

Why State-wide Judicial Races Matter – Superior Court Edition

In an earlier issue, we reminded you that the Judicial Branch in Pennsylvania has several levels. Most people have contact with courts at the local level, the Magisterial District Courts and the Courts of Common Pleas. If you don't like a decision one of those local judges made, you can turn to the Appellate Courts.

In this issue we'll discuss the Superior Court.

If, for example, you don't like a decision a local judge made in your custody case, you can appeal that decision to the Superior Court. If a defendant wants to challenge his conviction, that appeal goes to the Superior Court for review. The Superior Court reviews every case properly brought before it. And once the Superior Court makes a decision, that decision is generally binding on the lower courts.

But if you don't like a decision made by the Superior Court, you can ask the PA Supreme Court to review that decision. As you know, the Supreme Court is different from the Superior Court because it doesn't have to accept a request to review what a lower court decided. But when it does, any decision made by the PA Supreme Court is binding on every lower court. And, in most cases, the Supreme Court makes the final decision in a case. If you don't like what the PA Supreme Court decides there is usually not much that can be done.

So why does your vote for the Superior Court candidates matter? The Judges on the Superior Court are most likely to make the final decisions on issues that matter to your everyday life, like custody determinations, and whether a defendant's conviction should be overturned.

There is one seat open on the Superior Court this year. The candidates are Megan Sullivan and Timika Lane. Whoever wins the election will take the open seat on the bench and serve for the next 10 years. You can learn more about them at [Megsullivanforjudge.com](https://megsullivanforjudge.com) and judgelane.com

In Our Opinion

We must elect Judges to the Appellate Courts who are going to stick to interpreting the law and not try to make law from the Bench – and that's why our pick for the Superior Court is Megan Sullivan.

Judge Kevin Brobson, our candidate for the PA Supreme Court, has declared "I will not legislate from the bench." Megan Sullivan shares that same belief.

Megan Sullivan is a veteran litigator with twenty years of legal experience as both a criminal prosecutor and civil attorney. Over the course of her career, Sullivan has gained substantial trial and legal experience. She has served as a prosecutor in the Chester County District Attorney's office, a Deputy Attorney General in the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, a litigation attorney in private practice, and general counsel for a state university. Through her experience in both the state Attorney General's Office and the District Attorney's Office, she has handled all

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aspects of criminal prosecutions and prosecuted an extensive range of crimes, ranging from child abuse to white collar crime.

Megan Sullivan has worked to protect taxpayer dollars through her investigation and prosecution of insurance fraud committed by individuals and corporations in every industry throughout the state. She has also defended the Commonwealth and municipalities in civil litigation related to employment issues and civil rights lawsuits.

Sullivan's extensive background in both criminal and civil litigation, which includes cases before both the Commonwealth and Superior Courts, provides her with a breadth of knowledge that makes her well prepared for an appellate court position.

The above information was based on our review of Megan Sullivan's and her opponent's websites. We encourage you to do the same and believe you will come to the same conclusion that Megan Sullivan is the better choice.

Something to Remember

Candidates who want to run for the Appellate Courts usually have to wait until there is an opening to run. The candidates we choose in November will be elected for 10-year terms.

That's why it's important to elect Judge Kevin Brobson to the PA Supreme Court and Megan Sullivan to the Superior Court.

At the end of their term, if they want to stay on the bench, they will run for retention. It is an uncontested race where the voters decide either to keep them on the bench or not. It is only if they are not retained that the seat would open up for a contested election. The other way a seat is opened is if the Judge reaches the mandatory retirement age of 75 and can no longer serve on the Court.

Two Judges are running for retention on the Superior Court this year. These two Judges were elected to the Superior Court 10 (or more) years ago and have both said they want to remain Superior Court Judges. They will appear on your ballot with a simple yes or no question – Do you want to retain the Judge. If the yes votes outnumber the no votes the Judge stays on the bench. If the no votes outnumber the yes votes the Judge does not stay on the bench. The candidates are John T. Bender and Mary Jane Bowes. Judges running for retention do not usually have campaign websites. However, you can learn more about them at <https://www.pacourts.us/courts/superior-court/superior-court-judges/judge-john-t-bender> and <https://www.pacourts.us/courts/superior-court/superior-court-judges/judge-mary-jane-bowes>

What's Ahead

In future issues we'll provide information about candidates for the Commonwealth Court, as well as judges running for retention.