dept. 1, City Of Las Vegas >

INDY ANALYSIS

Walker was known as being reasonable and thoughtful. His challenger also received plaudits, but not enough to go against the incumbent.

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Matt Walker INCUMBENT

The incumbent judge in Department 1, Walker was a prosecutor in the city attorney's office for 16 years.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#) 



Amanda Pellizzari

Pellizzari serves as the public attorney for the municipal court, representing indigent defendants. She also has her own private law practice.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#) 

Municipal Court Judge, Dept. 2, City Of Las Vegas >

INDY ANALYSIS

Green as pro tem judge was given good reviews and was seen by some as helping to diversify a municipal court bench dominated by former prosecutors.

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Jessica A. Green

Green has been a pro-tem judge in municipal court for seven years. She has more than 15 years of legal experience.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)



Allycia Murphy

Murphy is a deputy city attorney for the City of Las Vegas and has argued cases in district court, the Nevada Court of Appeals and the Nevada Supreme Court.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [↗](#)

HENDERSON MUNICIPAL COURT

Municipal Court Judge, Dept. 1, City Of Henderson >

INDY ANALYSIS

Thompson was seen as level-headed in a civil practice. Allbritton was not seen very favorably by the panel.

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Alicia Albritton INCUMBENT

Albritton spent 16 years as a Clark County prosecutor. She was appointed to the seat by the Henderson City Council in 2022.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#) 



Gary Thompson

Thompson is a longtime private practice attorney in Henderson who has practiced in the municipal court.

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE](#) 

HENDERSON JUSTICE COURT

Justice Of The Peace, Henderson, Dept. 4 >

INDY ANALYSIS

Cory was seen as the clear choice here by the panel.

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Michael Allmon

Allmon is a prosecutor in the Clark County District Attorney's Special Victims Unit. He previously served in the U.S. Marine Corps, rising to the rank of major.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE 



John Cory

Cory is currently a prosecutor but has spent time as a civil attorney handling complex litigation cases. He has also worked in federal bankruptcy court.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE 