



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

Alaska Judicial Council

Retention Questionnaire

2026 Candidates for Judicial Retention

Full Name: David A. Nesbett

Court: Anchorage Superior Court

1a. Please estimate your workload during your present term:

- **Case work:** 90%
- **Administrative work, outreach, continuing education, etc:** 10%

1b. Superior Court Judges:

- **Criminal:** 10%
- **Delinquency:** 0%
- **Domestic Relations:** 30%
- **Child in Need of Aid:** 25%
- **Probate:** 15%
- **General Civil (Including Appeals):** 20%

1c. Number of jury trials/year: 6

1d. Number of non-jury trials/year: 50

1e. Any additional information you would like to provide about your workload?

The workload of a civil superior court judge has increased substantially due to the growing need for judges to cover the criminal trial calendar.

2. Please describe your participation on court/bar committees or other administrative activities during your current term of office.

Committee work and administrative activities include helping with the Anchorage Veterans Court, with the ultimate goal of working alongside Judge Wallace, who currently presides over this Court. Veterans Court is a specialized court designed to help facilitate the rehabilitation of eligible military veterans who are charged with criminal offenses.

I am also a committee member of the In-Court Pilot program, an initiative aimed at enhancing employee retention for Alaska Court System staff.

I also serve on the Newer Judge Committee, which meets regularly throughout the year and hosts an annual week-long CLE conference for all Alaska judges during their first three years on the bench.

I am also working with the Alaska Court System to increase the Court's presence in our community through public outreach and education.

3. Please describe any judicial or legal education you have undertaken or provided during your current term in office.

During this term, I have annually attended the Alaska Judicial Conference and the Newer Judges Conference. These conferences provide judges with education and training on many topics, including judicial ethics, best practices in the courtroom, diversity, and selected substantive areas of the law.

I also attended a one-week course from the National Judicial College on best practices in the courtroom and maintaining mindfulness and consistency in the courtroom.

I also attended an All Rise nationally recognized Continuing Legal Education course related to therapeutic courts.

These courses focus on best practices for managing the courtroom and handling individual cases, including those involving self-represented litigants. We work on improving communication and listening skills, conducting jury trials efficiently and effectively, and reviewing recent developments in the law and procedure, judicial discretion, ethics, and fair and balanced sentencing in criminal cases.

4. Please describe any public outreach activities.

As a trial judge, much of my community outreach occurs every day during the course of hearing cases, listening to litigants, and interacting with the public from the bench. This process is critical to ensuring that all parties are truly heard and have had a full and fair opportunity to participate in our judicial system. I have also attended community council meetings and guided tours of the courthouse for middle school students, as well as spoken to students at West High School and Goldenview Middle School. Topics include the role of the judiciary in our government and the role of the judge in our judicial system, as well as Alaska's method of selecting and retaining judges through the Judicial Merit Selection System.

5. Please assess, in one or two paragraphs, your judicial performance during your present term. Appropriate areas of comment could include: satisfaction with your judicial role, specific contributions to the judiciary or the field of law, increases in legal knowledge and judicial skills, or other measures of judicial abilities that you believe to be important.

While not my first term as a judge, this is my first term on the superior court. There has been a fresh learning curve with the new role that comes with a broader scope of responsibilities. I continue to feel passionate about doing what is right in each case, being fair to all parties involved, and treating everyone with respect and dignity. I have developed an increased appreciation and respect for the dedicated and hardworking members of our court system, and I strive every day to meet the high bar set by the other judges and my colleagues on the bench.

I've made every effort to recognize any of my mistakes or misunderstandings and correct them as quickly as possible. I have also worked to increase my knowledge and awareness of existing law and court decisions, and also to stay current with appellate court decisions and the decisions of the other trial court judges. I work to keep an open mind about both the law and the facts in each case, and to remain patient and understanding, even when there are many cases to attend to in a limited amount of time. I have also worked to improve my written decisions to ensure that my communication is clear to both sides, including the conclusion that was reached and the reasoning behind each conclusion.

