



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF THE WILKES-BARRE AREA AND PENNSYLVANIA

Citizen Education Fund **NONPARTISAN VOTERS' GUIDE**

**PRIMARY ELECTION**

**MAY 16, 2023**

**Polls open 7 A.M. to 8 P.M.**

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(Information obtained from Vote411.org and from candidates.)

**2023**  
**CAMPAIGN**  
**"A STEP AHEAD OF THE VOTE"**

**FOR ELECTION INFORMATION**

Contact your county Board of Elections or visit [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com). The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Information Center also provides election information. Call 717-234-1576 with any questions or go to [www.Vote411.org](http://www.Vote411.org).

**ABOUT THIS GUIDE**

The material in this Guide was compiled by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund. This material may not be altered or reprinted without the permission of the League. Each candidate's reply has been printed as submitted. Candidates were invited to participate in the Vote411 online voters' guide sponsored by the LWVPA-CEF and Patriot-News/PennLive via email. All reasonable efforts were made to encourage candidates to participate.

The candidates listed are those whose names appear on the ballot as of May 1, 2023. They are listed according to their party and then alphabetically.

Nothing in this guide should be construed as an endorsement or non-endorsement of any candidate, party, or initiative by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund.

**PURPOSE AND POLICY OF THE LEAGUE**

The purpose of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League is nonpartisan: it neither supports nor opposes any political parties or candidates.

**JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania is the highest court in the Commonwealth and the oldest appellate court in the nation. The Supreme Court's administrative powers and jurisdictional responsibilities are vested with the seven-member court by the Pennsylvania State Constitution and a collection of statutes known as the Judicial Code. The justice with the longest continuous service on the Supreme Court automatically becomes Chief Justice. Administratively, the courts within the Unified Judicial System are largely responsible for organizing their own staff and dockets; however, the Supreme Court has several committees and boards responsible for writing and enforcing rules for judges, attorneys, and litigants to ensure an efficient and fair judicial review. Annually, the seven justices receive over 3,000 requests for appellate review.

**Term:** 10 years  
**Base Salary:** \$244,793

Vote for ONE.

**DEMOCRAT**

**DANIEL MCCAFFERY (DEM)**  
**COUNTY:** Philadelphia  
**OCCUPATION:** Judge of the Pennsylvania Superior Court  
**EDUCATION:** Temple University School of Law, J.D., 1991 Temple University, SCAT, B.A., 1988  
Father Judge High School, 1982  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** 32 years as an attorney, trial and appellate court judge, tried more cases and presided over more litigation than any other candidate. Highly Recommended by the PA Bar, the only Veteran on PA's Appellate Courts. Judge, Court of Judicial Discipline, supervising judge for PA wiretap applications.

**Q. Pennsylvania's three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. In its most general terms, as it pertains to the question, the court has a duty to ensure the Constitutional rights of the people are appropriately applied and protected. I would describe my approach to constitutional interpretation as "Living Constitution" – meaning that the constitution was intentionally drafted using broad language to allow its concepts to evolve with changing societal conditions. As to my approach to interpreting rules, legislation & statutes, I would describe myself as a textualist in that I attempt to give a common sense meaning and will give the intent to apply a reasonable analysis to interpret any ambiguous word or provision.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

Every case must be considered based on the facts of the individual case, the laws pertaining to the case and were the appropriate Constitutional rights and protections fairly applied to the people and case in question.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Highly Recommended

**DEBBIE KUNSELMAN (DEM)**  
**COUNTY:** Beaver  
**OCCUPATION:** Judge of the Superior Court of Pennsylvania  
**EDUCATION:** J.D. Notre Dame Law School; B.A. Penn State  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** 17 years of judicial experience: 12 years as a trial court judge in Beaver County and 5 years as a state appellate court judge. experience handling civil, criminal, family and juvenile cases; 8 yrs as Chief County Solicitor

**Q. Pennsylvania's three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power**

**of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. The relationship of checks and balances between the three branches of government means that each branch must respect the authority of the other branches and act within the authority given to them. For example, the legislature has the authority to enact laws. However, those laws cannot infringe upon the rights guaranteed by the federal or state constitutions. If they pass such a law, the judicial branch can strike it down as unconstitutional. However, if the law comports with the constitution, judges are obligated to apply the law as it is written. Likewise, absent emergencies, the executive branch needs probable cause and a warrant from a judge before conducting a search. In this way, judges protect the right to privacy.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. Usually, overruling long standing precedent is warranted when (and only when) a precedent is "manifestly absurd or unjust" as in Brown v. Board of Education. The U.S. Supreme Court in Ramos v, Louisiana gives 3 guides I would consider: 1) Is the prior decision not just wrong, but grievously or egregiously wrong? In deciding this, I would look at the quality of the precedent's reasoning, consistency and coherence with other decisions, changed law or facts, and workability. 2) Has the prior decision caused significant negative jurisprudential or real-world consequences? 3) Would overruling the prior decision unduly upset reliance interests? These considerations set a high standard and require much deliberation before changing precedent.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Highly Recommended

