

**Kentucky
Candidate
Information
Survey**



JUDICIAL SURVEY 2018

Each judicial candidate pledges to keep an open mind and carry out their adjudicative duties faithfully and impartially if elected.

Each candidate also recognizes their overarching obligation to apply and uphold the law, without regard to his or her personal views.

<p>No statement should be interpreted as a pledge, promise, or commitment in connection with any case, controversy, or issue likely to come before the court.</p>		<p>KY District Court District 33</p> <p>B. Cody Goehring</p> <p>www.facebook.com/CODYforJudge</p>	
<p>Education</p>	<p>Harvard Law School, J.D. (2013) University of Texas at Austin, B.S. (2007)</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p>CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE</p> </div>	
<p>Current Occupation</p>	<p>Attorney at the Hazard (Ky.) office of the Department of Public Advocacy (Public Defender's Office)</p>		
<p>Family</p>	<p>Married to Brandi (Tackett) Goehring</p>		
<p>Legal Background / Experience</p>	<p>I have been employed as a public defender for five years, and have represented thousands of Perry County citizens in District and Circuit Court. I have experience representing clients in cases ranging from traffic tickets to murder charges. I am a member of the Perry County Drug Court Team.</p>		
<p>What do you consider the greatest accomplishment of your legal career? Why? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>I am most proud of my commitment to always treat my clients with respect and as equals. Many attorneys feel justified in speaking down to their clients, especially clients relying on a public defender, but I strive to avoid this pitfall.</p>		
<p>To what extent have you practiced in the area of criminal law? Family law? Complex civil litigation? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>I have extensive practice experience in the area of criminal and constitutional law. I also have experience in juvenile, domestic, and child support law. My experience in civil law stems from utilizing civil rules and case law when drafting appeals or habeas corpus petitions.</p>		
<p>What forms of voluntary professional and community service have you been involved with in the past? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>In addition to volunteering for Perry County Drug Court, I have committed my legal career to helping those less fortunate than me by taking a lower-paying public defender job in rural eastern Kentucky, while my fellow Harvard Law School graduates instead took high paying big law firm jobs.</p>		

By sharing how each candidate describes themselves, their qualifications, and judicial philosophy, the KCIS Judicial Survey is bringing light to the area voters are often least informed about. Thus, improving **1) voter knowledge; 2) voter participation; and 3) the quality of the democratic process.**

KCIS is a non-partisan project of the Family Trust Foundation of Kentucky.

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**KY District Court
District 33**



B. Cody Goehring

Becky Williams Patterson

www.facebook.com/CODYforJudge

What are the major influences in your life? Why?
(50 words or less)

I originally began thinking of becoming a lawyer after a local high school teacher encouraged me to join her speech and debate class. My mother, father, and "Mamaw" (grandmother) have been positive influences in my life and career. My wife's support during the campaign has been immeasurable and unwavering.

**CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT
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Are there any specific types of cases in which you know now you would find it necessary to recuse yourself?
(50 words or less)

Although I have avoided representing clients in Perry District Court since I began campaigning for district judge, inevitably some of my former clients will come before me while I am judge. I would recuse if this former representation would make me an unfair judge for the instant case.

In the last 10 years, which of the following organizations have you been a member, contributed money, volunteered time, been employed by, been endorsed by for a campaign, received money from for a campaign, or had any other affiliation?

Davidson Baptist Church

Some judges practice a philosophy of restraint, believing that judges must interpret the law strictly rather than seek to make new laws. Others develop a philosophy of activism, using the bench to enact social and political change. Please explain your approach.
(50 words or less)

As a district judge, you are subordinate to all other courts above you. Therefore, you should generally faithfully interpret the law and follow precedent set by higher courts. However, you are also the court closest to the people, and should therefore interpret the law with local practicalities in mind.

Some judges believe that courts should read the Constitution expansively and should not limit themselves to what is explicitly stated. Others believe the courts should not reinterpret the Constitution. Please explain your approach.
(50 words or less)

District judges must follow precedent set by higher courts. In the rare circumstances where a novel constitutional issue comes before me and requires a constitutional interpretation unguided by existing opinions by higher courts, I will tend to interpret the Constitution in a way that preserves individual rights.

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**KY District Court
District 33**



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Some judges believe that courts should interpret the Constitution as the framers intended. Others believe that the Constitution must grow and adapt to new circumstances. Please explain your approach.
(50 words or less)

I would interpret the Constitution as set out in opinions issued by higher courts.

CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE

What is your general judicial philosophy?
(75 words or less)

Judges should set the example by being the hardest workers in the courthouse. They should preserve limited resources by running their courtroom efficiently, not according to their personal convenience and preferences. Judges do not become king or queen by being elected. While they have to control their courtroom, they must treat all litigants, attorneys, witnesses, and courthouse employees respectfully at all times. Finally, above all, judges should rule without bias or partiality.

Which of the current/recent Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court MOST reflects your judicial philosophy and why? Which LEAST reflects it and why?
(50 words or less)

I am most like Justice Kennedy (Ret.) and Chief Justice Roberts, who have both shown an ability to consider both sides of an argument and rule regardless of their supposed party affiliation. I am least like Justice Alito.

What do you see as the most important issue facing Kentucky's judiciary?
(50 words or less)

Appropriately punishing drug users, sellers, and manufacturers, which means striking the right balance between treatment and incarceration. How to do this without over crowding jails with nonviolent drug addicts, or wasting rehabilitation resources on unwilling to accept help, is the toughest issue facing the judicial system.

What do you perceive as the greatest obstacles to justice, if any?
(50 words or less)

The greatest obstacle to justice is a lack of access to justice due to high caseloads and lack of finances. However, a judge that will work hard to rule fairly for all litigants can help overcome this issue.

What steps will you take as a judge to ensure that the rule of law is uniformly applied without passion or prejudice?
(50 words or less)

It is important not to take cases personally and approach each case with a clean slate. When judges act as if they have been personally victimized by an accused criminal, or become personally offended by the alleged actions of a litigant, they begin acting on passion instead of the law.

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<p>While serving on the bench, do you believe you have a role in bringing important legal or judicial issues before the public or the legislature? Why or why not? What should your role be? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>www.facebook.com/CODYforJudge</p> <p>I believe district judges can certainly approach legislatures or other public actors with suggestions for improving Kentucky's justice system. They can also work with AOC, other district judges, or higher judges to make or suggest positive changes.</p>		<p>Becky Williams Patterson</p>
<p>What makes you the best qualified candidate for this position? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>I will bring a strong work ethic to the bench. I will make rulings based on the law and facts, instead of who the litigant is or who they know. I have experience handling high caseloads. I will create a positive atmosphere by making predictable rulings and treating litigants respectfully.</p>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>CANDIDATE CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE</p> </div>
<p>Is there anything else you would like the voter to know? (50 words or less)</p>	<p>I have enjoyed helping Perry County citizens for the last five years as an attorney with the public defender's office. However, I know that I will be able to make an even greater positive difference as district judge than I ever can as a single attorney.</p>		

Overview of Kentucky's Court System

Supreme Court

Basic Info: The Supreme Court is the state court of last resort and the final interpreter of Kentucky law. Seven justices sit on the Supreme Court and all seven justices rule on appeals before the court.

Cases Handled: Appeals involving the death penalty, life imprisonment or imprisonment for 20 years or more go directly from Circuit Court to the Supreme Court. All other appeals must first be heard by the Court of Appeals, except those so exceptional that the Supreme Court will grant a request to bypass the Court of Appeals.

Term: District judges serve four-year terms.



Court of Appeals

Basic Info: Fourteen judges, two elected from each of the seven appellate districts, serve on the Court of Appeals and are divided into panels of three to review and decide cases, with the majority deciding the outcome.

Cases Handled: With a few exceptions, most cases appealed from Circuit Court go to the Court of Appeals. The case is not retried at the appeals level. Instead, the original trial record is reviewed, with attorneys presenting the legal issues to the court for a decision.

Term: Court of Appeals judges serve eight-year terms.



Circuit Courts

Note: Family Court is a division of Circuit Court that hears only cases involving families and children.

Cases Handled: Can hear all types of cases unless the General Assembly has given exclusive jurisdiction of particular kinds of cases to another court to handle, such as District Court. Circuit Court hears civil matters involving more than \$5,000, capital offenses and felonies, divorces, adoptions, termination of parental rights, land dispute title problems and contested probates of will. It also has the power to issue injunctions and writs of prohibition and mandamus to compel or prohibit acts, and to hear appeals from District Court and administrative agencies.

Term: Circuit judges serve eight-year terms.



District Courts

Cases Handled: Hears juvenile matters, city and county ordinances, traffic offenses, probates of will, felony preliminary hearings, civil cases involving \$5,000 or less, guardianship, conservatorship, voluntary or involuntary commitment, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence.

Term: District judges serve four-year terms.