

Judges on Seminole County Ballots – General Election 2020

Justice of the Supreme Court (FLORIDA) If retained, each Justice serves a six-year term beginning in early January following the first merit retention election. The Justice then will again face an up or down vote in the general election occurring just before the six-year term expires. If not retained in office, the Justice will be replaced through the Judicial Nominating Commission system.

Juez de la Corte Suprema

Shall Justice Carlos G. Muñiz of the Supreme Court be retained in office?

Justice Carlos G. Muñiz was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court by Governor Ron DeSantis (R) on January 22, 2019. Muñiz was on Trump's short list for Supreme Court nominee. Prior to joining the Court, he served on the staff of Secretary Betsy DeVos as the presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed general counsel of the United States Department of Education. Muñiz has written two articles for the [James Madison Institute](#): "Parental Notification of a Minor's Termination of Pregnancy" (published Fall 2004); and "It's Time to Fight Judicial Imperialism" (published August 17, 2005) Beginning in December 2006, Muñiz was the policy director of the [Republican Party of Florida](#) In January 2011, Muñiz became deputy attorney general and chief of staff to Florida Attorney General [Pam Bondi](#). In 2013, he was involved in the discussions with Bondi that led her to take no action on consumer complaints against [Trump University](#).^{[7][8]} Age 51 {Far Right}

District Court of Appeal *Corte de Apelaciones de Distrito*

Supreme Court justices and District Courts of Appeal (DCA) judges are appointed by the governor. Newly appointed judges go on the ballot for the first time within two years after appointment. If the voters retain them, they then go on the ballot again every six years. Appeal court judges are appointed by the Governor to serve a 6 year term. At the end of each term, voters choose to keep the judge or to remove them from office. If the judge is voted out, the Governor appoints a new judge.

Job Details

The Appeals Court reviews the decisions of lower courts with a three judge panel. If a person is unhappy with a ruling from this court, they can request higher courts to review the decision. These requests are often denied.

The Florida Appeal Courts are divided into five districts. This site focuses on the [5th District](#), which includes the following counties: Orange, Osceola, Volusia, Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, Lake, Marion, Sumter, Citrus, Hernando, Brevard, and Seminole.

Judicial candidates must be impartial. They are not allowed to run on a platform or declare a party affiliation.

For more judge information <https://www.5dca.org/Judges/>

Shall Judge Kerry I. Evander of the Fifth District Court of Appeal be retained in office?

Judge Evander was appointed to the Fifth District Court of Appeal by Gov. Jeb Bush (R) in July 2006. He is a member of the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission. Judge Evander earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Florida in 1976, with Honors, and his Juris Doctor from the University of Florida in 1980, with Honors. Was opposed to a motion brought by George Zimmerman, the killer of Trayvon Martin, to have his trial court judge disqualified. In 2014, Judge Evander found that a judge who was guilty of multiple ethical violations should lose her job. [News article](#) {Center}

Shall Judge Jamie Grosshans of the Fifth District Court of Appeal be retained in office?

Justice Jamie R. Grosshans was appointed to the [Florida Supreme Court on September 14, 2020](#). There is no vote needed.

Shall Judge John M. Harris of the Fifth District Court of Appeal be retained in office?

Judge John M. Harris was appointed to the Fifth District Court of Appeal by Governor Rick Scott (R) in July, 2018. Florida today May 11 2018 "Whether you call it a 'Lactation Lounge' or simply a 'Nursing Room,' the courthouse recently celebrated a ribbon-cutting for their new second-floor facility made possible by the Brevard chapter of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers and 18th Judicial Circuit Chief Judge John Harris." When an employer wrote

a letter to Judge Harris stating that he would fire his employee if they were picked for jury duty, Judge Harris wrote a scathing letter in which he threatened to hold the employer in contempt of court. In *State v. Brandon Reynold*, Judge Harris found that the state attorney had improperly combined charges in order to elevate a simple battery to a robbery and overturned the trial court verdict in favor of the prosecution. In *State v. Fortner*, Judge Harris refused to implement the "Stand Your Ground" defense in a situation where the victim was an invited guest. {Center}

Shall Judge Richard B. Orfinger of the Fifth District Court of Appeal be retained in office?

Richard B. Orfinger has been a Judge of the Fifth District Court of Appeal since 2000, Appointed by Governor Jeb Bush, and served as the Court's Chief Judge from 2011 to 2013. He is the longest tenured judge on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals His public service includes working as an Assistant State Attorney in the Seventh Judicial Circuit from 1976-1978. In *Wixtrom v. Dep't of Children & Families* (2004), Judge Orfinger denied an attempt to have a guardian appointed for an incapacitated woman's fetus, and in doing so declined to consider a fetus to have the same rights as a person, upholding *Roe v. Wade*. This decision went against the wishes of Jeb Bush, the Governor who appointed Judge Orfinger. {Leans slight left}

Shall Judge Meredith Sasso of the Fifth District Court of Appeal be retained in office?

Judge Meredith L. Sasso joined the Fifth District Court of Appeal in January 2019, after being appointed by Governor Rick Scott (R). Judge Sasso served on the Office of the General Counsel to Governor Rick Scott from 2016 to 2019. In this role, she litigated before all levels of Florida courts, along with federal trial courts. This team also advised the Governor and his Executive Office about constitutional duties, personnel and ethics issues, and legal policy. In that role, she was also involved in vetting judicial candidates and judicial nominating commission members. She is a conservative, [textualist](#) judge and is a member of the [Federalist Society](#). {Far Right}

Shall Judge F. Rand Wallis of the Fifth District Court of Appeal be retained in office?

Judge Wallis was appointed to the Fifth District Court of Appeal by Gov. Rick Scott (R) in May 2013. Before that, Gov. Charlie Crist (D) appointed Judge Wallis to the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court in January 2008. Had a minor scandal in 2010 when he told a murder suspect about to go to trial that he had been endorsed by the state attorney and the local chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police, leading to over 20 motions for recusal from criminal defendants believing Judge Wallis was biased. [News Article](#) {Right}

County Court Judge Group 1
John Woodard III (Incumbent)

John Woodard III was appointed to his seat by Governor Charlie Christ (D) in 2007 [Biography](#)