**REPUBLICAN**

**PATRICIA A. McCULLOUGH (REP)**  
**COUNTY:** Allegheny  
**OCCUPATION:** Statewide Appellate Court

Judge- Commonwealth Court of PA  
**EDUCATION:** B.A. University of Pittsburgh, magna cum laude; J.D. University of Pittsburgh School of Law  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** Judge, PA Commonwealth Court 12+ yrs. ruling on cases that go directly to PA Supreme Ct.; trial judge, Allegheny County Ct. of Common Pleas; Asst.General Counsel, Univ. of Pittsburgh.; private practice attorney; Director Catholic Charities; chair Allegheny County Board Chair Property Assessment Appeals and Review; Appellate Court Procedural Rules Committee.

**Q. Pennsylvania's three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. These separate but equal branches of government have distinct powers. The legislative branch makes the law, the executive branch enforces the law and the judiciary is to interpret the law. This means that courts are not to “legislate from the bench.” Judges should apply the rule of law and interpret the law and the Constitutions of the United States and PA as written, and reign in the other branches of government if they overstep their constitutional bounds. Thomas Jefferson warned that if judges interpret the law to be what they want, the Constitution would be a “mere thing of wax in the hands of the Judiciary, which they may twist and shape into any form they please.” Constitutional rights are protected with proper separation of powers.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. While the concept of stare decisis is traditionally applied by judges in assessing cases, courts are at times confronted with whether to overrule prior precedent. Criteria to be carefully considered includes inconsistency with related decisions, erroneous or incomplete facts, misinterpretation of law, or the unconstitutionality of prior precedent. Brown v Board of Education is a longstanding example of the US Supreme Court overruling prior precedent on the basis that it violated the Constitution, specifically the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Brown ended the unconstitutional precedent of “separate but equal” in Plessy v Ferguson. The US Supreme Court focused on Constitutional reasons in other cases.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:**  
 Not Recommended; Failure to respond.

**CAROLYN CARLUCCIO (REP)**

**COUNTY:** Montgomery  
**OCCUPATION:** Court of Common Pleas Judge  
**EDUCATION:** Dickinson College, Widener University School of Law  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** First female President Judge of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas serving in the Criminal, Family, and Civil Court Benches. Montgomery County Chief Deputy Solicitor, Director of Human Resources, Chief Public Defender, Assistant United States Attorney.

**Q. Pennsylvania's three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. Our system of checks and balances is vital to our democracy and should be carefully guarded.

### ON-LINE VOTERS GUIDE

The Vote411 Online Voters Guide is available at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org). Useful information for voters can be found on the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania homepage: [www.palwv.org](http://www.palwv.org). Links to this guide containing Luzerne County Council Candidate Information is available on the League of Women Voters of the Wilkes-Barre Area homepage: [lwvwb.org](http://lwvwb.org).

We must ensure one branch does not overstep its authority. For the Executive Branch, it could be excessive Executive Orders which can circumvent Legislative powers. For the Judiciary, it is legislating from the bench which can also circumvent Legislative powers. The Judiciary also has the duty of ensuring that Legislative and Executive actions do not overstep their constitutional roles. It's critical that the Judiciary only applies the law as it is written in the Pennsylvania and United States Constitutions. Inappropriate actions taken by the Executive branch and even the Judiciary takes power from our legislature which is closest to the people.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. In deciding a case that could affect long-standing precedent, just as in any case that comes before me, I will apply the law as it is written in the constitution. Justices of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court must not allow themselves to be swayed by the media, Executive or Legislative branches, and certainly not by the popular opinion of the day. Even our own personal beliefs must be tempered to ensure that the Judiciary remains unbiased and only make rulings based on the law.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Highly Recommended

### PENNSYLVANIA JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

#### JOB DESCRIPTION

The Superior Court is one of Pennsylvania's two statewide intermediate appellate courts. This court, established in 1895, reviews most of the civil and criminal cases that are appealed from the Courts of Common Pleas in the Commonwealth's 67 counties. The Superior Court consists of 15 judges. The president judge is elected to a five-year term by his/ her colleagues. A large number of appeals flow to the Superior Court from the trial courts. Generally, appeals are heard by panels of three judges sitting in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, or Pittsburgh. The court often is the final arbiter of legal disputes. Although the Supreme Court may grant a petition for review of a Superior Court decision, most petitions are denied, and the ruling of the Superior Court stands.

**Term:** 10 years  
**Base Salary:** \$230,974  
 Vote for not more than TWO.

### DEMOCRAT

**PAT DUGAN (DEM)**

**COUNTY:** Philadelphia  
**OCCUPATION:** President Judge and Veterans Court Judge  
**EDUCATION:** Juris Doctorate Rutgers School of Law  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** Judge 16 years, 4 years President Judge (elected by a vote of 27 judges), 13 years attorney focused on criminal defense & child advocacy, 23 years Army (and Reserves) Infantry Paratrooper, Civil Affairs, JAG with 5 years overseas, started a Veterans Court 2010, married father of 6

**Q. Pennsylvania's three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. I believe that a prior court's precedent should be given serious consideration to remain in place and in effect, however that is not set in stone. Before a court reverses any previous decisions, the reviewing court must take into account whether the decision was poorly reasoned, whether there has been a change in the statutory law, review of any intervening events or circumstances, and there is legal justification to overrule prior precedent. It is not a decision to be taken lightly and any change in the law must not undermine the public's confidence in the judicial system and must maintain the integrity of the judicial system.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. I believe that a prior court's precedent should be given serious consideration to remain in place and in effect, however that is not set in stone. Before a court reverses any previous decisions, the reviewing court must take into account whether the decision was poorly reasoned, whether there has been a change in the statutory law, review of any intervening events or circumstances, and there is legal justification to overrule prior precedent. It is not a decision to be taken lightly and any change in the law must not undermine the public's confidence in the judicial system and must maintain the integrity of the judicial system.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:**  
 Not Recommended; Failure to respond.

**TIMIKA LANE (DEM)**

**COUNTY:** Philadelphia  
**OCCUPATION:** Judge  
**EDUCATION:** Howard University - Bachelor of Arts, Rutgers Law School - Doctor of Law (JD)  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** Elected in 2013 to the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas and immediately assigned to one of the busiest trial divisions in Pennsylvania. Judge Lane has presided over thousands of jury and bench trials and authored over 100 judicial opinions. She currently serves in the civil division.

**Q. Pennsylvania's three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. Checks and balances are an integral part of our government, essential to ensuring that no one branch can overpower its boundaries. The role of the Judicial branch ensures that the legislative and executive branches maintain constitutional rights within the law, furthering that justice be equally, effectively and lawfully maintained and upheld. In short, checks and balances are critical to a functioning government and must be maintained.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. Presiding a case in which in theory could affect a long-standing precedent must be weighted carefully and with respect to the past precedent. Long standing precedents are not without fault, and throughout history the judicial system has seen changes occur to long standing precedents for better and for worse. It is through this evolution, as society changes and laws are adapted to those changes that consideration of both the changes in the legal system and society should be considered, as well as aforementioned respect to the long standing precedent and whether its reasoning still stands solid within the judicial and societal systems.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Highly Recommended

**JILL BECK (DEM)**

**COUNTY:** Allegheny  
**OCCUPATION:** Commercial litigator & appellate attorney

### IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW VOTERS

If you are a new voter or if you are voting at a polling place for the first time, then you must bring your voter ID card or a photo ID such as a driver's license, student ID or some other form of Federal or State government-issued ID. Some forms of non-photo ID are also acceptable, such as a firearm permit, current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or government check. If you do not have any acceptable ID then you must be allowed to vote by provisional ballot.

**If you are not a new voter and are not voting at your polling place for the first time, you are NOT required to bring or provide identification.**

**DEMOCRAT**

**MATT WOLF (DEM)**  
**COUNTY:** Philadelphia  
**OCCUPATION:** Judge  
**EDUCATION:** B.S. Political Science, LeMoyne College, J.D., Loyola University School of Law, numerous judicial education training courses.  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** The only sitting judge in the race. 25 years of civil rights trial experience. 5 years plus of judicial experience, with a majority of that as a Supervising Judge. 20 years of military experience, 17 as an Army JAG, awarded Bronze Star Medal, service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Q. Pennsylvania’s three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. The rule of law. Each branch of government serves as a check on the others. Legislatures pass laws, sometimes in reaction to judicial decisions and executive actions. Courts interpret the law and the facts and the Executive essentially carries out the functions of the government, subject to the laws as interpreted by the Courts. People who serve as elected officials usually take an oath of office to uphold the laws and the state and federal constitutions. I take such oaths seriously and would commit to upholding the law, as should each member of the other branches of government.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. It depends on the case, the facts and the law. This question cannot be answered in vacuum. There are antiquated decisions in Common Law that are long standing precedent which call to be overturned such as the Supreme Court’s 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision which upheld the legality of racial segregation in America. It took 58 years for that case to be overturned in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. Some long standing precedent should be overturned such as the “separate but equal” line of cases as an example. Other long standing precedent should be respected, particularly as it relates to the preservation and recognition of fundamental constitutional rights.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Recommended

**BRYAN NEFT (DEM)**  
**COUNTY:** Allegheny  
**OCCUPATION:** Attorney  
**EDUCATION:** BA., Political Science, University of Pennsylvania 1986; J.D. Boston University School of Law, 1989  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** I have practiced law for 33 years. I was a law clerk for the Honorable William F. Cercone of the Pennsylvania Superior Court. I have practiced in 30 Pennsylvania counties and all of the Pennsylvania appellate courts including the Commonwealth Court.

**ELECTION DAY PROBLEMS**

If your right to vote is challenged at the polls on Election Day and the problem cannot be resolved at the polling place, the judge of elections at the polling place should telephone the county Board of Elections. The problem could be resolved by phone if your name appears on the county records. If it does not and you want to try to resolve the problem, then you can go in person to the county Board of Elections where a judge from the Court of Common Pleas will be on duty to resolve election problems. Alternatively you can ask for and vote by provisional ballot. If it is later determined that you were eligible to vote your ballot will be counted. You will be given instructions on how to determine if your vote was counted.

**If you have any questions or need to report any problems, call 1-866-OUR-VOTE for assistance in English or Spanish or 1-888-API-VOTE for assistance in Asian languages.**

**EDUCATION:** B.A. in Criminal Justice - The George Washington University (cum laude graduate);  
J.D. - Duquesne University School of Law (cum laude graduate)  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** Jill has practiced in every area the Superior Court hears, has practiced in the Superior Court & appellate courts across the country, and spent 10 years on the other side of the bench as a law clerk - 6 on the Superior Court, 4 on the Supreme Court - where she drafted over 500 decisions.

**Q. Pennsylvania’s three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. The judiciary is a separate but coequal branch of government. It is not the role of the Court to legislate, but neither is it permissible for the Court to serve as a rubber stamp for the legislative and executive branches of government (or the courts below). Appropriate deference to these bodies must be given when reviewing & interpreting their work, but it is solely in the Court’s purview to determine the constitutionality of the measures taken and the legal correctness of their actions. The Court serves a critical role of interpreting our statutes and our constitutions (federal and state), which must be viewed in terms of the intent of the drafters at the time of their passage as well as the evolving standards of decency of our society.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. The decision to overrule precedent, particularly longstanding precedent, should not be taken lightly. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to, the correctness of the prior reasoning, its consistency with related precedent, changes in the law & society subsequent to the decision, & the level of reliance on the precedent by the legal system and the public.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Highly Recommended

**REPUBLICAN**

**MARIA BATTISTA (REP)**  
**COUNTY:** Clarion  
**OCCUPATION:** Attorney/Executive  
**EDUCATION:** Clarion University, B.S.; Westminster College, M.Ed.; Ohio Northern University, J.D.; University of Pittsburgh, Ed.D.  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** 15+ years experience in Civil, Criminal and Administrative Law; Former Assistant District Attorney; Former Attorney with the Governor Corbett Administration; Served as an Administrative Hearing Officer where I presided over hundreds of hearings and issued hundreds of administrative decisions.

**Q. Pennsylvania’s three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. The Framers’ purpose in dividing power between the three branches of government was to ensure that no branch of government became too powerful. James Madison’s wisdom in Federalist 51 was to create a check against the authority of a single branch of government, sharing the decision-making power of the new federal government. For Pennsylvania, this model of separation of powers has created its own form of checks and balances between our three co-equal branches. In practical terms, this has empowered the courts, particularly the appellate courts, to better protect the rights of the people of this Commonwealth. By serving as a check against the executive and legislative branches, the judiciary serves to safeguard against abuses by either.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. Stare decisis, a Latin term which means “let the decision stand,” or “to stand by things decided,” is a central tenet of the American legal system. This doctrine highlights the importance of precedent in our legal tradition. Applying precedent to the particular facts of a case is a way to provide predictability and consistency in the law. While I cannot speak directly about how I would rule in any case that may appear before me, precedent may be used as a guide, as well as the law as it has been written and the particular facts of a case. In some instances, the issue of constitutionality may be raised by the parties.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Not Recommended; Failure to Respond

**HARRY F. SMAIL, JR. (REP)**  
**COUNTY:** Westmoreland  
**OCCUPATION:** Judge  
**EDUCATION:** Grove City College Class of 1988 Duquesne School of Law Night School Class of 1997  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** 14 years as a practicing attorney and nearly 9 years as sitting judge in Westmoreland County

