PUBLIC ATTITUDES REGARDING THE SELECTION OF JUDGES IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
RESULTS OF A STATEWIDE SURVEY, 2008

APPENDICES

PREPARED FOR:
American Judicature Society
and
Washington State Judicial Selection Coalition

Professor David Brody, J.D., Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Criminal Justice Program
Washington State University, Spokane

Professor Nicholas Lovrich, Ph.D.
Director, Division of Governmental Studies and Services
Washington State University, Pullman

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT
JUDICIAL SELECTION IN WASHINGTON
Survey of Citizen Attitudes and Preferences, 2008

In an effort to learn more about how the people of Washington State view the state’s judicial system, courts, and judges, we are asking citizens from across the entire state to tell us how they feel about these important aspects of our state government. We hope that you will assist us in this effort to assess our court system and the processes used to select judges by completing and returning the survey on the following pages. The survey is short, and should take no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete.

This is a request for completely voluntary participation. Your frank and honest views are important to us, and you can be assured that your responses will remain totally confidential. Only researchers working with the Division of Governmental Studies and Services at Washington State University will have access to your answers and comments. No reports will be made of individual answers or comments, and only summary statistics will be reported in published results of the survey. In filling out the questionnaire you may skip over any questions you feel uncomfortable answering, and you are encouraged to make marginal comments anywhere in the survey booklet that you wish.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study you may contact either of the researchers, Professor David Brody or Professor Nicholas Lovrich at (509) 358-7952.

We have provided a pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope for your convenience. After completing the survey, please return it in this envelope through the U.S. mail.

If you wish to complete this survey on-line, you can go to the following website: http://dgss.wsu.edu/survey.html and use the five-digit code number at the bottom of the page for accessing the on-line survey.

Thank you in advance for taking the few minutes it takes to participate in this effort to learn about how the people of Washington feel about the selection of their judges.

David Brody
Criminal Justice Program
Washington State University

Nicholas Lovrich
Department of Political Science
Washington State University

NOTE: The ID number on this questionnaire is used only to coordinate mailings. When you return your survey, your number is checked off our mailing list and you will not be bothered by follow-up contacts.

Survey Distribution Control # ______________
If you would like to receive a copy of the summary of survey results, please make a check here [ ]
SECTION 1: EXPERIENCES WITH THE COURT SYSTEM AND JUDICIAL ELECTIONS

First, we would like to ask you about your personal experiences with the court system. Please mark the circles for each preferred answer on the questions below.

1. Have you ever dealt with the court system in each of the following ways?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Served as a juror?</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been a party in a court case?</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testified as a witness in a court proceeding?</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. To your recollection, in general, how often do you vote in elections for judges?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always or Almost Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Often</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. If you answered “Not Often,” “Almost Never,” or “Never” in question 2, please indicate whether the following items were reasons for your not voting in judicial elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Not Voting</th>
<th>Major reason</th>
<th>Minor reason</th>
<th>Not a reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courts don't affect my life</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't have enough information about candidates</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested in judicial elections</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one was worth voting for</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know enough about the court system</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. During the August 2008 primary elections, in which of the following judicial contests did you cast a vote?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voted</th>
<th>Did Not Vote</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Appeals</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior Court</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. We have listed a number of words and phrases some people use to describe judges in the Washington courts. For each word or phrase listed, please indicate how well you think it describes the judges serving in Washington courts. [Words and phrases listed in alphabetical order]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountable to the public</th>
<th>Very Well</th>
<th>Well</th>
<th>Badly</th>
<th>Very Badly</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controlled by special interests</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair and impartial</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For sale</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest and trustworthy</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive to Citizens</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share your values</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Listed below are several specific qualities or traits that may be possessed by judges. If you had a case coming before a court, please indicate how important it would be to you that the judge possessed the quality or trait in question? [Qualities and traits listed in alphabetical order]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair and impartial</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows the law</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protects people’s rights</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive to public opinion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares my values</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION 2: JUDICIAL SELECTION IN WASHINGTON

The next several questions involve how judges are selected in Washington State. A description of the selection system currently being used is provided in the box below.

CURRENT SYSTEM OF JUDICIAL SELECTION IN WASHINGTON STATE

There are 218 supreme court, court of appeals, and superior court judges in Washington State. These judges take office in one of two ways. Judges are either:

a. Elected by voters in nonpartisan elections, or
b. Appointed by the Governor to fill a vacancy due to retirement or death of a current judge.

Currently, 87 judges (40%) reached the bench by nonpartisan election, and 131 judges (60%) reached the bench by being appointed by the Governor.

No matter how judges first reach office, at the end of their terms they must run in a contested election to keep their position. However, if no one challenges a judge, he or she automatically remains in office for another term. In 2008, 84% of judicial elections are uncontested.
7. Given the information presented above, how would you rate the system currently used to select judges?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Neither Good nor Bad</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Very Bad</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why do you feel this way?

8. Regardless of how you feel about the current system of judicial selection, please indicate whether the following aspects of that system have a positive or negative effect on Washington’s courts (listed in alphabetical order).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Effect</th>
<th>Positive Effect</th>
<th>No Effect</th>
<th>Negative Effect</th>
<th>Negative Effect</th>
<th>Very Negative Effect</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising by judicial candidates</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising by special interest groups</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic retention of judges who aren’t challenged</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates raising campaign contributions</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor appointing judges for midterm vacancies</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges having to consider what a majority of voters think when making judicial decisions</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges running in contested elections (if opposed)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial elections being non-partisan</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION 3: COMMISSION SYSTEM OF JUDICIAL SELECTION

A proposal has been made to change the way judges are selected in Washington. A description of this system is provided in the box below.

**COMMISSION SYSTEM**

Under the commission system method, a bipartisan, broad-based commission (made up equally of lawyers and non-lawyers from across the state) interviews and evaluates candidates for judicial positions and recommends the most highly qualified to the Governor. The Governor is then required to appoint one of the people recommended by the commission. This system is sometimes referred to as “merit selection.” Under this system all judges would face periodic retention elections in which voters decide whether each judge should remain in office.

9. Given the information presented above, how would you rate the commission system for selecting judges?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Neither Good nor Bad</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Very Bad</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why do you feel this way?
10. Regardless of how you believe Washington judges should be selected, please indicate what effect the following components of the commission system would have on Washington courts. [Effects listed in alphabetical order]

| Ability of voters to remove judges whether or not they’re challenged in a contested election | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Having a nominating commission make recommendations for judges to the governor | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Not using contested elections to choose judges | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Requiring the governor to appoint a person recommended by the commission | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Using retention elections to determine whether a judge stays in office | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |

11. In considering the two systems of selecting judges we have described, please indicate on the scale below which system you favor for selecting judges in Washington State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY FAVOR CURRENT SYSTEM</th>
<th>NO PREFERENCE</th>
<th>STRONGLY FAVOR COMMISSION SYSTEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1    2    3    4    5    6    7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION 4: JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

A number of states conduct performance evaluations of their judges. These programs ask attorneys, jurors, and other individuals who recently appeared before a judge to evaluate the judge on qualities such as integrity, legal ability, communication, and temperament based on their personal observations. The results are collected, compiled, and distributed to the public to provide information for voters to use in judicial elections. The results are also given to the judge to promote self-improvement.

12. Would you support or oppose the development of a judicial performance evaluation program in Washington?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Support</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
<th>Strongly Oppose</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why do you feel this way?

13. Would having information about a judge’s performance make you more or less likely to vote in a judicial election?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Much More Likely</th>
<th>Somewhat More Likely</th>
<th>No Effect</th>
<th>Somewhat Less Likely</th>
<th>Much Less Likely</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 5: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC TRUST

In order to have some background on your views regarding judicial selection, we would like to ask you some questions regarding how you feel about how much trust can be placed in other people and in the major public institutions serving the public.

14. Generally speaking would you say most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful dealing with people?

Most people can be trusted O
You can’t be too careful O
Depends O
Don’t know O

15. Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you given the chance, or would they try to be fair?

Most people try to take advantage of you O
Most people try to be fair O
Depends O
Don’t know O

16. Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or they are mostly looking out for themselves?

Most people try to be helpful O
Most people mainly look out for themselves O
Depends O
Don’t know O

17. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Great Deal</th>
<th>Only Some</th>
<th>Hardly Any At All</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Supreme Court</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Legislature</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Supreme Court</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Superior Court</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Schools</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Media</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. On fiscal policy issues (taxes, government spending) where would you place yourself on an ideological scale?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Conservative</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Very Liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1------2------3---| 4------5--6---7--| 8------9-----10

19. On social policy issues (school vouchers, gay rights) where would you place yourself on an ideological scale?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Conservative</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Very Liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1------2------3---| 4------5--6---7--| 8------9-----10
SECTION 6: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In order to make certain our survey results are drawn from people from all walks of life we need to ask you some questions about your personal background.

20. What is your gender? Male O Female O

21. Which of the following categories contains your present age?
   18-29 O 30-39 O 40-49 O 50-59 O 60 or older O

22. What best describes your racial/ethnic background? (Check all that apply)
   White/Caucasian O
   African American O
   Latino/Hispanic O
   Native American O
   Asian/Pacific Islander O
   Other O Please specify: _______________________

23. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   Some high school O
   High school graduate O
   Some college or trade school O
   Community college degree (AA) O
   Four-year college degree O
   Graduate Degree O

24. What is your employment status?
   Self-employed O
   Employed outside your home O
   Homemaker O
   Student O
   Retired O
   Not employed (not retired) O

25. What is your present or most recent occupation? If you are retired, please note your former occupation.
   __________________________________________

26. How long have you lived in Washington State? _____ Years

   This concludes the survey. Thank you very much for your time and effort.

Please return your completed survey in the postage-prepaid envelope that arrived with the questionnaire.

**NOTE**: If you would be willing to speak with someone regarding this survey and the issues it covered, please provide your name and either your phone number or your e-mail address below.

___________________________________
APPENDIX B

RESPONSE FREQUENCIES
Respondent County of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asotin</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelan</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clallam</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowlitz</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garfield</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grays Harbor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsap</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kittitas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klickitas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okanogan</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pend Oreille</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skagit</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skamania</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snohomish</td>
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DO YOU BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECT ON WASHINGTON'S COURTS?

**Advertising by judicial candidates**

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### Governor appointing judges for midterm vacancies

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Judges running in contested elections (if opposed)

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Judicial elections being non-partisan

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DO YOU BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ASPECTS OF A COMMISSION SYSTEM WOULD HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECT ON WASHINGTON'S COURTS?

Ability of voters to remove judges whether or not they're challenged in a contested election

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Having a nominating commission make recommendations for judges to the governor

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Please indicate on the scale below which system you favor for selecting judges in Washington State. (1= current system, 7 = commission system)

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Would you support or oppose the development of a judicial performance evaluation program in Washington?

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Would having information about a judge's performance make you more or less likely to vote in a judicial election?

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**HOW WELL DO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS DESCRIBE WASHINGTON’S JUDGES?**

**Accountable to the public**

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**Controlled by special interests**

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**Fair and impartial**

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### Honest and Trustworthy

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ON A SCALE OF 1-10, WITH 10 BEING UNIMPORTANT AND 10 BEING VERY IMPORTANT, HOW IMPORTANT THE JUDGE POSSESSED THE QUALITY OR TRAIT IN QUESTION?\(^1\)

**Fair and impartial**

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**Follows the law**

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\(^1\) Response options with no responses omitted.
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### Shares my values

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### Which of the following categories contains your present age?

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### Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background?

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What is the highest level of education you have completed?

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What is your employment status?