I work hard to contribute to the cooperative and impassioned spirit of the superior court to provide the best possible product to our community, which is very rewarding.

5a. This question pertains to Superior Court judges only.

State Law requires the Council to conduct an evaluation of judges standing for retention, and to provide information to the public about the judges. Under a provision added in 2013, the information the Council provides to the public "shall include the judge's consideration of victims when imposing sentence on persons convicted of felony offenses where the offenses involve victims" (see AS 22.10.150).

Please submit a short statement about how you consider victims when imposing sentences in felony offenses.

When imposing sentences in felony offenses, it's important to consider the impact on the victims, as their participation and experiences are critical to the justice system's goal of accountability and fairness. Sentences should reflect the harm caused to victims, ensuring that their loss is acknowledged, while also promoting rehabilitation for the offender. Balancing justice, deterrence, and the needs of victims is crucial for a fair legal system.

6. During your most recent term as a judge, have you:

a) had a tax lien filed or other collection procedure instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities?

No

b) been involved in a non-judicial capacity in any legal proceeding whether as a party or otherwise?

No

c) engaged in the practice of law (other than as a judge)?

No

d) held office in any political party?

No

e) held any other local, state or federal office?

No

f) had any complaints, charges or grievances filed against you with the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct, the Alaska Bar Association, or with the Alaska Court System that resulted in public proceedings or sanctions?

No

8. Please provide any other information which you believe would assist the Council in conducting its evaluations and in preparing its recommendations for the 2020 retention elections.

None.

Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

9a. Please list your three most recent jury trials including case names and numbers. Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these trials. (If there are additional pages, please email these to sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us)

Jury Trial Cases

Case 1: In re Morris v.

(Case No: 3AN-25-00963PR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Davyn Williams Alaska Dept of Law, 1031 W. 4th, Ste 200 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Abigail Cazel Assistant Public Defender, 900 W. 5th Ave Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Case 2: State of Alaska v. Douglas Lane

(Case No: 3AN-20-06716CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Alice Curci District Attorney's Office, 310 K St. Ste 520 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Igor Herbey 406 G. St., Ste 301 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Case 3: Emmanuela Gotay v. Mary Pichardo

(Case No: 3AN-24-04177CI)

Total Attorneys:

Atty 1: Jeffrey Barber 540 E. 5th Ave Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Blake Quackenbush 550 W. 8th Ave Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

9b. Please list your three most recent non-jury trials including case names and numbers. Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these trials. (If there are additional pages, please email these to sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us)

Non-Jury Trial Cases

Case 1: Collins v. Thompson

(Case No: 3AN-24-07738CI)

Total Attorneys: 1

Atty 1: Hatton Greer 645 G St, Ste 100 Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Case 2: Banks v. Banks

(Case No: 3AN-24-0802CI)

Total Attorneys: 1

Atty 1: Kara Nyquist 825 W. 8th Ave, Ste 200 Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Case 3: Head v. Head

(Case No: 3AN-24-10420CI)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Valorraine Dattan 645 G St, Ste 100 #558 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Preston Keeler 550 W. 8th Ave Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

9c. Please list your three most recent cases, including case names and numbers, which did not go to trial, but on which you did significant work (such as settlement conference, hearings, motion work, etc.). Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these cases. (If there are additional pages, please email these to sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us)

Cases that Did Not Go to Trial

Case 1: Ladrado v. Ladrado

(Case No: 3AN-22-04108CI)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: John Pharr 1577 C St, Ste 204 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Scott Perkins 205 E Benson Blvd, Ste 324 Anchorage, Alaska 99503
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Case 2: Hemphill v. Hemphill

(Case No: 3AN-25-04630CI)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Megan Hiser 731 I St, Ste 101 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Samantha Fleming 1016 W 6th Ave, #403 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Case 3: Hering v. Hering

(Case No: 3AN-16-08356CI)

Total Attorneys:

Atty 1: Addie Lancaster 310 K St, Ste 306 Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Atty 2: Jessica Falke 825 W 4th Ave, Ste 200 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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