**Q. Pennsylvania’s three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. The Founders’ in their wisdom established a system of checks and balances as an attempt to ensure that no branch of our government could have unbounded power. Our system is based on on the freedom of our people and these checks and balances ensure that is difficult to pass laws or regulations that can curtail that freedom. Our constitution is our guiding light and any branch that strays from that document can be quickly put in line with it by another branch. It is the judiciary’s role, as the only branch to not face regular election, to ensure that the constitution is being adhered to by intermediary courts and by the the legislative and executive branches.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. My guiding principle when deciding a case is the text of the constitution and the intent of a statute when applying that statute in the course of a case. Precedent or stare decisis is critical in this review. Stare Decisis is critical in providing predictability and stability to the courts. I leave open the possibility that a court must at times correct previous encroachments by the judiciary relative to constitutional review and deviation of the facts. I believe it is a heavy burden to demonstrate such encroachments when weighing prior precedents.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Recommended

**JUDGE OF THE COMMONWEALTH COURT**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**  
The Commonwealth Court is one of Pennsylvania’s two statewide intermediate appellate courts. This court, established in 1968, is unlike any other state court in the nation. Its jurisdiction generally is limited to legal matters involving state and local government and regulatory agencies. Litigation typically focuses on subjects such as banking, insurance, utility regulation, and laws affecting taxation, land use, elections, labor practices, and workers compensation. The Commonwealth Court also acts as a court of original jurisdiction, or a trial court, when lawsuits are filed by or against the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Court is made up of nine judges. The president judge is elected to a five-year term by his/her colleagues. Generally, appeals are heard by panels of three judges sitting in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, or Pittsburgh.

**Term:** 10 years  
**Base Salary:** \$230,974  
Vote for ONE.

**Q. Pennsylvania's three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. Each branch of government has a role in limiting overreach by a co-equal branch of government. In order for the judiciary to serve as a check on the legislative and executive branches, the judiciary must be independent and allowed to decide cases brought to it without fear of reprisal or retribution. Courts have authority within their jurisdiction to interpret laws and the Constitution. It is within the province of the Legislature and the Executive branches to change the law if a court ruling creates an unintended result.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. The Commonwealth Court may not alter long-standing precedent of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. However, it can revisit its own decisions, and it can review decisions of a Commonwealth Court judge sitting as the trial judge hearing a case in the Court's original jurisdiction. Such a review would require a thorough understanding of the history of the precedent, why it came into being and why it is being challenged as unsound.

## REPUBLICAN

**JOSH PRINCE (REP)**

**COUNTY:** Berks

**OCCUPATION:** Attorney at Prince Law Offices, P.C. and Civil Rights Defense Firm, P.C.

**EDUCATION:** Graduated with honors from McGill University in 2004 - Bachelor of Arts, double major in Political Science and World Religions; Widener Law School 2006-2009 - Juris Doctorate, graduated cum laude and as a member of Law Review

**QUALIFICATIONS:** I've spent my 13-year career defending our civil rights in the state and federal courts. Beyond having successfully litigated numerous appeals in the PA courts, including before the PA Supreme Court, in just the past 4 years, I've successfully litigated 8 cases before the Commonwealth Court.

**Q. Pennsylvania's three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. It is the constitutionally mandated and necessary separation of powers to ensure that no one branch of government becomes too powerful or usurps the power of the People. We have, unfortunately, in recent times seen the harmful effects of when branches of government overstep their constitutionally limited boundaries. For example, when a judge legislates from the bench - thereby usurping the powers of the Executive and Legislative branches - the constitutionally mandated separation of powers is violated and the People's confidence in the Judiciary is eroded. This is why it is imperative that we only elect judges who will uphold the law as written and Constitution as intended, without consideration for one's personal views or beliefs.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. As litigants and the legal community must be able to rely on precedent to understand their rights and obligations, it is imperative that precedent only be overturned where a manifest justice has occurred and necessitates correction, such as the abhorrent decision in the Dred Scott case, and not where the overturning of precedent would be for political or other reasons. Where appropriate, the criteria I would consider are the quality of the reasoning for the past decision, consistency of the the existing precedent with related decisions, legal developments since the past decision that shed new light on the existing precedent and what is the reasonable implementation of the new precedent

within the legal system and its impact moving forward.

**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Not Recommended

**MEGAN MARTIN (REP)**

**COUNTY:** Cumberland

**OCCUPATION:** Attorney

**EDUCATION:** JURIS DOCTOR, May 1994, Widener University School of Law, Harrisburg, PA; BACHELOR OF ARTS, June 1991, University of Delaware, Newark, DE

**QUALIFICATIONS:** I am honored to be endorsed by the PA Republican Party and recommended by the PA Bar Association. I also have the unique distinction of having served in all 3 branches of our state government and as an attorney for the US Navy. My qualifications stand alone in the race for Commonwealth Court.