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APPENDIX C

VOLUNTEERED RESPONSES
COMMENTS REGARDING CURRENT SYSTEM OF JUDICIAL SELECTION

- They should be elected.
- I am not sure that leaving a judge in an office that they were appointed to by the govern is necessarily the way to go maybe that judges does not always reflect the legal/lawful way to do things if the govern is not always just.
- If a "bad" judge reaches office, attorneys, cops, journalists can "flush" them out.
- Some reached by election, some by governor appointment. Seems balanced
- The current system seems expedient, though the fact that a partisan elected official can appoint judges to offices that are supposedly non-partisan is problematic to me.
- We don't have the people who want to get into these positions.
- The information given out in a nonpartisan election is so sketchy that its hard to know what kind of person you are voting for and being appointed by the governor is definitely a partisan action solely initiated by one person.
- That many appointed by the Governor makes appointment political. To vote better, candidates should be known as well as Senators and Representatives.
- It is theoretically OK. It's unfortunate that so many spots are uncontested.
- I have not been _____ in the court system.
- I get my ballot and vote they way I feel would be the best for the job.
- I never know who to vote for in state-wide elections, even after reading the voter's pamphlet.
- If 60% are chosen by 1 person, then I don't doubt that 1 person is going to choose who share their same views and not give the people who it'll end up affecting the most a say or choice. So basically, the people who have to deal with that judge are fucked from the get go cuz that shouldn't be 1 man's decision. The people should get a say. It pisses me off our current judges aren't being contested. Step up!
- It would depend on how the judge is doing as to whether they should be contested or not.
- It would appear that the checks and balances between the executive and judicial are somewhat compromised.
- The people should be voting on all the judges even when there is retirement and/or death.
- As stated above, 60% of our judges are appointed by the whims of one person. I feel there should be a system of checks and balances in the selection of judges. Also, when we have the opportunity to vote for a judge, they are only allowed to provide a brief biography and a brief statement about why we should vote for them. Under Washington's Code of Judicial Conduct, they are not allowed to provide a statement of core beliefs (How they would vote on certain core issues). This leave the voter blind as to who he is voting for.
• It allows government by the people.
• Don't think the Governors or the President should have that right.
• The governor has a tendency to follow party lines and would appoint judges in less than an impartial way.
• The bench is too important for a political individual i.e. Governor to be able to stack the bench with.
• How "non-partisan" is an appointed judge? The governor will appoint a judge that has the same beliefs as him/her and the judge may feel obligated to be overly supportive of governor that appointed him/her.
• Too many political appointees.
• Governors don't always know all the judges--supposed to be bi-partisan--not always true. I rarely knew much about judges other than what is in a voter's pamphlet.
• They all seem fair and honest and try to help to do the right!
• They are not Impartial
• Just because they are not challenged doesn't mean they should remain in office.
• It's most fair and practical
• I feel they must be doing a good job or someone would be running against them.
• I can't think of a better way to do this.
• Judges doing their jobs well enough not to spur someone to challenge them.
• It's fair
• Did 60% die or retire this term? Uncontested--why?
• I always like choices when voting, as opposed to people running "un-opposed". Something positive about the system of selection is that a governor can make appointments.
• There should always be someone to run against them. It’s hard to get rid of a bad judge.
• NO OPONENTS
• The voting public knows very little about the qualifications of the judges. The pre-selection process may be based on political favors.
• Most people don't have a clue about who they are electing or why. We read the voters pamphlet and guess who will be best.
• 84% uncontested is too high.
• Judges appointed by governors share the same interests of the governor. They should be nonpartisan.
• It seems to work as we do not have a lot of problems now.
• It seems to work well.
• No contact.
Need more information about judges when they are up for election.

I do not have any suggestions for a better system to replace what we have.

Because many people (myself inc.) really don't know much about the individual judges. There should be some kind of a system where they are chosen based on their integrity.

It is probably the most fair way to do this, just wish there was more information on their judicial records available. Too many run unopposed.

Should have more lawyers running for office.

Governor can have too much influence on judicial opinion.

The case load is so overwhelming that there are not enough Judges, appoint more Judges.

1. Election by voters who are not well informed about quality and _____ of the people.  
2. Appointment sometimes becomes a matter of political patronage rather than qualification and experience.

Voters should have more information and Governor shouldn't misuse so much appointment power.

There is not enough competition for the positions. Therefore, we don't get to learn about candidates for judge's positions. Pay is 1/2 what it should be.

Campaigning is expensive and time consuming and can become political. Yet citizens need to know who they are voting for. Campaigns are often funded by special interest groups. Full contribution funding should be disclosed.

If that person did not do a good job they should not automatically be allowed to come back to work.

I don't like the governor getting to choose. Should be temp judge then have a election for new one.

I would like to have more confidence in the selection process. Nonpartisan election assures impartiality. Suspect of appointed "political" agenda.

I really don't know a lot about the judicial selection process in the State of Washington.

Judges should be elected or appointed for their knowledge and the law and their fairness in administrating it. They need to know they will be judged also.

Not enough info about persons running. Most of time not enough persons to choose from. You never know what a person's legal and moral philosophy is.

Usually all we know about a prospective judge is what we read in their own literature.

As far as I'm concerned, no public "official" should ever be appointed by any partisan individual. I.e.: Governor, mayor…etc.

The qualification of an incumbent is never really measured if they have no contest. The close relationship of the Bar and the judicial system sways who will run and win.

Not every one of the judges needs to have opposition. If a judge is doing well, it is better to leave that judge in place. If he or she is doing poorly, then someone will normally
step up to run.

- Can't think of a better way.
- My expectation is that I should be able to trust the Governor to make well researched appointments to the bench.
- Being appointed could bring favoritism and create a very political position. It leads me to think we need more judges if they are not volunteering for the positions.
- Unless a voter spends a great deal of time researching the judicial actions taken by a particular judge, we are not in a good position to select one from another. A system must be in place to provide for judges - this method is currently efficient enough to do so.
- Good because if judge is good they stay, bad because if bad they stay, it's just neither.
- It seems reasonable, I just don't think there is enough information given to the public about specific judges, I have never cared about electing judges, however I think it is important.
- I think ALL judges should be put in by elections by we the people.
- I feel our judges are good, i.e. follow traits listed in question 6.
- If a judge is removed from the bench for any reason during his or her term, the Gov. needs to put someone in then he can be elected after that term.
- The governor should not appoint--should all be elected.
- Judges or anyone appointed by the Governor are going to share the Governor's views and usually goals--Politics should not be part of judges selections.
- I feel all judges should be voted on by the people.
- I believe we should follow the federal system of Judicial Appointment with approval of the legislature. I do not believe elections make the judges more responsive to the people, in contrast, in a contested election, it may make them more responsive to special interests.
- We need to know more about the qualification and thoughts and ideals of each person wanting to be a judge.
- Stronger candidates are produced by competition for each vacancy--84% too high resulting in good ol boy.
- Uncontested races can leave a judge on the bench for decades. Perhaps they would work harder for the people if they were held more accountable.
- Because there is no way to get a judge out of office if no one runs against him. I believe that this gives them a sense of security.
- Because majority are not chosen by voters.
- Because it takes a lot of work to get to the judges seat.
- Experience is in any job is important especially in our court system. However, I would think that an attorney who ran again a Judge and lost would have a hard time in the
Judge's courtroom. Thus, good and bad!!!

- I don't get enough info about them.
- Just because the are uncontested doesn't mean they are good judges, there should be a better way rotating them.
- It gives the general public a large voice in how our judicial system is run. We have a chance to choose for ourselves whom we wish to represent our values and interpret our laws in the one place where we expect to find fair and impartial mediation of legal disputes.
- Because I really don't know if it is or isn't the best way. There should be a change at least after 10 years in position so the don't get complacent.
- Most governors are lawyers and who best to know the qualified judges
- nonpartisan election should be in place
- We really know little about them! Except for voter's pamphlet, I don't really pay attention to them.
- Because it doesn't leave a choice to say whether this person is doing his job right. We need to encourage more qualified people to run to give us more of choice when election day comes.
- I don't feel that a person should be automatically given a position because of apathy, they should be elected to the position by the voters.
- You end up with the same kind of justice or lack thereof for any foreseeable future.
- By the people. Voted in by the people only by the people.
- If the governor is still in office, presumable he/she appoints people with the same political leanings as me.
- I feel they should all be elected by the people in a vote, not appointed by the governor.
- While I feel ALL judges should be elected by the people they serve, special elections every time a bench comes open is cumbersome and costly so the Gov. appointee with follow up election seems logical. I do wish the numbers were reversed to 60:40 elected judges or better.
- You need competition to keep judges sharp and up to date. Being unopposed allows them to become lap and open to unsavory dealings.
- Need to be held accountable for their actions
- I feel they have voted on.
- Judges are very seldom opposed in elections. Their ruling records are never disclosed so its hard to decide between judges.
- The current process is good, but could be improved.
- Can't think of a better way.
- Because of the pay and nobody wants to be a judge.
- Not many want to be judges.
I don't think the Governor shares my values. In fact, it's obvious that she doesn't.

It's good that eventually all Judges are elected in a nonpartisan election. I'm disappointed at the high percentage of judges who are initially appointed by the governor feeling that politics must enter into the initial selection. I am also disappointed in the number of uncontested races locally.

I have no complaint regarding selection, whether by election or appointment. I'd say the system is OK. However, I do want to complain about the lack of REAL information about a particular judge running for election. The info in the Voter's Pamphlet is entirely subjective and without substance. I could write up a blurb about any one judge knowing nothing about them and it would sound just as good as what we're offered. Instead, I'd like to see a sample of each judge's rulings or opinions. I realize such information would need to be distilled and brief, but it would be more meaningful than "impartial", "well qualified", "raised two kids and two cats", or "endorsed by XYZ". I think judges wield incredible power. As it stands, I feel I usually vote deaf and blind, hoping for the best.

It depends which party of the governor that appoints them.

Governor appoints partisan judges (Dem or Rep) depending on party. Should be filled by vote within so many days. County by county where vacancy occurs.

Governor position is POLITICAL!! If that person can appoint judges (60%) and the judges can stay in their position because their position is uncontested; what then makes them impartial and not beholden to the political powers that be??

In non-contested elections=the judge has an opening to being impacted by special interest groups--appointed is sometimes important to continue the office-->next election.

Not enough positions are contested.

Because of selection in the beginning by the 2 methods.

There's no way to remove a judge if they have become tainted or prejudiced.

I prefer the vote of the people to the appointment by a governor, so I am glad the appointments are short-term (must be confirmed by people's vote in the next election cycle, if the judge is to remain in office). However, I feel there should be a way to make it possible for the people to become reasonably well informed before they vote. And why are so many judicial elections uncontested? Are potential judges pressured to let the incumbents remain in office? If so, this is certainly an unhealthy situation.

Too little information provided to make a decision.

Judges do not appear to judge on the law but tend to try to make new law from the bench. There is little or no information available to know in advance what a potential judge will be like.

I am a firm believer in the election of judges by a democratic election whereby the majority rules. In the event that a position becomes vacant, it is important that the vacancy be filled in a timely manner, as is the current practice. The checks and balance comes with the next election when the people can make their wishes known.

Why does no one run against the sitting judge?
• Should be a limit to the times a judge can run uncontested--(3) then must be a review and appointment.
• Seems ok to me, what are other options? Perhaps some help from high level lawyers?--law professors?
• Too narrow of a spectrum. Qualifications known by a few. What makes the Governor an expert?
• 60% are there due to the choice/onion of one person! Doesn't give voters a choice! Why are 84% uncontested?
• The law enforcement officers should have some say!
• It is not a sitting judge's fault if he is not challenged for a new term.
• Both appointed and elected systems have their problems. Appointed indicates a political connection, not necessarily most qualified. The electoral process is often won based on popularity and amount of contributions raised rather than qualification.
• One would assume that if a judge is not being challenged that they have hopefully been doing a good job.
• I agree with both ways (a and b).
• If they don't prove themselves in a positive way they won't be re-elected.
• Fair
• There are checks on appointments with nonpartisan elections.
• I approve of being appointed by the Governor.
• Interesting that the governor has so much power. So how she leans is how the judge will probably lean…Hmmm.
• No matter what, in the end the public gets to vote if the judge decides to continue serving.
• I feel it would be best that all judges are appointed but be term limited--yet a longer term than an elected office than appointed term.
• Majority of the judges should be voted by the citizens.
• A contested election provides more information about the candidates. We need more information about judges running for election.
• There is no mention of whether candidates are even qualified. This leads to cronyism in my opinion.
• I'm not sure why no one challenges the judges since they could do so. I don't see how this is a problem with the system.
• The general public has no way of obtaining enough information to determine if a candidate is qualified to be a judge.
• Not knowledgeable enough--need to more about the individuals, their judgments and arguments, etc.
• Not exactly bad by not good in particular I am against election of judges and
appointments without review

- I would like to have them run under a party label and not disguise their positions.
- Even though the voters have no part in filling open judicial positions, I would hope the governor and her/his staff would thoroughly research the background and qualifications of those under consideration. I agree voters should be involved, but it is impractical if a position comes open mid-term.
- I am not aware that the current system causes problems.
- Don't know enough about outcome of court cases
- I'm not clear on the process used by the Governor to appoint the judges. Are there safeguards to prevent political cronyism?
- I've had limited experience with the judicial system so I do not have a strong opinion one way or the other
- Voters are not experts in the field of selecting judges. I rely on recommendations from attorney friends and I'm not sure if voters have done their research leading to poor elected judges at times but most cases it seems to work.
- Is there a better way?
- Judges should be elected.
- Because I am not sure of all the facts. For all I know other methods of selection might be worse.
- Election of judges is a stupid way to select qualified judges. Invites corruption.
- Other methods could be worse.
- Judges should be elected.
- People don't know enough about judges to make the election anything more than a popularity contest.
- It seems to have worked well for years.
- By requiring judges to stand for election at the end of their terms, this gives a measure of public oversight of the judicial system. This allows judges to be removed if they no longer represent the will of the people, have indulged in impropriety or unsuitable behavior or were truly not qualified to have been serving.
- You may or may not get a good candidate-Who knows?
- As good as we can practically do.
- If there are no challengers, it would appear that the judges are doing a good job, unless challengers were ________________.
- Works fairly well most of the time, _________ judges can be removed.
- Don't think elections are the best way to select judges; uncontested elections are even worse. I'd like to see some kind of blue-ribbon, open impartial system for selecting judges, kind of like a civil service register. If the Governor appoints, the judges should be subject to Legislative confirmation, like federal judges are.
I do not know much about the judges, even though I read the voters' guide. Difficult to gauge their suitability, other than most of them have law degrees.

Many were uncontested because they don't have anyone running against them. They can't change that.

I would rather have 60% by election and 40% by appointment.

That seems like a very high percentage of judges appointed to fill a vacancy caused by retirement or death. Sounds ripe for partisan maneuvering, with 60% of judges only indirectly responsible to the electorate. That may good or bad. Would like to know more. As for 84% of judicial elections being uncontested, unless the expense of running against an incumbent judge is prohibitive, that may only indicate general satisfaction, or indifference, with the judiciary.

We should use Alaska's system. Qualified applicants apply for open judgeships and then are screened by the Alaska Judicial Council (made up of a Supreme Court Justice, 3 attorneys, and 3 lay people). A bar and police poll is also performed. Applicants are interviewed and the council sends at least two names to the Governor to be appointed. Once appointed, judges must stand for retention election after three years, then even six years. No one runs against them - it is not a popularity vote. This system does not completely eliminate the political element but at least only truly qualified applicants are considered by the Governor. Additionally, judges do not run a campaign. In fact, judicial ethics in Alaska prohibit sitting judges who are up for retention from doing anything except their jobs. Judges cannot participate in political campaigns of other candidates either. They don't campaign, they don't raise money for their campaigns, so they are not beholden to special interests. In spite of other corruption in Alaska, the judiciary is very clean. Any state that does not consider this system is not doing justice to its citizens.

If a judge isn't challenged, he or she remains in office. The judge could be incompetent.

Decent judges

Don’t know enough.

You can't force people to run.

Sorry. I just don't see it as something that concerns me.

It seems that there should be a way to vote someone out of office even without a challenger. Then they could be replaced by appointment. This may make judges more accountable to the public.

Judges appointed by governors won't be non-partisan--that can unfairly bias the judge pool.

It depends upon whether or not the Governor will choose based upon competence or politics. Gregoire always chooses politics.

I don't think most voters are qualified to select which lawyers would best uphold the law in an impartial way.

What's better?
• The one problem is understanding their qualifications. So being appointed has merits but we can vote someone out if they offered the electorate.

• I prefer federal system

• It is troubling that so many are appointed and then, the majority being in non-contested races, get to continue serving. However, I'm not against appointments (these positions need to be filled in a timely manner) and it's not their fault that no one wants to run against them. So, I'm not sure what a superior system might be - one that results in more contested races so judges feel accountable and there is some turn-over in the system? But, you can't force people to run against these judges (just like you can't force people to vote), so I'm not sure how you improve things...

• All should be voted in.

• I think that judges should not be elected but appointed by a non partisan commission.

• Judges should be impartial and not subject to political pressure

• I would prefer a higher percentage would be appointed through non-partisan election

• It is what it is. Overall this system works and we have a variety of judges in the system which would be the case with any process for obtaining judges.

• I don't know how to find out information about the judges running for election. I don't think I can make an informed decision on who or how anyone gets elected.

• In general, we--the public, are not truly qualified to select judges--I believe judges should be recommended to the Governor, Mayor, etc by qualified panels.

• It seems too automatic--no competition.

• Judges should always have to be elected. Too many appointments lead to a biased base of judges.

• I don't believe judges should be elected by the populace.

• They eventually will be elected in nonpartisan election.

• People don't always know much about the judges. And when elections are uncontested, inferior judges may stay in office.

• It seems fair.

• Don't know enough about judges to really vote on them. Didn't know 60% appointed by Governor!

• Because of my limited knowledge of the judicial system.

• Is this because pay for judges is not high enough and lawyers don't want to take a cut in pay to accept the job.

• I know nothing about the judges other than what is printed in the voters' pamphlet. I base my judgment primarily on how they are rated.

• Would like to see more challenged at ballot. 84% is too high for uncontested.

• I have to care for my family. I don't know.

• I feel that all judges should be elected by people in the community that they are serving.
• Pluses and minuses to both ways. People don't know the judges, maybe politicians do. But why do judges know politicians more than the public?
• The Governor should not have so much power. The governor represents special interests and big money companies. The courts need to be returned to the peers of the people.
• All judges should be elected for every term
• We don't need an election every time someone dies or retires, but too easy to keep dead wood in office if not contested at end of term. We really don't know how they are doing.
• Voting does not seem to be the best way to appoint judges and there are too many issues surrounding special interest groups, politics to let them be appointed.
• We need to provide more information to voters on judges and their views to the voters.
• Most are appointed and then 84% of elections are uncontested. I don't see how public opinion weighs in and that is not good.
• I need to know what qualifies someone to be a judge. What education? How are they evaluated--performance during their term?
• Candidates are largely unknown or uncontested or both, what's the value of being 'elected'. Should be appointed by a 'body of their peers'.
• There are so many variables among the prospective judges that no single system will work in every situation.
• I don't object to governor appointment but if they automatically keep their jobs if uncontested and 84% are uncontested then there's no quality control.
• No one __________ if there judges are truly qualified and unbiased.
• How else would we get the positions filled - especially if no one wants to run for it? However, I know nothing of the system’s ability to get them out of office if for some reason they are doing a horrible job.
• Being uncontested likely indicates no great dissatisfaction of the judges behavior/rulings.
• Seems fair and logical.
• Keeps judges out of political races w/all the _____ $.
• I feel that there should be more qualified people running for being a judge so that there will be more variety in the type of people we vote for. Even though I'm not really involved with the court system, I know that there are people that really do care about who gets elected.
• No judge should have a free pass. there must be competition for that seat.
• Bad judges if not challenged will continue to keep their position indefinitely. The number of judges appointed by the governor is disproportionate to the elected. The judges reflect the governors values.
• Too many appointments. Judges retire a little early to give you an appointment.
• Becoming a judge should not be a popularity contest. People should become a judge
based on their qualifications. I always vote according to the rating the Bar Association gives each candidate. I do not investigate each candidate nor should I have to. The Bar Association does that for me and is in a much better position to rate who is qualified and who is not. If the governor elects a judge and then that judge faces an uncontested election then I would assume that judge is doing his or her job well.

- Could be better
- They should be elected to fill a vacancy instead of appointed by Governor.
- Governor should never be involved and they should always find someone to run against another because just because there is no other doesn't mean the current one is good.
- Need a better screening process to ensure that only qualified candidates are in the running.
- I don't think that the governor should be making a majority of the appointments. I'm surprised so many were uncontested.
- Because I do not know that much about the legal system to determine who would and who would not be a good judge and I don't learn what I need to know through the voter pamphlet.
- There is not enough information to make a decision. I find that in voting for judges, I do not know enough about a judge in most cases, how did they handle certain cases, and for that matter they should be following the law anyway. I do not think the public knows enough about the judicial system or about judges to elect them into office. I include myself in this. I do not believe the public should be making these decisions, it makes no sense for them to do this.
- In King County, judges are elected either by a liberal governor or a liberal voting base. As a conservative, I feel judges should be non partisan and judge solely by what is written as law.
- He would have to be fair and knowledgeable or the public wouldn't vote them in for another term.
- It appears that judges, in general, are not elected by the people.
- Seems presents system is logical but I would like to see the arguments for other systems of judicial selection.
- Appointments by the Governor is partisan and should not be allowed at all.
- Politics may play into appointments; it gives the Governor a lot of power. Most people don't know as much about judicial elections and may not vote; uncontested elections perpetuate the status quo.
- Salivating judge theory
- No substantive information available regarding judicial decisions to guide cognizant voting.
- How do we as voters really know a judges qualification? I could see the Governor having a agenda that is not in the public interest.
- I read the voter's manual, listen to what others have to say about the candidates and then
make my selection.

- If there is a governor who can be trusted and that person was elected, then there is reason to believe that there is some accountability. The process is less random then the political process as a whole.

- Seems fair. Can't think of a better way.

- Voters not qualified to select judges by being uninformed on qualifications.

- I think they shouldn't always take the word of law enforcement because sometimes they're not always right just because they we judges.

- With no challengers--we can be allowing a poor judge to remain in office--Let's look at lawyers more critically also!

- keeps politics out of it

- I don't have a better way to select them

- Not really qualified to judge a judge.

- Sounds like it is fairly balanced.

- Both Republican and Democratic Governor's can appoint judges and with 40% being elected to office and all having to run for office to keep their position this seems reasonable to me.

- Too easy for bad judges to remain in office.

- How do we know that they have done a good job? I do not like the idea that they are not accountable.

- Don't know if there is a better option.

- Governors are advised by the bar association and other experts, and their appointments are public, scrutinized by the press and others. I have been impressed with the quality of their appointments. And if a judge is a dud, the election process removes them over time, because the press and other evaluators do communicate their observations to the voters.

- Due to lack of information and lack of interest, judges get in by running unopposed and stay in the same. Plus the Governor appointments allow the politics at the Governor too much control.

- I wouldn't think either all elected or all appointed would be good and this 40/60 split seems appropriate.

- Do not witness their vote, am not aware.

- The judges should be a nonpartisan position, but if 60% are appointed by a politician, there is partisan politics involved in the decision.

- I think it shows the citizens’ are not involved in the selection.

- More should be non-partisan

- I don't believe a judge should be on the bench "for life." It seems to me that if judges were required to run after a term, then they would be held accountable to the public.
The U.S. Supreme Court is an example of how self-centered, egocentric individuals who are appointed by a reactionary president could poison the spirit of the law.

- I do not want them appointed by the Governor who may not share my views or moral standards.
- Governor not always looking out for the people.
- The general public does not understand the law or the court system and doesn't necessarily comprehend what it takes to be a good judge. The Governor is subject to influence by groups with money, particularly during election years.
- It seems to me there are probably qualified people who don't step up so must continue good or not.
- The Governor's appointments are unilateral and based on political ideology. Given the ratio of elected to appointed judges and the percentage of uncontested elections it is obvious that the majority of judges do not have to have accountability to the public. The result could be a biased interpretation of the law and constitution.
- The non-partisan election process does offer an opportunity for the judicial candidate to share his/her background, priorities and jurisprudence philosophy.
- They should be by election, just like politicians
- CON: A governor may want to influence court decisions by appointing people who are politically aligned with him/her. (Even though, in my opinion, a judge should be unconcerned with politics in interpreting the law, politics must play a role in appointments, and elections for that matter.) PRO: However, the governor has the opportunity to interview qualified individuals. CON: The public doesn't spend much time choosing judges--I chose in the August primary based on the biographical descriptions; it didn't seem like a particularly good way to decide who should be a judge. PRO: The People can be sure that they have had some influence on who the judges are.
- Voters are not familiar enough to vote on most candidates.
- I think that all elections should have two candidates so that all (incumbent) should have the re-state why they are the best for the position.
- the majority of judges aren't elected. on the one hand, running for judge office seems weird, because it shouldn't be political, but on the other hand, being appointed by the governor seems like it's subject to more vagaries than election by the masses.
- I think it is a fair system.
- A judge appointed by the Governor will by definition be a political appointee. With the likelihood of an uncontested future election, the entire judiciary is stacked by the party in power in Washington state. It is completely contrary to the concept of independent branches of government.
- These people are unknown to me. I think all judges should be appointed by the Attorney General of the State.
- Feel that all should be by the voters
- I don't like the fact that one person chooses 60% of the judicial power. We should look
at why are they retiring so fast--what's the problem there?

- If most are appointed, it is subject to partisan favorship.
- How else should the electoral process be conducted.
- Due to the lack of info on judicial elections it would take significant research to make a well informed judicial vote.
- All should be elected. Governor should have no say. 60% appointed is ridiculous.
- Requires elections for all--implies accountability.
- I don't know too much about this.
- A panel of citizens should be assembled to review the judge's rulings and the panel then decides if the judge may enter the election.
- If judges always had to run in elections, they would have to raise money, potentially making them more accountable to those who donated to them. On the other hand, elections give the public the ability to get rid of those judges who perform poorly.
- I don't see much change.
- Because I respect and believe in the governor.
- Judges need to be more prominent during elections campaigns. For me, how they have ruled is not available for my decisions.
- Every election should be contested. Reasons for uncontested elections should be discovered and corrected. Those appointed by the Governor generally are appointed due to their "special interest" platforms. The system has lost it credibility and is no longer associated with the roots of our Constitution. They are there as a business not "for the people, by the people"!
- Voters are not always knowledgeable. They don't know what the heck they are voting for. I like the appointed system.
- Running for election does bother me as it requires a judge to cater to the masses, rather than be impartial.
- Too high a percentage were appointed by Governor.
- The people should elect judges, not the Governor.
- All should be elected.
- This leaves the majority of judge selection up to one person--the Governor. Not enough checks and balances.
- With the Governor selecting the majority of judges, it no longer is nonpartisan. The Governor's choices surely reflect, in this case, her agenda and values.
- Seems to work fairly well; question how an individual governor would weight candidate
- I guess I'm shocked at the numbers. I'm bothered by the possibility of governors appointing judges to promote their own agenda.
- Judges should be elected--politics lobbyist political factious get in way B/n Gov and judges--should be nonpartisan and voted ______ by public.
• Voters generally do not have enough info to select judges wisely, and selection by the Governor can be too political.

• Legal branch of government seems to be a "special case". Removed to an extent from electoral selection and recall… To wit: our ________ Supreme Court.

• The system seems to work. The public has an opportunity to elect a new judge if an appointee fails to serve the public in a satisfactory manner. I have not, for instance, heard of political appointments of the nature of the recently resigned federal attorney general Gonzales.

• Voters have little idea what the qualifications of a candidates are. And governor based appoints are often politically motivated or at least influenced.

• Minimize the effect of partisan politics on the judicial system. If there is a problem, the position is challenged openly.

• Because not all judges are fair and good and no one runs against them so we are stuck with bad judges sometimes.

• If they were bad, they would be voted out.

• Should be elected by individuals, not appointed.

• Do not feel any judges should be appointed by the governor and should all be elected in office by public vote.

• Retention of poor--unsatisfactory, unchallenged judges.

• All judges should be non-partisan--allowing the Gov to appoint more judges than those elected creates political judiciary.

• It doesn't seem like the best system, but I have no ideas on how to improve it. So, the system is just O.K.

• I don't like it but I can't think of a better way.

• We need the openings filled. The question is really who is the most qualified to pick the judges. I believe most voters have no clue and the Governor pretty much has a vested interest , or a debt he/she might owe in picking a judge without oversight.

• What do we the people truly know about the one in question? Normally nothing!

• It seems to be working

• Needs to be over 50% nonpartisan elections.

• Poorly qualified, police supportive judges.

• Good mix.

• The people ultimately have a say with their vote.

• No more than 1/3 should be appointed by the Gov.

• Not enough media attention about cases. Bad access to the JIS. "Citizens" have to pay to access court documents and records.

• Most citizens don't know who might be available to run for judge or what their qualifications might be.
- I believe we have been selecting judges by this system for a long time, it seems to be working.
- Best would be voted in--perhaps better w/appointment if they should run in election within the year, ex: next fall election.
- It seems bad, but if there's a check and balance association (maybe the BAR association fills this role), then the current system may be ok. If there isn't a way to weed out unqualified judges, then the system is bad.
- Good nor bad in the governor
- It works.
- There appears to be underlying forces working against competition and giving voters the power to decide judges of choice, evidenced by high number of uncontested elections.
- Everyone is partisan. If you don't know what part they support you don't know their way of thinking.
- Because I think they should all be voted in by the people.
- System open to abuse in many ways. I do not know of a better way than the one in place.
- I say good assuming that if they were doing a questionable job other qualified lawyers would recognize this and run against them to assure that their record was publicized and that they did not return to the bench. If this is not the case this would be a bad situation since there would be no screening process to remove a judge that is unqualified.
- It is pretty clear that the ruling party in the State had great control over the choice of judges and that partisanship rather than impartiality prevails as to the choice regarding a judge's values. Those values in turn come to reflect the standards of society.
- It makes most of the appointments political.
- If appointed by Governor, then it could be political. If voted upon, the public and I are so uninformed. I trust my son, a respected attorney, for his guidance.
- It's all political as judges list nonpartisan and could be very political. Need to follow LAW!
- Its very partisan.
- It is fair.
- The Governor has too much power to appoint judges.
- Not sure of another way to fill the positions.
- Judges should not be elected, it injects too much money and politics into the system. I prefer a combination of merit-based, appointment process.
- We only hear about cases that go wrong or are controversial--which happens occasionally. My guess is that by and large cases mostly go fairly.
- Seems balanced and allows for gaps to be filled in when necessary. Set up to respond to public opinion.
- Judges need to be elected or reelected. Accomplishments and 'Stats' need to be gone.
over and an election part of the system of seating. Accountability is very important for judges.

- The public isn't often aware of the qualifications of a judge. When the governor appoints a person, there is a long selection process. Judges are often unopposed because they are doing well.
- Judges should be voted on.
- The appointments maybe should be made by nonpartisan group of judicial experts at the Supreme Court level. Election of Superior Court is preferred.
- If there is no one running in opposition are we getting the BEST person for the job? Governors can appoint those who agree w/their party. Liberal judges stop much of the timber sale in Central WA one way or another and liberal judges push through laws that go against Biblical principal.
- I have a concern that appointments tend to be political.
- Too many judges appointed by partisan governor.
- Not enough information.
- I am concerned about judges ability to be impartial when they have their eye on reelection. I am also concerned about the influence of political party dogma if they are appointed.
- Why are there not enough qualified judges willing to challenge those positions that are up for reelections?
- Appointed judges for the most part owe someone in government and I see this as influencing decisions.
- well, if the Governor appoints most of them..doesn't really matter what I think, now does it.?
- Public should have more say.
- Human behavior becomes complacent, errors in judgment, no incentive, pay raises automatic.
- I believe election of a judge is critical. However, the seat cannot be vacant if there is no interest found in private sector to fill it--then the Governor must appoint a replacement.
- Never many choices or information--sometimes too political.
- What if you don't like the Governor. Than for the rest of their term, the judge, who probably is going to agree with how the Governor runs things politically, is going to base their decisions off of that. So for some length of time they are put into position, w/o actually being voted in by the people.
- It appears most are part of the "Good old BOY system"
- A necessary evil for the Governor to appoint. There would be too much downtime otherwise. Courts are busy enough as it is.
- Because judges don't need to do anything to stay in the bench. They could be horrible or unqualified and not accountable & because nobody challenges then they get to stay.
• Keeping informed
• Don't know how they review the law and not ke___ they think about it.
• Should be a process for weeding out bad judges--requiring "reappointment" or some other method.
• Need the judges to voice their opinions on debated subjects to know what they are standing on issues when they are being discussed in voter pamphlets for our choosing which to vote for.
• I would like more judges to be elected by the people than appointed.
• In the event of an unforeseen vacancy, the spot need to be filled quickly. By requiring the judge to then be elected, it gives the public a chance to change out the judge.
• There should be more competition for spots, but the only way for the public to get feedback on judicial performance is newspaper-sponsored research!
• I am not familiar or skilled in the judicial system.
• One weakness is that appointments by the governor politics the selection more than I'd like to see. I'd rather see bi-partisan agreement on the selection.
• Assuming information on the performance of the judges is made public for voters, from both pro and con sources, I would say the system seems to works reasonably well. I was very interested in the attorney poll which evaluated judge performance released by news media within the last year. I hope it was not a onetime thing. I wouldn't mind seeing a similar poll from law professors on the judges' adherence to the law, assuming there is a large enough pool of professors available. Specifically, we, the voters, need more information on a judge's performance.
• I don't really know why I feel so-so about it. I don't know about elected verses appointed.
• Too many judges run with no challenge. People seem to not care about actual things judge do and stick to the status quo.
• Not really concerned
• Don't like governor appointed.
• Governors almost always appoint a qualified judge. If not he/she may be challenged at next election.
• If 84% were uncontested and were re-elected, they did not have to be good judges to serve again.
• I have minimal experience with the court system, sons custody hearing, couple traffic tickets. I have always been treated fairly
• It is a good idea to have judges be elected in non-partisan elections. If judges have problems, it is reported in the newspaper and on television. Bad judges can be voted out by the voter!
• It seems to result in a decent judiciary...I am reluctant to have so many political appointees.
I would seem that the other people in the system trust, or think that, the judges currently holding a uncontested position are doing their jobs just fine.

too much power in the hands of one politician, the Governor. One bad political Governor and we could end up with very good judges eliminated because of political affiliation. (example: Gonzales-Roberts)

Not enough information on their backgrounds and their education and history of cases.

I feel it's basically a club. You have to be politically connected to get in and the system is biased in favor of incumbents. It's more important to know someone than to be the best qualified.

Should be elected. Voter should have more information on potential judges.

Too much political ability to influence judges.

Well, the statistic of people who actually think is 25%. The rest don't care. I really don't think people are paying any attention to what they get unless they accidently happen to be in a court of law.

I think they should all be elected into their positions not appointed. more of a chance for special treatment. as long as they are doing their jobs they should be ok left in office.

I feel that like other elected officials, they need to re-apply for their jobs, be reviewed by a board if un-challenged to ensure integrity of the person.

Haven't thought about it.

They shouldn't be allowed to run uncontested and all should be elected by the people.

Nobody should remain in office by "default". I also don't like politicians influencing our judicial system. It doesn't make the "powers" separate.

Election usually picks better choice (if there is a choice0; appointments are more common (60/40) for new judges, but their names are (in most states) chosen based on qualifications/etc.

I think elections are always a great idea to keep the public involved and heard.

it's a closed group of people(appointed commissioners waiting to run for election). more over they (current judges) can just retire mid-term so the current gov. can pay-off political debt!(131 of 218 wow!).

Political partisanship.

By default judges can continue in their position, even if they are not good at what they do!

No way to get a judge out of office if he/she is running unopposed.

Public should be deciding majority of elected officials.

As a voter, I really don't know what I should be voting on. I would rather have a group of citizens that know more about the subject to work on the appointments.

the judges, prosecutors, public defense attys, and police officers all collect money from court case's unsubstantiated by fact, most cases handled by pd attorneys are manipulated
by prosecution by way of making a deal, this leads to manipulation of fact for financial gain, instead of public safety, education, awareness, and general announcements programs

- The judges should be accountable to someone. If it is based on a vote by the public, there are a lot of people like me who inundated with information that we don't look into it at all. Or we chose a few that seem important to us. There should be a 'boss' looking over these judges and deciding if they are ethical, fair, judicial, etc.

- It's a system—we can live with it and use it.

- Too political. Judges should not run for election.

- Should be some way to remove "bad" judge if position is not contested.

- By appointment is NEVER fair and representative. It is individually personal.

- I pay fairly close attention to current events and the news - local, national and international. But I don't feel all that informed about judges unless a scandal occurs. With no evidence to the contrary I might conclude that Washington's judges are fair and not partisan in their deliberations and rulings. Elections do allow someone to challenge a judge was not living up to the standards of the office. I'm wondering thought why only 16% of judicial elections are contested when most other elected positions have higher contested rates. In conclusion I would have to say that at present and with no information to the contrary, the system is working. I just don't know how well.

- People tend to focus on what matters most to them: the economy, taxes, etc. For some reason, only people toughed by legal issues will be concerned about judicial elections.

- I feel there is no accountability.

- Public election.

- Often I feel that I don't know enough about the person running to make a good decision when voting for judges. In addition to the statements included in the voters pamphlet, it might be useful to have information related to their records; cases they have presided over and the judgments they have made.

- We don't hear about their record.

- Not enough elected by the people.

- If judges are appointed by the governor and then 80+90 are uncontested, they certainly have not been chosen by the voters of the state. It seems that once appointed they are in for life.

- I get the 60% appointed out of necessity the 1st time around, but at the end of the term, there needs to be "contested" elections--Where are the candidates and where is the biographical info about them?

- Even most intelligent voters aren't well qualified on legal issues to properly select judges and recent trends in judicial elections are following the negative campaigning trends of average politicians.

- I seldom hear complaints about our judges.

- Don't feel I can vote f____ls
• More judges are appointed by the governor.
• People should be contested and voted on.
• I don't have any better ideas
• Judges could be appointed to serve the wishes and ideas of the governor
• Difficult to replace a judge that is no longer effective in the position
• Judge should be reviewed and graded every term and not reappointed if the perform their job poorly.
• I feel the real problem is that we generally have too few individuals educated enough to pursue this level of law career. One reason may be the HIGH COST of higher education; eliminates more competition/interest.
• Lack of information.
• Because the governor is a politician and he or she would more than likely choose someone from their party.
• Unless a judge does something really bad, the public in general doesn't hear about a judges record in office. So by that reason the people holding judgeships must be doing an acceptable job. Faulty logic???
• Because they are nonpartisan, we cannot know if they share our values. Unless we keep track of their decisions, e.g., publicized cases in the media, we would not know if they are soft on crime or tough.
• Unusual high number handpicked by the Governor.
• I believe the Governor needs all or as much info about a person who wants to be a judge, so they are making a good choice.
• It just seems fair, overall.
• no competition, no choice
• Why bother to put judges on the ballot uncontested.
• 1. They are not challenged in their elections. 2. Appointed positions are excessive.
• All judges should be elected by the people--for the people…not by a governor.
• Because if 84% of judges are running uncontested, the Governor has too much influence on selection.
• Not fair.
• Appointed judges are probably better vetted for the desired qualities than those elected by an uninformed public.
• Does nothing to ensure excellence regarding qualifications, etc.
• I do not like the fact that judges are allowed to solicit donations from parties that come before them, e.g. the Builder's Association.
• Because they stay by "default".
• Vacant seats are filled expediently to keep the court system functioning but the general
public also has a say regarding who remains on the bench.

- Judges have no reason to strive for excellence in their field or to make any attempt to make sure that their verdicts are carried out.
- It's an ok system now, but there is not enough information about the candidates and their records and judgments for voters to make fully informed decisions.
- Don't know enough about it.
- How are appointed judges being held accountable? Why are judges appointed by the Governor and the party in power?
- Once nominated they must face a competition. If there is no competitor then at least the opportunity for competition was available.
- Let's the governor controls the courts
- I usually agree with 90% of these decisions I read about.
- A judge that is not favorable to me or other people could run time and time again if he is not contested.
- guessing I know how you feel by the way you present facts. It is possible that judge who is not challenged is doing a fine job. the opposite also can be the case. perhaps a highly overpaid commission could decide
- Concerning each selection--maybe they should have 5 different cases and how the voted on 5 different topics of their responsibility. Let the people do the judicial selections.
- I believe all judges should be elected by the people and only appointed when an unexpected vacancy exists.
- I feel all appointed judges are partisan.
- The process is good, the terms are relatively short so we should have an opportunity to vote for a judge. I would suggest that the problem is 84% of these elections go uncontested.
- From the description it sounds like it could be political choices. It depends on the honesty, impartiality of the Governor.
- We vote the Governor in and trust he will make the proper decisions. If there are problems with a judge he can be challenged.
- Partisan appointments are never good. The "people" have not spoken 60% of the time in Washington.
- Best way to put qualified people on the bench.
- don't know enough.
- Being elected by voters is essential; I also think the governor does have the right to appoint judges. I wish that more elections were contested.
- Don't like governor appointing so many judges.
- Appointment could suggest returning a favor--Hmmm! It's good to elect because they are supposedly more accountable to the public. But judge may decide to keep his office-
-read play "Inherit the Wind"

- Because being appointed by a partisan governor may lead to judge who may be open to outer influence.
- The appointment by governor weakens the ability for the public to make decisions.
- If they are doing a good job, they should remain in office. If they were not doing a good job, someone would run against them.
- Un-opposed contest: BAD! When there is a choice, I never feel like I have adequate info on the candidates to make an informed decision.
- Most are elected. That gives the voters the ability to hold the judges accountable.
- If no one contest and the positions must be filled, they should remain.
- Judges not contested. Do not directly answer to the public.
- Appointment by the governor is most likely politically motivated. I question whether the most qualified person is always the one chosen.
- The appearance is a system that favors incumbents enough to discourage challengers. This reduces accountability and responsiveness to the public.
- Too many are political appointees.
- Judges should be accountable in every decision to president and to the laws of the state. Some things are at their discretion and should be always upholding our constitution.
- Little info readily available to voters leads to snap judgments.
- Sounds like judges aren't being compensated enough to bring lawyers out of Private Practice.
- Hate to see one person make an important decision. Should be a group. Too much special interests.
- Single-person (governor) appointments may not reflect the citizen's need for check and balance, and gives no choice to people.
- System seems to work
- Don't know any better way
- Too much political lee-way.
- Every judge should be elected by the people, never appointed by the Governor. The Governor is a partisan office, so they will naturally elect only judges that have their own interests at heart and not a fair and constitutional judge!
- Most people have very little contact with the judicial system and know very little about the judges involved. Therefore it is difficult to choose from several people running for a position just by reading a voter’s pamphlet. Other offices are more open and the candidates can be seen and chosen by their actions or words, but not judges. However, having the judges only appointed would make the positions more subject to the political beliefs of the person doing the appointing and that's not a good solution either. So I suppose using both methods keeps things in some check.
• It is too bad to see them automatically remain in office either because of lack of knowledge or indifference. I don't know if there is an ability to see how judges have ruled on different things or how to go about getting real information about them (not just what they say in the statements).

• The majority should be voted in by the election process.

• When "automatically remaining in office"--the public is not getting a say in it.

• I believe that all judges should be elected every time, by the public. More people should run for the position, so that elections aren't uncontested.

• Why aren't more people running? Do they think the system is tainted so they can't run? Why aren't more people encouraged to run so that we keep judges on their toes.

• Most overeducated people seem to turn into pompous elitist ass holes, out of touch w/reality.

• How many judicial slots are filled when incumbents resign prior to term completion such that someone appoints the successor who then runs as an incumbent. This has been a practice for many years, and doesn't do much for the integrity of the system.

• Think especially Supreme judges should not be there for life, think age limit should be used. They're too old.

• Appointments are often given to friends, supporters or individuals who share the appointees political agenda. They should all be voted on.

• It's an okay system in that we must keep the judicial system going. Bad in that if we aren't paying attention, we can get in a lot of trouble. Need a system of checks and balances.

• Should be elected by the people 100% of time. Should be made more clear for people.

• Not enough info.

• I don't necessarily think it is the way they are elected it is how they conduct themselves once elected.

• The electorate should choose judges. If they run unopposed it is unfortunate that they "win" by default, but the Governor should not intervene. I disagree with Governors appointing judges to fill midterm vacancies, but not so much that I want to overhaul the current system.

• Politically biased.

• They should be elected.

• Money and power can change people. Good people get in and then their opinions can be bought.

• There's enough citizens don't know about our government. The figures that decide punishment and uphold the law should be chosen by the people.

• The Governor has too much power.

• My limited exposure.
I don't follow.

If I don't care for the governor, who was voted in and don't share their views, then the judges appointed aren't who I want.

Well, even if a judge is appointed, the public has the opportunity to vote the judge out if they are bad. At the same time, most people voting in elections for the judicial positions don't really know much about the judges running unless they have had direct contact with them, which is rare, so it is good to have someone in the system who knows them better have a strong influence as well. But it isn't "Very Good" because I think there is always room for improvement and tweaking in our governmental systems, so they shouldn't get the top ranking.

Voters frequently don't have enough information to make an informed decision. Appointments by Governor could easily be partisan-based.

Should be appointed by someone other than the Governor.

It's important not to have gubernatorial appointment as the sole avenue to fill the bench.

If a judge was considered "bad" they would be challenged.

There are a lot of good judges there to help you out.

Haven't dealt with court system

Depends upon who the governor is

Governors (and presidents) should not appoint judges.

they are human too and can't be perfect

I like the idea that all judges are elected by the people

I feel this is probably good because if these judges weren't performing as expected by the people they would then be contested.

A variety of options in seating a judge is best due to the fact they have a wide range of experiences and opinions

The governors can be very partisan in their appointments. However, when election time comes we either get zero info on candidate or s/he is unopposed.

watching court cases and reading accounts in the paper of most cases. I think our judges are more than qualified.

I do not like a political party naming judges. I think the public should vote for all judges based on merit.

We need to have more judges running for office.

If the judges are doing their jobs that they were appointed/elected for then they should continue without having to be re-elected/appointed. They only need to be replace when they are not performing per the criteria given or because of death or extreme illness.

I feel the selection by the Governor would be based on politics primarily..not necessarily on appointing the best candidate. I am concerned that many judges when appointed are not challenged in the next election and therefore automatically remain in office for
another term. I do not have a solution.

- If uncontested ________ choices are political once appointed it is hard for anyone to beat an incumbent, due to lack of recognition of new person running.
- Only way to end partisan politics would be to have election for vacant positions which would be expensive for special election or leave position unfilled until next general election.
- Because I don't know of a better method.
- I feel there should be more exposure of the judges when being reelected

Popular election of judges is inherently political. The judiciary should not non-political and non-partisan. The federal constitution attempts to guard the independence of the judiciary by providing for life-time appointments. That should be the model at the state level as well, at least at the level of the State Supreme Court.

- It seems to be fair in selection.
- Just like business competition is good--helps ensure honesty, equity, qualifications.
- Because 84% were appointed. We voters know little about them.
- Judges should be elected. Incumbents appointed by the Governor they are not contested will reflect that Governor's party beliefs, liberal or conservative.
- In democratic system people have the choice to elect not governors.
- Lawyers give up practice to become judges--hard to go back--skill set also different for bench and often includes attorneys who didn't do well in private practice.
- Do not know enough about judicial process.
- An appointed judge has not fully earned the position. An elected judge has.
- Don't think the position of Supreme Court justice should be elected.
- I do not think when I vote for a judge that I have enough information to know if they are truly good at their job. Reading the voters pamphlet I do not know if they are respected by their peers or colleagues in their position.
- There simply is not enough information for the voters to make a good decision. When we leave it to another governmental body to choose the "best" candidate, there is political favoritism and the buddy selection. How are governors' held accountable for the selections they make.
- The contests should be contested. It not they are appointed by a elected and partisan politician.
- A liberal Governor would appoint a liberal judge! Liberal judges do not protect victims (and families).
- An uncontested judge is probably doing his job well.
- seems like there is very little competition for these judges when running for the respective positions
- The people in the positions listed are all qualified to be there and I trust their judgment.
• I believe the public should know who is legislating. I can't say I've ever really known much about any judge--and their job is as important as anyone in government!
• No Governor should be allowed to put a judge into a position--this opens a door to favoritism.
• Have not thought about this until now.
• The majority of judges are placed on the bench without any information to the public or any knowledge of the history record, background or values.
• Because I really don't know how the Governor makes her choices, but we must have judges.
• The problem is two-fold. Citizens are losing faith in our judicial system. Too many cases reek with stink!
• Too many judges have conflicts of interest. Why should a judge _____ ____ do to get elected? There is payback in the system.
• There is no accountability for the person sitting on the bench. When the Governor fills the empty spot, this can be a reward for helping the Governor get elected (no credentials). If they get elected, hopefully the public elects the best qualified. If they go uncontested, they are usually doing a good job.
• I can see the advantages and disadvantages however as a voter, if is frustrating to vote because I don't know very much about the judge I am voting for.
• Must be a shortage of judges.
• It is usually supposed to be a contested race, but frequently the incumbent has no competition--that amounts to an appointment. There should always be a choice or there is no point of placing the name on the ballot.
• I think we must have someone in the position even if they may not be the very best for the job.
• No evaluation of their performance. Where is the oversight to remove judges who do their job poorly.
• Pretty close to 50/50, so I feel it's ok.
• It seems as though friends are helping friends which could lead to unfair treatments or judgments. Although, I don't believe this to be the case by what was stated above it seems like a bad system.
• It is hard to keep politics out of the courts if all selected by governor, yet voters have very little information to base decisions when voting. It is important to have good, qualified judges, yet emphasis on qualifications and records are seldom reported in press and I seldom research information on my own. Bill board ads seem to be more prominent than any other source; what does that tell you? I have relied on and hoped that the most qualified have been awarded the judgeships, but am uncertain if that indeed, happens.
• Not necessarily bad for judge to be appointed, but would prefer more accountability to voters. Feel most voters are not well informed though.
• Whether by appointment or election, it is very difficult to find out a candidate's values. Values can shape interpretation of law.
• The judicial branch of government on any level, County, State or Federal does not receive sufficient public review or oversight. It is not that a judge is inherently corrupt .. it is simply a matter of accountability. The Judicial Branch is ideally, not accountable to special interests, political parties or religious beliefs .... but to the common good, enhancement and protection of the people. Being labeled an 'activist' judge ... is a current political framing device used by special interests to protect their realm of influence, money and power.
• All judges should be elected by the people
• Too many appointed- not enough voted in by the people.
• The governor is going to pick qualified people and we can always vote them (the Gov or judges) out if we need to.
• All judges should be elected in partisan elections.
• It is the most efficient and fair way to select judges, that I can think of. If there is no one else willing to do the work, then retention makes sense.
• Once a judge has the seat, it is very difficult to unseat them.
• this system gives one person too much influence on how laws are interpreted.
• Are they uncontested because opinion is that they are qualified or because the system is crooked and won't allow new judges?
• Having judges elected in uncontested contests seems to be a bad thing
• Ideally I would want the voters to choose a judge by election but we did elect the Governor so hopefully we can trust in their appointments.
• I think that most judges are fair and most should be uncontested.
• Political party tradeoffs.
• It's what we are used to.
• Fairness to all who vote.
• It makes good sense. I get to vote and if they didn't perform well, I can work to remove them (by voting no).
• Governor has too much sway on judicial selections. Could become too political. Governors selections should be confirmed by senate.
• If the system works and is clear to the voters re: "challenges", then it is what it is.
• Selection by non-partisan vote protects the citizens from specific political party influence. The terms are short enough to allow voters to oust poorly performing judges from remaining in position for long periods of time.
• Few people really KNOW them or what they believe. Their elections are always overpowered by other races, such as for governor. Running with no opponent is not the best system, but I don't have another to suggest.
• Since a high percentage of judges run uncontested, most people must be satisfied with their performance.
• Decisions generally seem well reasoned
• I can't think of a better method
• We have ended up with a lot of poor judges.
• System seems to be working
• Even when elected. The public is not in a position to make a good decision.
• Points I like. Points I think should be changed.
• Judges should be appointed, and then stand (unopposed) for retention elections. I think it's the "Missouri Model?"
• There is no perfect way to select judges. The electorate is not involved enough to make an intelligent decision. The Governor is influenced by politics and a philosophy that may not agree with the law. Unfortunately, I cannot think of a better way of selecting qualified judges who will apply the law rather than try to rewrite it. I certainly don't want the Legislature involved. So, I support the present system.
• Mix of appointment and election keeps the public aware and involved, interpretation of law not (directly solely) subject to political marketing.
• There are merits to the system, but it's almost impossible to know who to vote for. On the other hand, I wouldn't want all political appointees with possible biases.
• There is no perfect way to select judges. Politics usually affect appointments. A very popular person could be elected even though they are not really a good candidate to be a judge.
• Don't have any information that indicates appointments are better or worse than elections.
• I believe that direct appointment by any person (governor) leaves open the possibility of governmental influence
• There is very little information shared about judges, unless they themselves break the law.
• Voters too reluctant and/or uninformed to unseat an incumbent judge.
• I don't have any problems with it.
• In the end voters make the decision to retain or elect a different judge.
• New judges get a chance for election while the old judges do not lose time if no one challenges them.
• Citizens should be a part of the process, because judges serve the citizens.
• Judges should be elected. Circumstance arises when it isn't cost effective to have a single election for an individual who retires, etc.
• I feel they need to be rotated out often.
• My understanding is that a judicial appointee must be approved by the state legislature,
which provides oversight. It would be unreasonable to expect to hold a special election every time a judge steps down, particularly since a interim judge would have to be appointed. In essence, the first term all of the appointees serve, is the interim term, followed by a choice by the public whether or not to keep them in office. It seems unfair that so many judges run unopposed, but judges are supposed to be non-partisan and follow the rule of law. This means that when it comes to presiding over cases, they should all have the same ideology; to follow the rule of law.

- It's a fair way to keep the position filled. Would also like to see the Governor's appointed one pre-approved by a majority in the house and senate.
- They aren't driven by any governor's personal agendas.
- Nonpartisan elections seem to be a fair way for judge to be selected. Uncontested elections probably need to be looked at- way such a high number?
- Too many appointed by Governor.
- I believe that most citizens would allow judges to remain on the bench because they've always been there.
- Murderers, rapist, pro athletes, politicians, and white collar elite are not punished severe enough.
- The number of Governor appointed judges out number elected judges, there should be a non-partisan election for every judge at the end of every term. Keeps them honest!!
- I have no solution to cause a change in the system.
- There obviously aren't enough judges to keep all positions in "elective" status. By nonpartisan electoral way me is assured public scrutiny.
- The present election system works relatively well for small counties such as ours. We either know or can find out enough to make an informed choice. The system works poorly in large counties and in area-wide (Court of Appeals) and state-wide (Supreme Ct) races. The information is cryptic and usually all the same, i.e., all candidates will be fair and impartial.
- Not sure voters (myself included) are qualified to choose.
- No major scandals, so seems to be working better than other methods.
- I think all elections of judges should be contested unless death creates a vacancy all should be nonpartisan. Retirement should trigger a special election.
- Appointment by Governor--a political appointment
- Selection and term decisions that work well should not be changed.
- Being elected is OK, but being appointed by Governor speaks of political payoff. Should always have 2 running that gives people a choice.
- The problem is voting for an unqualified person.
- Should not be appointed.
- Appointed = Politics
• It gives voters a chance to make a choice on who will be deciding important issues. People have been sent to Death Row by faulty judging and prosecutions.

• I never know which it is elected or appointed. Should be one or the other.

• The system seems to work just fine.

• Because judges are sometimes uncontested they could be in their positions for life.

• Seems to work--saves money to get to keep office if unopposed. Elections and campaigns are too expensive.

• Selection of very few positions should be political. Every position outside of supreme court should be elected positions.

• I believe that the Governor would only fill those position with judges who would work for the Governor not the good of the people.

• It's what I know. I haven't lived under any other system.

• It seems as though a larger percentage of sitting judges should be based on elections rather than appointments.

• Elections do not always result in qualified judges. The public does not know how to determine if a judge is qualified.

• Most contests should have challengers.

• 1. Judges must be elected the next term after appointment. 2. The Governor is elected.

• Electing judges is biased and unfair. It provides very poor quality judges. I used to live in another state where judges were not elected and they were much better quality jurists. Look, for example, at the federal judges. They are appointed for life and generally considered some of the best judges in the country. The voters are uninformed about judicial elections and the system unfairly favors incumbents. Judicial elections are fundamentally unfair. A very qualified candidate has a very hard time running against a sitting judge. The public will never know the true differences and the sitting judge will accept money from lawyers who appear in court. All of this is very wrong, prejudicial to the people, and produces bad judges, bad decisions and a broken system.

• It worked so far.

• I have no reports of Judge incompetence or prejudice.

• The judges should be accountable to the people not the governor.

• What is causing candidates not to run? Do they feel that they won't win or is there no interest? The governor appointing judges might not have the best interest of the people, but only of their own.

• Too many selected by governor, not enough voted in by people- might represent special interests of governor and not of the people in general.

• Are the judges selected by the Governor done so in mid-term by vacancies?

• Individuals feel their vote is unimportant just in regular situations but when there isn't a choice, it's worse. Always offer a choice. New blood, new ideas, no "good old boy" standing.
- It would seem to me that we need both the insight of the appointment system (more knowledge about prospective judges) and the opinion of the general population in order to have a balance. The current system seems like it can be fairly balanced.
- This system can lead to corruption. Governors can appoint someone they "like" who will work for them rather than giving the people the right to elect.
- Since I don't know much about the judges, I can't determine if the present system works well. I don't believe any of the election-time ads I read or see on TV.
- Appointment is fast and allows the administration in power at that time to exert some political influence.
- Don't see any other way to elect them.
- Being appointed doesn't mean he is good in that position. It could be part of the "good ole boy" system.
- If nobody goes against them and they finish their term in good condition, they can continue to serve in their position.
- I talk to friends that are familiar with the judges and have exposure to them before deciding who to vote for.
- I think we should get to vote for each and every Judge. More honest Judges would be the result and we would almost never have an uncontested position.
- If the voters are off base morally then they elect junk, and visa versa.
- I don't have a better idea. It is too hard to know the judges you vote for.
- This way the spots are filled, and the people that are voting don't know who those people are or what they stand for.
- The part being appointed by the Governor is a bad idea.
- Best system offered.
- Seems fair
- I would hope that a Governor appointed judge would meet the standards I expect. However, as it is a political appointment, being conservative, currently a liberal governor :
- I feel all judges should be elected by popular vote. one wonders why 60% had to be appointed by the governor?
- I agree w/most of it except for the fact that if they aren't contested they continue to serve. I then think their case history needs to be looked at--how many appeals were filed? They need a progress report of some kind.
- I believe that all judges should be voted in. Not the governor decision, should be the people decision.
- The ones elected by vote is fair, if we are given all the facts before election. The one by the gov. is for whatever party the gov is.
- The people should have more control.
• Because WA is a very liberal state and the judges placed on the bench by our liberal democrat governors tend to be liberal activist judges who do the bidding of the left. I'm sick of them making law rather than interpreting it. They were never intended to usurp the power from the citizenry.

• Voters should have the opportunity to select our court judges. This seems like a fair way to do it.

• I don't' like the fact that the election process of Judges has become so political. They stand on the street corners and wave. They have negative tones to the campaigns even though they are not supposed to. I don't know how you can have a Governor be impartial, but yet the public needs information about their qualifications, not flag waving by special interest groups that give confusing/spin information.

• Either system has a base in political politics. Most candidates have ties to a political party with political agendas and that will reflect in how a judge performs on the bench. We have a real weak system in which the best and most capable person may never be selected or willing to be considered as a candidate for a judge.

• Do not like being appointed by the governor.

• It's good if no one is competing but if beat, it just wouldn't be fair to the out beat person. They should all be elected and stay.
COMMENTS ABOUT COMMISSION SYSTEM OF JUDICIAL SELECTION

- It sounds like they would get the best ones.
- I believe that this would be a better way to elect a judge because then that person would be selected on their qualifications not his/her opinions.
- It's not a popularity contest--judges have to decide cases based on the law. Attorneys can be political, but judges shouldn't be.
- The decision is made by a select group of people and not by all of the people who are to be judged.
- The proposed system at least makes a pretense of allowing citizens to notarize their elected officials though selection by ballot, which is one aspect of the current system that I value. On the other hand, I don't necessarily believe that individual citizens are invested in the commonwealth and a majority of them certainly don't possess the expertise to evaluate candidates who best serve the interpretation and application of laws. Accepting that lawyers appointed to the commission may exhibit personal political points of view (I'd prefer a non-partisan vs. bipartisan commission), I still prefer this proposed system to the current one. Requiring the governor to appoint judges after they've been recommended seems redundant, however. If a judge has been vetted by a qualified commission, then that recommendation should serve as the appointment as well. Also, I'd like to have a better idea of who the "non-lawyers" selected for the commission would be. And how would the commission be selected? By vote? The more I think about this proposed system, the more problematic it seems ...
- Have educated people look into their qualifications--yet they could be a special interest group not looking out for the majority of the public.
- Untested, might be difficult to find a "bipartisan" commission of a group of lawyer & non-lawyers
- This would be somewhat better than what we have now but I would prefer that judges be partisan in the election process so we know where they stand.
- Qualified people being involved--still could be political.
- It puts a legitimate constraint on the governor.
- Depends on who the commissioners are--could be worse--driven by special interest groups within the commission.
- They should be both be voted in. Not appointed by one person.
- People who are more knowledgeable about qualifications (hopefully not political party affiliated).
- Great that they're giving the common citizen a say to balance things out but it still is, in the end, up to one man. It would be better if the Governor had to choose the one the commission picked. Reduces potential God complexes.
- It would be fair and unbiased.
- I would have some concern over how the members of the commission are selected,
and thus it's political slant.

- People don't have a vote on who is seated as a judge initially--I think though that periodic retention.
- It provides some checks and balances. However, it completely removes the voter from having any decision in the selection of our judges. I feel judges should be elected via a bipartisan election so that we can vote according to their core values and not how many children they have or where they do or don't go to church. On the other hand, the Commission System would work well to replace a judge (which, as previously stated, is 60%).
- Opinions of qualified peers would be useful information in determining who to vote for.
- Not sure.
- It would limit the Governor's ability to hand pick their favorite candidates.
- Should insure that only well qualified people are on the bench and eliminate or reduce the Governor's ability to stack bench.
- But why should the governor appoint? Why not just have the commission system select the judge? The governor could have input but not make the final decision.
- Selected by a broad interest base.
- Judges can become complacent. A committee hopefully wouldn't be influenced by special interest groups. Merit selection rewards the best qualified.
- It would seem to make sure that the most qualified people make it to the bench
- It sounds like a fair and impartial way to do it.
- Because right now we don't have it. It's nice having the general public and lawyers in the selection process.
- System functions well presently.
- It's fair
- Evaluated on merit.
- I am sick and tired of the moron "liberal" judges who keep letting hard-core offenders off the hook. In this country, all we care about is the rights of the accused. What about the rights of victims?
- Most voters are totally unaware of the qualifications of individual candidates.
- People who are more informed about the candidates would be choosing. The way we do it now, I think the "public" just votes for names they are familiar with.
- It takes candidates' qualifications into consideration. However, the process would still be influenced by political allegiances.
- It puts it in the hands of people who understand the qualifications and personal qualities needed to do the job.
- Recommendation to Governor has value. Pre-qualification by neutral commission.
Like retention election component.

- Judges should be voted by the people, not selected by party officials.
- If the system works, don't fix it.
- This proposal uses sound methods for our Governor to make a sound decision.
- No knowledge about this thought.
- Seek the most qualified judges by the commission and periodically approved by the voters.
- This appears to be a peer review process for the candidate. The commission should have a better knowledge of the candidates qualifications than the general public.
- Because the voters would know that the judges they were choosing were from the "cream of the crop".
- Who is to determine bipartisanship of the Commission, who is to say that whoever is governor won’t be Partisan as to whom is selected.
- I don't think governor should influence the selection.
- This might keep the judges on their toes under a commission type system. Accountable for their decisions if you will.
- I feel all judges should be required to meet all qualifications and be required to address all their judicial work and qualification. There should be a better way to inform the voting public so they can make a good evaluation to vote.
- Is acceptable if does not include the politics of Patronage to include current party in power.
- I would be concerned about who decides and how decisions are made to select commission members.
- This would take the politics and special interests out of the election process.
- I'm sure favoritism plays a part.
- I want more than just merits. I want he/she rate of success or failure what were the results of previous cases, I could look to does this person get involved in the community.
- I like how its not just the governor deciding the panel picks first.
- The broad based commission--provides a more equitable, nonpolitical, accountability retention election--good check in of competence, integrity.
- It sounds like this system is a good way to ensure checks & balances remain in place.
- Lawyers are just as human as the rest of us and I'm afraid they would recommend persons for judges who would think like the lawyers.
- Because it is based on merit. Has a way to keep them or remove them from office depending on performance.
- Negative feeling about lawyers.
• Appointments by governors would naturally be influenced by the sitting governor's own bias.

• Once again we would put our very lives in the hands of those who have proven to be corruptible and again in the hands of lawyers. History has proven this to be a bad decision over time.

• It makes more sense to have the appointment process conducted in an open forum. Making those who have overused or abused the responsibilities and decorum of this office need to be winnowed out. A classic example is Judge Harris being elected to a 4 year term when he must step down after 1, then have the appointment filled by the governor. This concept is not in the best interests of the public. I have personal exposure to a statement made by a superior court judge that stated "I know the law, but there are people involved". The defense counsel was afraid of making a comment because he is practicing in the court system that gives the incumbent the overwhelming probability that this particular judge will be around for a long time.

• I don't have a better plan.

• People who know which candidates are qualified make selection. Could be bad if commission has become corrupt or political. Could be bad if there is no public appraised of the judge before the retention election.

• It meshes with my previously stated beliefs.

• This system would seem more non-partisan therefore resulting in more qualified judges vs. judges with the most connections.

• It would keep everyone honest and working. Have to do their best job.

• The bipartisan committee would be well informed about each candidate for office before making any recommendations.

• Don't know much about it so it's neither.

• I have always been a fan of decisions being made by those whose job it is to do research on the decision being made, I think this way is better as long as the commission is elected by the people.

• I think we the people should vote on judges

• Stay with present system. Commission system would be more complicated.

• It's the right way.

• Too much say for the governor.

• Seems a better system--your contemporaries know you better. This commission should also have input from law enforcement.

• The judges would be selected based on their proven ability and would be responsible to the public by a confidence vote rather than a contested election. Although a commission making a recommendation is good it should not be mandatory for the Governor to select from the commissions list. The appointment should also be required to be approved (or not) by the legislature.
• The governors only appoint whomever works best for the governor.

• Review system adequate as well as elections.

• Would their peers pick on friendship or qualities. Retention elections makes all accountable--I'm for that.

• Gives the people a chance to get a Judge off the bench if they are unhappy with his decisions. I for one believe in stiffer penalties and harder Judges but am not able to get a so called soft Judge off the bench if they are uncontested. The public is just stuck with that Judge.

• Because voters have a voice.

• just feel like it is a good thing.

• Qualified people would be evaluating the candidates.

• I believe it should be up to the general public to voice our choices directly. The more steps we are removed from the selection process, the less control we have over who will best serve us as individuals and as a statewide community. As our situations shift and change over the years, we need to feel we are at least partly responsible for those who will interpret and represent the law in mediation of legal disputes. The base factor here is trust: the more we're able to choose for ourselves through nonpartisan election, the more trust we will have in those officials elected to mediate for us. The judicial system as it stands has a very tarnished reputation, however, removing our ability to elect judicial representation by majority vote will only cause a greater rift between the trust of the people and the court system.

• It would not allow selection due to how much money they have or who they know.

• It has an opportunity to develop into a good old boys club.

• I seems to be working well.

• The commission would (or could) investigate the candidates. The "retention elections" should include an updates about the quality of their decisions.

• It would allow to look at their qualifications and see where they are in judging others and the laws of this state.

• Judges that are appointed are not voted by anyone except the Governor. This would put some control in the public's hands.

• Again we the people not governor.

• At least you learn something about the person's ideals.

• I feel their selection should be made by persons of both parties and who supports them made public.

• While I'm sure the system has merits, I do not like the idea of a bunch of folks in the back room deciding judges, especially when half are lawyers. It would only take a few of them to go to the same church and then they're stacking the bench with their buddies. How about having the people elect them in and then have a merit system regularly decide if they are fit to serve whether they are uncontested at the
next election or not.

- Just making more hassles. Let the voters decide since it is one of the few "rights" we have left.

- Are you crazy!? Attorneys deciding on judges?! Only an attorney could think up that one! Let's let someone who has had their honesty proven by polygraph (police) decide before allowing a class of people (lawyers) known for dishonesty decide who should be a judge!

- Can't think of a better way!

- The governor we have now is a dud.

- It would make those in positions more accountable to the voters.

- It would take the potential politics out of the picture.

- Who selects the bipartisan, broad-based commission? Seattle? By population or region? Regarding the retention elections, would there be available substantive information or just PR fluff, (as we now must tolerate)? In choosing between the current system or the proposed system, I'd say the current system needs improvement. The proposed system bothers me because our judicial branch would seem to rest entirely in the hands of the commission--and where do they come from? On the commission for life or a short term? Is a bipartisan commission realistic? I'd be willing to learn more, but have to ask if the current system is broken enough to warrant discarding? Keeping in mind that money usually talks, and power tends to offer opportunities for corruption, will there be checks and balances in the proposed system? BTW, thanks for the chance to vent a bit.

- Most qualified would be appointed--not most popular or money backed.

- It is always hard to gather a group of people, no matter how dedicated, that do not have some agenda..... having a periodic retention election would allow the citizens to stop a judge that became senile as we have seen in the past and then make some very bad decisions.

- It's hard to think of the commission as being fair (out of politics) and not squabbling!! People bring their prejudices with them.

- Could bring more qualified people into positions.

- Seems like a good idea.

- Then voters have a say in whether a judge remains in office and if the are doing their job to serve the system.

- Unanswered questions: Who decides who will be on the commission? Do the people ever have an opportunity to know the names of candidates recommended by the commission, so that they could give input to the commission BEFORE the governor chooses one of the candidates? How often would the periodic retention elections occur? What would happen in the event of an egregious betrayal of public trust by a chosen judge? Would the schedule of periodic retention elections be open to revision if necessary?
• The commission would likely have the expertise and knowledge to better judge the candidates.
• In a jury people are judged by their peers. It would seem that a panel of legal professionals and non-professionals would serve the same purpose. By evaluating each potential judge on his/her merits, one would hope that the most-highly qualified candidate(s) would be selected as judges. BUT as in all committees, the outcome is sometimes determined by the strongest personality or voice. This could be a negative.
• What's the point? If no one runs against them, they're still a judge.
• It includes the non-lawyers.
• The Governor really has a lot of power in the current system. The commission system seems very sensible.
• It is better than anything we've got.
• It invites accountability (retention elections)--voters decide if judge should remain.
• The law enforcement officers should have some say!
• Under the current system a 1st term judge can possibly be voted in by his "looks", "personality", etc.
• That allows a very small group of people, plus the Governor to select judges for the people. People don't have enough say as things are!
• This system would be more apt to put the most qualified applicants into the Judicial system. This would be dependent on how the Commission members are selected, how long is their term and what criteria/guidelines they are given to work with.
• It is so hard as a citizen to know how really qualified a judge is. Other professionals use a qualification process to select.
• It works. We have good judges in Port Townsend, one of which is my lawyer and an honest man.
• Makes sense
• Don't know
• Fair
• This takes fund raising, advertising, special interest groups, and pandering to public opinion out of things.
• If selected by the Governor they must be qualified!
• ____ judges being let go because there are voters out there (like me) who don't know the good they are doing and don't vote for them.
• This helps to erase a possible "one-sided" approach to appointing a judge done so by our Governor.
• I would rather it stay as it is rather than another layer of politics added even though the commission is described as "bipartisan".
• Merit is being voted in by the people.
• Candidates are thoroughly vetted by commission of professional people.
• I think qualified candidates are the most important factor in choosing the right person for the job.
• If it is truly nonpartisan and the judge is honest and fair and rules according to the law it would be workable.
• Candidates evaluated on an individual basis has the best chance at producing a group of qualified judges for selection.
• It could potentially reduce the political aspects of getting elected and satisfying voters.
• Depends on selection of commission and its size. May not be able to avoid partisanship if too large (that is larger than 8 - see partisan or committees)
• Better quality judges--better prepared and qualified.
• I really don't know but I would hope both conservative and liberal are judged
• Probably would get judges with better qualifications.
• Still uses elections--no real difference.
• The concept sounds good. However, I wonder about the practicality of gathering a commission that would be "broad-based" and willing to put in the time needed to effectively vet potential judges. There would also need to be some protection from the lobbying of the commission by judicial potentials. In the recent election, I was dismayed by some of what I saw just in the endorsement process by the district organization of Democrats. Individuals who made up the endorsement recommendations panel had been lobbied by a judicial candidate and failed to effectively consider all candidates fairly, providing incorrect information to the voting body of organization. I could imagine a similar scenario occurring in the process described, with a much greater impact.
• Depending on how this was implemented it could go either way. My experience with Commissions is that they also can be influenced (and sometimes more so) by special interest groups.
• I don't think it should come down to the governor. That is how US Supreme Court works and now its full of conservative judges who do not represent my values and are putting restrictions on this country. I'd rather it be non-partisan by experts in field.
• It is difficult for laymen to assess a judge's merits or qualifications. But who selects the "Bi-partisan, broad-based commission"
• It sounds good. So long as the commission is sufficiently broad-based AND knowledgeable it should work out fine.
• Ensures appointment of qualified and impartial judicial.
• Open to competition.
• Dominant culture impact seems hard to avoid.
• Commissions won't work. Look at WA roads.
• Voters are not qualified to pick judges.
• Because the commission should have a good idea of the candidate's qualifications.
• Regardless of the intentions and alleged "bipartisan, broad-based" makeup of such a commission, this type of system would allow for seeding of judges sympathetic to a particular group's point of view, potentially causing great harm during the tenure of the judge in question.
• You seem to get a much better judge. The downfall-potential for cronyism
• Merit systems.
• It is good to have an overseer body and periodic reviews to keep judges honest and accountable.
• Seems fair
• Yes. Who appoints the commission? Would want info on who does it this way, what is the experience?
• A commission is much more likely to make a good selection than a bunch of under informed voters.
• Judges should be non-partisan, and the vetting system seems a reasonable way to recommend qualified individuals.
• Most of the public don't have an opinion about judges. They don't have to interact with them in their official capacity. This would have a screening effect on the process.
• Good idea to have lawyers and non-lawyers on the commission.
• Judgeships are somewhat technical positions and it may be good for qualified professionals such as lawyers to have an input in deciding who's qualified for the office. On the other hand, judgeships are also somewhat political and it may be good to have non-lawyers, common citizens getting in their 2 cents worth. It sounds reasonable. And it sounds good that an unelected judge may have to face the electorate regularly.
• Well, it is exactly what I described on the previous page. Good for Washington for considering this method of judicial appointments.
• Hopefully highly qualified people get to be appointed and retained.
• Perhaps better judges picked. _____ . Eliminate special interests.
• Don't know enough.
• As long as the commission is truly nonpartisan, sounds good. However, I'm sure the far right wackos would figure a way to take things over.
• I guess presenting the governor with selections approved by the legal community is better and diminishes the possibility of buying a seat or a totally unqualified person
winning.

- Judges are first reviewed by an educated/experienced commission, then held accountable by the public.
- I like that qualified evaluators (people who understand law and judges) make the recommendations--the partisan bit is good too.
- The bar association clique would rule the judiciary.
- I would hope the people on the commission are knowledgeable about the law which judges are supposed to uphold. I don't think most voters have the _____ to determine who would be the most impartial judge.
- Skills are jetted but voters have a final say ultimately.
- Keeps judges independent and free to be unpopular when necessary.
- As long as voters get a say on these judges. I have no idea who would sit on these review boards (special interests?). Not giving voters a say removes the judiciary from accountability and review by average citizens. I don't want to feel like party/legal "elites" are making all the decisions on these judges. I guess it would depend on who sits on the review boards - the extent to which I feel like they represent a fair/balanced viewpoint on selection judge & are not tainted by party politics/special interests.
- I think they all should be voted in.
- Judges would not be appointed for political considerations.
- Individuals who are in a position to evaluate the merits of a candidate as opposed to an ordinary citizen with no legal background, would be better, with the ability to remove the individual should their recommendation prove to be faulty.
- Seems to leave a lot of room for favoritism/favors
- I feel this would take the nonpartisan election process out totally. I don't feel this would benefit the judicial selections and only adds to the already political nature of this selection process.
- I am optimistic that a commission would be impartial and non-biased to issues as well as having knowledge of the candidates (more than the public) they recommend.
- Again, the public votes for judges--No! Also, why confine the ______ only to these, the commission members select!
- Seems like it is holding a judge responsible.
- This adds a layer of check and balance, so the Governor doesn't have all the power in selection.
- Allows some study of qualifications; allows open discussion by folks who are well qualified to recommend; takes the final decision out of the hands of the public.
- Haven't followed the procedure.
- Commission members being involved means that more people would be involved in
the selection of judges.

- It gives more power to voters.
- Commission system has too many lowers (Lawyers? Layers?). Retention elections is a good idea.
- Because of my limited knowledge of the judicial system.
- We have a chance of getting judges who will do a proper job as a judge.
- It seems as though qualified people evaluating whether a person should hold the office of judge would be good for the people of the state.
- It would depend on how the commission members are selected and recommendations should include a broad range of choices--not just 2 or 3 that would be interchangeable.
- I work so hard, I don't know/time.
- Judges should be non partisan and free of political pressure.
- People who will learn and study candidates will recommend qualified people. As long as the commission is unbiased and not bought.
- If the commission is made up of people that are informed and intelligent.
- It seems that using a broad based commission group would give the citizens a fairer chance of getting the best candidate for the position
- It would provide a roster of candidates that people who really know them would provide. How, who picks the commission?
- It seems to appoint judges via qualifications rather than special interest groups and political groups.
- It removes politics, campaigning, special interest as influencing selection and potentially the judges decisions.
- Provided the commission is nonbiased, at least candidates would be evaluated on qualifications. Now many get into positions due to being unopposed--therefore automatically voted in.
- It would be more fair and the selection process would be made by persons with the most knowledge of performance and personal issues of candidates.
- Merit plays a significant role at the beginning of the process; citizens can provide a check on the process later.
- It makes judges earn their jobs.
- It depends upon who is on the commission.
- It takes away my right to vote for the person I feel most qualified. It gives partisan Governors to make my choice.
- It gives more control over the positions that are filled by appointment - with this system in place I guess I would know that a fair group of people really considered the candidates qualifications and qualities. I also like the fact that voters can then
 decide whether or not they think the judge should stay in office after already having had time to show us how they do.

- Removes the "peoples" opinion and right to decide by vote.
- Depoliticizes (hopefully) and allows selection from qualified pool so hopefully no cronyism or judgements awarded as "thank you" or reward.
- I like this idea for selecting judges because the evaluation process will give a clearer picture of each candidate and if he/she is qualified for the job. A flyer for a candidate only says so much; but when the candidates get interviewed by someone who has already been a judge, then they have a better picture of who is qualified for the job.
- small groups tend to have agendas or party lines and will select judges accordingly, as would the Governor
- The process sounds bipartisan and merit based.
- I don't trust the commission.
- I already employ a similar strategy for choosing who I vote for. I seek the Bar Associations recommendations and choose the best qualified candidate based on those ratings. Judges should not be "running" for office and subjected to fund raising, being backed by special interest groups, etc. It taints the office. And adds a conflict of interest right off the bat. I like the merit selection idea a lot.
- Periodic retention elections would ensure voters have a voice in their judicial representation. Bipartisan is good.
- Governor has too much control.
- Governor should never be involved.
- We need to screen out political patronage appointees and focus on merit. See previous comment.
- I feel that it gives voters a chance to see how each judge is doing in their position and make a change if necessary.
- Because I am not qualified to choose a judge but the commission would be.
- It is better than the current selection process. However, I would remove the public completely from this process. There should be an oversight committee that reviews judges in each area listed prior regarding qualities of judges and how they followed the law in each case. This oversight committee should be made up of the "merit selection" committee so they know the performance of each judge.
- It would give a large number of people voice in the process.
- What is best for all
- Sounds like it might put qualified people in the positions.
- Expensive to make retention elections and why do it if unopposed?!--Otherwise guess commission might work.
- Merit selection would still have a bias.
• The commission would be bipartisan and include non-lawyers. The governor could still be involved but with less power. Candidates wouldn't have to campaign publicly.
• Helps to eliminate legal decisions being swayed by political pressure and salivating judge positions
• State Bar Association opinions will dominate Commission. The "well qualified" candidate rating by the WSBA means a candidate is politically correct, has never worked as anything except a lawyer or judge, and has never accomplished anything outside of the legal system. The LAST thing we need is more appointments of those with NO outside the law experience of any kind.
• It would give too much power to the Governor--what if the panel votes and the Governor is used to tie-break.
• I think this would be a better way. When you don't have a background to make choices, sometimes it is a guess when making my selection.
• The governor should have the ability to use her judgment about whether a candidate is suitable since she will be accountable for the appointment.
• The people have one choice; whether to retain that judge and if not, then what. No contest.
• Because a commission would have better knowledge of candidates qualifications.
• They should know who's good and who's not good. Judges should be fair in all situations.
• Hopefully, the lawyers will act as proper judges and make known which judges are best in office, and will let the voting public know.
• Need to eliminate "bad apples".
• keeps politics out of it
• I would like to know how the commission would be appointed
• Kept them accountable.
• I don't like control of the Judicial system given to a small group of people I know nothing about.
• Good, but places too much power in hands of the commission.
• Most attorneys are left (liberal) leaning. Commission would likely put forward left leaning candidates. Would not be balanced.
• Good chance to weed our bad judges.
• Formalizes the fact-and-reasoning-based qualification for appointments.
• Qualified people would be evaluating and not just allowing anyone to run and narrows the field for the Governor.
• Retention elections seem a good idea--but who selects commission is a question.
• Not sure.
• Good: Merit selection. Bad: Retention elections; retention should be based on some kind of performance review, not whims of voters.

• Assures more broad involvement and perspective.

• I see this as a method of selection and retention with accountability. A judge should believe in our system, and not be pressured to make decisions based on which direction the political winds are blowing.

• I would like to have a vote! I would like to vote for these judges who I feel are best qualified. I worry about the politics of a commission.

• This puts the hiring decision in the hands of those more qualified to assess a person’s ability to fulfill the duties of a judge. I would suggest that the lawyers participating in the interview process be from a district other than where the judge will practice to avoid conflicts.

• This system could take some of the political/special interest aspects away from the selection process and make the judges accountable to the people for their performance.

• I feel that a judicial candidate should be able to make their case for earning the public's trust. The Governor is a politician, a partisan who should not dilute the citizen's election.

• Okay, this system could take care of some of the problems with judge selection by trying to force it to be nonpartisan. It is also good that the commission would be made up of lawyers and nonlawyers whose job would be to interview and recommend candidates--this seems better than asking the People to elect judges in that they could make it their job and actually make an educated decision. However, who chooses the commission? Also, can the Governor recommend candidates for commission review? What influence would the Governor have on the commission members? What influence would special interest groups have on the commission members? How would the People know whether a judge should remain in office? On what would they base their decisions? specific court cases? This doesn't seem right either.

• Eliminates one person opinion.

• This keeps the current governor (whoever they may be) from appointing their friends and ________ the judicial system.

• it's a mix of people (politically and professionally) who will probably make a balanced recommendation. it seems less subject to nepotism/etc.

• Judges are to serve the public, so the public's opinions should count.

• Because it depends upon who sits on the commission. How are they selected? What is their criteria?

• It appears that this system may be somewhat more impartial and less partisan.

• I worry about the current governor who isn't always bipartisan

• This may work better than leaving it to the voters. Merit selection should be a good
way, unless they agree with what our governor did on the Casino deal!

- Judges needing to be bi-partisan also need to be selected by a larger group of people from different backgrounds so to control one person's opinion from dominating the selection.
- Much more selective from abroad group of legal experts.
- It seems just about as good but would give a lot work to the governor.
- The lay person without political ties to the governor would be under represented and mediated.
- Keep Governor out of it. Have commission rate candidate, publish the results and let people vote using this info.
- Process has high potential to alienate the public.
- Politics intrude in general elections. Judges should not be political.
- Lawyers=qualified, non-lawyers=person able, governor= next to final decision; elections=continuous oversight
- Everyone--even judges must have a process to be held accountable.
- I think many of the same judges would be in office as there are today, so the net result is basically a wash.
- I have not seen any action.
- Does every lawyer get to vote?
- It's a change.
- Bad Governor, bad commission system board.....bad judges. However, it's a better method than current system. I'm ready for change, it's hard to determine "what" would be better. Best to start and polish than to sit in analytical paralysis.
- You want the most highly qualified to get the job.
- It's made by informed people--hopefully truly bipartisan.
- Judge candidates are evaluated by lawyers and non-lawyers--passed to Governor based on their qualifications.
- We never hear how they have ruled in the current cases so its all in a name--no record.
- All should be elected.
- Advancing by weight of merit is more desirable than being part of a 'good ole boys' club.
- Heavily weighted on the party in the governor's position. LIKE judicial/lawyer input. MOST effective tool of competency.
- I like the idea, but I'm concerned what it will cost the taxpayers. I would not agree with an increase in taxes to cover this. I think the committee be voluntary, use law students (with a professional volunteering to oversee it) and let them apply it to their education as a practicum or on-site learning experience. Law students need to
develop skills in interviewing and it would be something very beneficial to society and also look great on their resume!

- Candidates for judges should be elected by voters.
- Big improvement over the present system, Provides better professional and knowledgeable element to the selection process.
- I'm not informed enough about the processes and details of "merit selection". Although like the idea of such appointees needing to sit for extension election.
- I haven't read anything about judicial appointments being problematic in this state. I'd want to know who was proposing "merit selection" and why. How would the commission members receive their appointments? I would be more inclined towards a "merit selection system" if the state governor were Republican.
- Require candidates to meet and _______ competency level--more assurance an appointee is qualified to act as a judge.
- System should not be partisan. Commission should consist of non-legal professionals mixed with a good ethnic cross-section of the populace.
- Sounds more fair and unbiased.
- Fair to the voters.
- This takes away the voter's right of selection.
- A qualified individual should present their qualifications to public and run for office! The BAR, Governor and Commissions are political.
- Once again, I feel that any judicial position should not be determined by a board of lawyers or individuals influenced by lawyers. This should be of a public vote.
- Better system than current procedure.
- Commissions still retain the air of partisanship--or back room wheeling/dealing.
- Seems like there might be a better mix of power in selecting judges.
- The people don't elect them, therefore they don't have a responsibility to them.
- Right now they way we select judges is pretty much a crapshoot... The average voter has very little interaction with judges and the legal system...then do we really understand all that they must take into consideration when they rule? It is sort of like watching ice skating..we groan at how the judges don't score like we want them to..but we are not aware of all the technical mistakes the skater makes. Hopefully a commission predominantly made up of people who understand would give us a high caliber of judges.
- It should be the "people" not the governor who has the say. Why is it his/her choice?
- No experience with it
- I like that qualified committees help find candidates and they are presented to us for retention.
• Takes politics out of judiciary. Takes pro-police out of appointments.
• It is not much of a change in the process.
• A commission selection process is better than a gov. selection.
• There is the law and there should be gray areas too. Non-lawyers without "special interests" should feel-out a judge candidate as being compassionate and common sense.
• The commission would have more knowledge of who could be chosen and what their qualifications are.
• Because it's been done way for how long!! And it must be working.
• Better representation than only appointment through Governor.
• Commission system seems better than the current process because it evaluates a judge's performance instead of allowing one person like the governor to make the selection which could be biased and the election selection alone I think is almost useless since any candidate can make himself look good in an advertisement of himself.
• When the judge is old in health.
• Checks Governor's powers.
• I believe voters should decide appointments to judicial positions but we must have contested races and candidate information to make informed decisions and choices.
• The voter's have a say in it.
• Gives a broader base of selection, less likely to be biased or politically motivated.
• Although the committee is bipartisan, the list of lawyers recommended would have some more aligned with the governor than others and political reasons may determine the selection of a particular lawyer. I feel that lawyers are more than likely looking at the decisions of judges and a flag would go up if they were making consistently bad decisions. I like the selection of a judge to be by the people. The problem I see is that it is hard to get good information about judges. This is why I like seeing who endorses them. This pretty well shows their political alignment. Also, seeing how the state troopers and others involved in the legal system lineup is helpful in making a decision during an election.
• I like it.
• I don't know much about any judge except for local one.
• If lawyers and non-lawyers evaluate, this seems good. However, "special interest reps" should NOT be included in the system. It seems it could minimize political influence.
• They need to be accountable.
• Who would appoint the commissioners?
• We still need the people's voice.
Could use the Buddy System and not be bi-partisan.
Less chance of special interests swaying opinions.
No one organization has the power to elect.
I like the idea that a panel of people evaluate the qualifications and make a recommendation.
Judges should not be elected, it injects too much money and politics into the system. I prefer a merit-based, appointment process. This process helps promote a qualified and impartial system, and has worked well for federal court judge positions in WA.
Good as long as the group (commission) was representative of our state's population and not just corporate lobbyists.
My feeling is: Too many judges are 'sitting' too long and lose their perspectives and are unable to judge properly. They also need to be made aware of what the general consensus of the populace is feeling about crime and criminals in their area.
I like that the judges are voted on by the people and not retained for life. People should be allowed to run for positions if they want. Similar to political races.
A commission is good; maybe not for local judges, however.
Good to have people with knowledge picking the judges!
Again, the conservative, Godly values of this state are not represented well, either in Olympia or the courts.
I think the peer review system would be good. It would also take some of the political pressure away from our current appointment system.
Governor's can't load up the bench this way!
Every office should have term limits. Who selects the "selectors"?
The proposed system address the issues that concern me most; evaluation of qualifications in a systematic way, reducing the influence of party politics, power of special interests.
The Governor may be partial. A commission is less likely to.
You know this might be better than running when you really didn’t have a chance to show the people of WA who you are. After you have been a judge for a while and there is evidence of what you can do the people of Wash can vote on your behalf.
A better chance of finding and appointed judges with a solid background in carrying out the law and not making up law.
I think that maybe some of the ones that can be "bought" will not get in to wreck havoc in the courts. But, what IF the Governor could be "bought" and assign someone who is not worthy???
Because we need the most qualified judges.
• People have a decision.
• Judge not subject to politics. Qualified people will nominate.
• Majority of voters have no clue on the performance of a judge. Would also reduce those that are inept.
• I think this process would be fair. However, I believe they should be subjected to term evaluations, limits, and elections.
• It would seem that judges entering office for the first time might be more qualified under a system such as this.
• More consideration of real qualification
• A judge serves the people. The people should be able to choose who that is. Not a panel of lawyers, and our Governor.
• Who selects the commission? How "broad"? Easier for special interests to focus on this small group.
• The only better system would be to use current boards, etc. to dialog recommendations. With this system we should be able to limit unqualified judge.
• Allows for citizen and jurist input.
• Hopefully the commission system eliminates "party" preference.
• Their peers are the best qualified to evaluate their merits. I feel that the general public does not have the knowledge needed to decide the necessary qualifications needed to be a judge.
• Where is the oversight once appointed? