



alaska judicial council

510 L Street, Suite 450, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-1295 (907) 279-2526 FAX (907) 276-5046
<http://www.ajc.state.ak.us> E-Mail: postmaster@ajc.state.ak.us

Press Release

Contact: Susanne DiPietro, Executive Director
Alaska Judicial Council
510 L Street, Suite 450
Anchorage AK 99501
(907) 279-2526
sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us
www.ajc.state.ak.us

For immediate release
February 28, 2025

Announcing Nominees Anchorage Superior, Kodiak Superior, and Palmer District Courts

The Alaska Judicial Council met in Kodiak on February 25, in Anchorage on February 26, and in Palmer on February 27, 2025, to interview applicants for vacancies on the Kodiak Superior, Anchorage Superior, and Palmer District courts.

The Alaska Judicial Council voted on February 25 to nominate **Magistrate Judge Colleen Baxter, Andrew Ott, and Magistrate Judge Dawson Williams** as the most qualified applicants to fill the Kodiak Superior Court vacancy. Following its meeting on February 26, the Council voted to nominate **Magistrate Judge Marika Athens, Kate Demarest, Judge Kari McCrea, and Danée Lynn Pontious** as the most qualified applicants to fill the Anchorage Superior Court vacancy. Following its meeting on February 27, the Council voted to nominate **Patrick J. McKay, Jr., Glenn J. Shidner, and Matt Widmer** as the most qualified applicants to fill two vacancies on the Palmer District Court. The governor has 45 days in which to appoint from among these nominees to fill the positions.

The Judicial Council is required to nominate two or more of the most qualified applicants applying for a judicial vacancy. (The framers of our Constitution referred to this standard as the "best available timber.")

The Council is a citizens' commission created by the Alaska Constitution composed of three attorneys, three non-attorneys, and the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court. The Council completes an extensive investigation and evaluation of judicial applicants. The Council reviews each applicant's education, experience, bar discipline and credit records, participation in community activities, and other records. It asks members of the Alaska Bar to evaluate the applicants, encourages the public to submit comments, and interviews the applicants.

Nominees for the Kodiak Superior Court vacancy are:

Colleen Baxter: Magistrate Judge Baxter has been an Alaska resident for 54½ years and has practiced law for 27 years. She graduated from Temple University Beasley School of Law in 1996 and is currently a magistrate judge in Kotzebue.

Andrew Ott: Mr. Ott has been an Alaska resident for 35 years and has practiced law for 35 years. He graduated from Seattle University School of Law in 1989 and is currently in private practice in Kodiak.

Dawson Williams: Magistrate Judge Williams has been an Alaska resident for 19½ years and has practiced law for 19½ years. He graduated from University of Michigan School of Law in 2005 and is currently a magistrate judge in Kodiak.

Nominees for the Anchorage Superior Court vacancy are:

Marika Athens: Magistrate Judge Athens has been an Alaska resident for 42 years and has been practicing law for 20 years. She graduated from Duke University School of Law in 2004 and is currently a magistrate judge in Anchorage.

Kate Demarest: Ms. Demarest has been an Alaska resident for 14 years and has practiced law for 16 years. She graduated from University of Minnesota Law School in 2008 and is currently an assistant attorney general in Anchorage.

Kari McCrea: Judge McCrea has been an Alaska resident for 18 years and has been practicing law for 23 years. She graduated from Mitchell Hamline School of Law in 2001 and is currently a district court judge in Anchorage.

Danée Lynn Pontious: Ms. Pontious has been an Alaska resident for 20½ years and has been practicing law for 20 years. She graduated from University of Denver College of Law in 2004 and is currently in private practice in Anchorage.

Nominees for two Palmer District Court vacancies are:

Patrick J. McKay, Jr.: Mr. McKay has been an Alaska resident for 33 years and has been practicing law for 13 years. He graduated from Western State University College of Law in 2011 and is currently an assistant district attorney in Anchorage.

Glenn J. Shidner: Mr. Shidner has been an Alaska resident for 8½ years and has practiced law for 8½ years. He graduated from Florida State University College of Law in 2015 and is currently an assistant United States attorney in Anchorage.

Matt Widmer: Mr. Widmer has been an Alaska resident for 19 years and has practiced law for 19 years. He graduated from William & Mary Law School in 2005 and is currently in private practice in Anchorage.

Attached are records of the Council members' votes.

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**Alaska Judicial Council
Vote Tally Sheet
Kodiak Superior Court
February 25, 2025**

Candidates	Council Members						
	Babcock	Collins	DeWitt	Hansen	Katcher	Parker	Carney*
Colleen Baxter	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Andrew Ott	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Dawson Williams	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

**The Chief Justice votes only when to do so would change the result.*



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**Alaska Judicial Council
Vote Tally Sheet
Anchorage Superior Court
February 26, 2025**

Candidates	Council Members						
	Babcock	Collins	DeWitt	Hansen	Katcher	Parker	Carney*
Marika Athens	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Kate Demarest	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Kari McCrea	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Patrick McKay, Jr.	Absent	No	Yes	No	No	No	
Danée Pontious	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
James Stinson	Absent	No	No	No	No	No	

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**Alaska Judicial Council
Vote Tally Sheet
Palmer District Court
February 27, 2025**

Candidates	Council Members						
	Babcock	Collins	DeWitt	Hansen	Katcher	Parker	Carney*
Krista Anderson	Absent	No	No	No	No	No	
Patrick McKay, Jr.	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Glenn Shidner	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Jonathan Stinson	Absent	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Matt Widmer	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

**The Chief Justice votes only when to do so would change the result.*