**Q. Pennsylvania's three co-equal branches of government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial – each act as a check on the power of the others. In practical terms, what does this relationship of checks and balances mean to you?**

A. I respect the very different yet equally important roles of the three branches. When it comes to our judges, the people deserve to have judges who are fair & impartial, respect & defend the rule of law, protect our Constitutional rights & freedoms, apply the law as it was written by our General Assembly, & who hold government accountable because government must follow the law, too. Our judges must be exemplary public servants who act in the public's interest, not to further any political agenda or their own personal agenda. Judges must not make policy decisions from the bench that are reserved for our elected representatives to make. We need our judges to be independent as our Constitution created them to be. I will be that judge.

**Q. What criteria would you consider in deciding a case that could affect long standing precedent?**

A. Judges should approach every case keeping in mind their oath to support, obey & defend the Constitution. The Constitution should be their North Star. Judges should apply the law as it was written by the General Assembly. Judges should not be influenced by public opinion or pressure; they should follow the law. Precedent exists to maintain the rule of law. Defending the rule of law helps promote a world without chaos. It gives consistency to our judicial decision-making process. It ensures that individuals in similar situations are treated alike rather than being subject to the personal views of a particular judge. I respect the Constitution & rule of law. I respect precedent. I will continue to do so as a judge on our Commonwealth Court.  
**PA BAR ASSOCIATION:** Recommended

## LUZERNE COUNTY COUNCIL

### JOB DESCRIPTION

The Luzerne County Council is the legislative body governing Luzerne County and providing direction to its operation of providing service and protection to the citizens of Luzerne County. Council is composed of 11 members.

**Term:** 4 years

**Base Salary:** \$8,000 per annum

Vote for no more than SIX (6).

## DEMOCRAT

**PATRICIA KRUSHNOWSKI (DEM)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Wilkes Barre

**OCCUPATION:** Verizon; Union Steward for IBEW 827

**MICHELLE ROTHENBECKER (DEM)**

## WRITE-IN VOTING

Information for write-in voting will be available at the polling place.

**RESIDENCE:** Bear Creek Township

**OCCUPATION:** Small Business Owner

- a small educational consulting company called Ruby Run LLC.

**EDUCATION:** Master of Business

Administration and a Master of Education in Instructional Design, both from Western Governors University

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICE:** I

graduated with an MBA during the pandemic while working full-time as an executive, and I believe this business and leadership background will help immensely with budgeting, modernizing operating procedures, and finding ways to save money from wasted spending to invest back in the people. Additionally, as a middle-class small business owner who does not come from a wealthy family, I am hoping I can help people who have felt like they don't have a voice feel represented. As a small business owner, I understand the challenges that face our small businesses.

**PRIORITIES IF ELECTED:** My priorities as a Luzerne County Council member are to bring accountability and transparency to our government and to ensure that the most qualified people who make data-driven decisions are appointed to important county positions. Additionally, I want to find some ways to potentially save money in the budget, such as ensuring travel and expense policies follow best practices, modernizing and digitizing where possible, and negotiating contracts with vendors. This money could then be used to invest back in the community in programs that will help people, such as improving broadband access in rural areas. I also want to protect our beautiful natural spaces and waterways by creating a dedicated environmental services department.

**JIMMY SABATINO (DEM)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Butler Township

**OCCUPATION:** Manager, Avanti of Drums

**DAMON SAXON (DEM)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Wilkes-Barre

**OCCUPATION:** Community Specialist for Philadelphia based company

**STATEMENT:** As a member of Luzerne County Council, I will be a force in ensuring regular and adequate funds are being supplied to our county's main concerns. I plan to make a stance in the preservation of a civilized environment by helping in the decision making of our city's infrastructure, small businesses and the development of more parks, community centers and educational programs that cater to our youth.

**JOANNA BRYN SMITH (DEM)**

**RESIDENCE:** Wyoming

**OCCUPATION:** Staff Attorney; The Barbara J. Hart Justice Center, a project of the Women's Resource Center

**EDUCATION:** Saint Joseph's University, B.A. Philosophy and B.A. Fine and Performing Arts, Philadelphia; City University of New York, Juris Doctorate, Queens, Long Island City

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICE:** I grew up in this area and am a life-long resident of Luzerne County. This area is my home and I care deeply for it. As an attorney, I have a full grasp on how the law works and how it should work; therefore, I am able to apply those principles to our local government in the most constructive way. I worked for the County for almost a decade and therefore have a thorough understanding of the struggles our local government faces, along with workable solutions. I have happily served our community as a volunteer for many organizations, focusing especially on servant-leadership. I have served on the Board of Directors for many local organizations including the Fine Arts Fiesta and Little Theater of Wilkes-Barre. Through much of my volunteering and work with non-profits, I have been given the opportunity to work with countless children and young adults, teaching them musical and public speaking skills. I am also a proud graduate of Leadership Northeast,

having remodeled and furnished a new activity area for CASA's advocates to spend time with their program participant students.

Finally, my entire career has been focused on serving the most vulnerable in our community. I have worked exclusively in public interest law, currently offering free legal services to those who have experienced domestic violence. In public interest work, I serve whomever asks for help. This work has prepared me to represent everyone in our community equally, a way of thinking and working that I will happily exhibit and model as a member of the Luzerne County Council.

**PRIORITIES IF ELECTED:** Efficient, accountable and transparent government; Improve and invest in our infrastructure; Properly and safely fix our roads and bridges; Cut waste in our county's current spending practices so that we do not raise taxes; Invest in our communities and neighborhoods with public projects such as parks and community spaces; Support hiring our own workers, not outsourcing; Ensuring that our tax revenue is invested back into our communities; Prioritize education; Work to restore faith in our county's election procedures; and put our hard-working families' and communities' needs in center focus.

**BRITTANY STEPHENSON (DEM)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Plymouth Township  
**OCCUPATION:** College Student Affairs Practitioner

**MARYANN VELEZ (DEM)**

**RESIDENCE:** Duryea Borough  
**OCCUPATION:** Founder President CEO of a local nonprofit UNA (unacorp.org)  
**EDUCATION:** B.S in Health Science (Nursing), B.S. in Psychology

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR**

**OFFICE:** Experienced leadership: Without prior knowledge or experience in the nonprofit sector, I delved into courses and trainings to learn how to successfully build and run a nonprofit. To date, we have served 15,000 families throughout Luzerne County, created, executed, and implemented successful community programs that elevate underserved communities.

Unparalleled commitment and dedication: As a nonprofit leader I am charged with securing funding to continue the work UNA performs. For the last 18 months, I have undergone extensive training under Federal and State agencies to learn how to apply for sophisticated funding opportunities. This knowledge can be leveraged as a County Councilwoman to help alleviate the burden on the tax payers, increase infrastructure, help reduce crime, and implement crucial services to help eradicate the opioid epidemic.

**PRIORITIES IF ELECTED:** Supporting small business; Reducing tax increases; Infrastructure; Reducing crime

**REPUBLICAN**

**CARL BIENIAS IIII (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Hanover Township

**OCCUPATION:** Attorney

Served on council since February 2022. Seeking a full term on council to continue to work on initiatives such as paying down the county's long-term debt, repairing roads and infrastructure and amending the county charter.

**ANTHONY CORRADO (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Butler Township

**OCCUPATION:** Facilities director at Hazleton Area School District and a partner in Tony Corrado Tire and Service Center.

**STATEMENT:** Corrado said his educational background coupled with professional work experience will enable him to be a very strong asset to the entire county.

**THOMAS DOMBROSKI (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Dallas Township

**OCCUPATION:** Several positions in the commercial real estate and rental business.

**STATEMENT:** Opposes efforts to go back to the previous three-commissioner form of government, which he described as a broken system. The county should continue to pay down long-term debt.

**GREGORY W. GRIFFIN (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Swoyersville

**OCCUPATION:** Retired corrections officer

**STATEMENT:** Would be a driving force to avoid a property tax increase, since there is fat in the county budget. He would push for better training for county staff members.

**HARRY HAAS (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Kingston

**OCCUPATION:** History teacher at Dallas Middle School

**STATEMENT:** Served three terms on council from 2012-21. Not happy with decisions council members have made on several issues, including the distribution of American Rescue Plan funding grants.

**RONALD D. KNAPP (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Nanticoke

**OCCUPATION:** Administrative Assistant in Army Reserves

**STATEMENT:** I will not hesitate to ask important questions, i.e. who would be responsible for the bridge that spans the Susquehanna River to access the shuttered SCI Retreat owned by Pa. State Corrections if purchased?

**VIVIAN KREIDLER-LICINA (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Nescopeck Township

**OCCUPATION:** Homemaker

**STATEMENT:** Would work to reduce spending and prevent a property tax increase. County roads, bridges and infrastructure need to be repaired and maintained properly. Restore faith in county elections.

