

[Judging The Judges in the WA Primary Election](#)

Local News

Posted by:

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SILVERDALE, Wash. - Judges are not above the political fray when it comes to attack ads and negative campaigning. But in Washington, there is an impartial place to go for information before voting in judicial races. It's a nonprofit, nonpartisan website called www.VotingforJudges.org. The time to look at it is now, before the primary on Aug. 7. In some judicial races, the candidate who gets more than 50 percent of the primary vote will be elected.

VotingforJudges.org Webmaster Paul Fjelstad compiles information released by the candidates, but also rounds up a lot more than that, he says.

We include materials such as ratings by various bar associations and other groups, and newspaper endorsements, which are just starting to come out now. I also include information from the Public Disclosure Commission about how much money the candidates are raising and where it's coming from. - Webmaster Paul Fjelstad

On the site, a person can click on their county to see the judicial races. This year, three Supreme Court Justices are among those up for reelection.

Washington Supreme Court Justice Charles Wiggins is a co-founder of the website. He says all too often, people skip the judicial races on their ballots because they don't know much about the candidates. But in an era when "big money" often dictates election outcomes, he worries that individuals are losing their clout in the court system.

"If voters opt out of the system - and say, 'Oh, I don't know enough, so I'm not going to vote' - you're magnifying the effect of these other organizations, these special interest groups. So, it's really important that voters are conscientious, and that they do some investigation of these things."

Wiggins, who is not up for reelection this year, calls the flood of money poured into judicial campaigns "a terrible development." He says all the information on the website is publicly available - the goal was to organize it and make it accessible in a single place.

VotingforJudges.org is supported by donations.

Chris Thomas