**LEE ANN MCDERMOTT (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Kingston Township

**OCCUPATION:** Co-owner of McDermott Real Estate Appraisals

**STATEMENT:** Council incumbent in the fourth year of her first term. Wants to continue in her role as chair of council real estate committee, which has become more active in trying to market and sell county-owned properties.

**MATTHEW MITCHELL (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Plains Township

**OCCUPATION:** GIS coordinator for Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority

**STATEMENT:** Appointed to fill a vacant council seat in June 2022. Enjoys interacting with the public and feels he has a lot to offer. He described himself as a fiscal conservative.

**KIMBERLY PLATEK (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Sugarloaf Township

**OCCUPATION:** Pharmaceutical sales representative

**STATEMENT:** Wants to make sure residents throughout the county are treated equally. Top priorities include the financial health of the county and addressing staffing issues.

**RICHARD TIHANSKY (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Conyngham

**OCCUPATION:** Cooperative Education Coordinator for Hazleton Area School District and a partner in Tihansky's Auto Repair in Hazleton.

**STATEMENT:** Served on Conyngham Borough Council. Wants to improve the lives of young people and provide opportunities for them to stay in Luzerne County. Top priority would be to straighten out the election bureau and county electoral process.

**STEPHEN J. URBAN (REP)**

*Candidate contact information not available, information obtained from press reports*

**RESIDENCE:** Kingston

**OCCUPATION:** Information Technology professional

**STATEMENT:** He also served on council from 2012-15. Tries to bring a different perspective to council discussions and has been willing to question the stipulations of the county charter.

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE WILKES-BARRE AREA**

P.O. Box 1480 | Wilkes-Barre, PA 18703-1480 | 570-675-3429 | lwvwba.org

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The League of Women Voters of the Wilkes-Barre Area is a nonpartisan organization which has as its purpose the promotion of political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. Membership is open to any person who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League. While the League of Women Voters has made every effort to ensure that the information provided to us by the candidate is typed properly in this guide and it will not be liable for damages arising out of error, deletion or omission.

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**Prepared by:** The League of Women Voters of The Wilkes-Barre Area and The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania.

Special Thanks to the Citizens' Voice for publishing the Voters' Guide. The Voter's Guide is a member supported publication.

**ON-LINE VOTERS GUIDE**

The Vote411 Online Voters Guide is available at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org). Useful information for voters can be found on the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania homepage: [www.palwv.org](http://www.palwv.org). Links to this guide containing Luzerne County Council Candidate Information is available on the League of Women Voters of the Wilkes-Barre Area homepage: [lwvwba.org](http://lwvwba.org).

# JOIN US IN OUR MISSION TO EDUCATE AND ENCOURAGE ALL CITIZENS TO VOTE AND MAKE INFORMED VOTING CHOICES.

*Consider joining the League of Women Voter's of the Wilkes-Barre Area*

## WHO WE ARE

As an all-volunteer organization, we work diligently to promote citizen participation in our democracy by educating our community about voting and the democratic process.

We encourage citizens to have a voice in their government by simply going to the polls to vote for the candidates who reflect THEIR views on how government should operate.

**Voting truly is a simple act that can have profound effects on our county and how it operates.**

Our nonpartisan status allows us to work effectively on voter education. The community knows that candidate meetings and our Voter's Guide will present information without bias. We are respected in our community because citizens know that we are fair in our presentations.

We never support political candidates or parties, nor do we do things that would appear to support one over another.

Our Wilkes-Barre League focuses on voter education. Our members include men and women.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME? OUR HISTORY!

The Wilkes-Barre League of Women Voters was established in 1944. The League of Women Voters of the United States was founded in 1920 -- six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified.

**This amendment gave women the right to full voting rights after a 72-year hard-fought struggle.**

The amendment was ratified on August 26, 1920. On November 2 of that year more than eight million women across the United States voted in elections for the first time. The League of Women Voters was created to help newly enfranchised women learn how to register to vote, how to vote, how to learn about their candidates, and how to learn about the workings of their governments.

The League of Women Voters is nonexclusionary -- all are welcome to join and participate in our programs.

Our name honors our rich history and those women who paved the way for all of us by working tirelessly to gain the right for disenfranchised women to vote so many years ago.

## WHAT WE DO:

- Voter Registration Drives
- Candidate Forums - before Primary and General Elections
- Annual Breakfasts with Legislators
- Annual Publication of a Government Directory
- Publication of a Voter's Guide before each Primary and General Election
- Annual Meeting Dinner
- Annual Holiday Dinner

**LEARN MORE: [LWVWBA.ORG](http://LWVWBA.ORG)**

**CONTACT US: P. O. BOX 1480 , WILKES-BARRE, PA 18703-1480 570.675.3429**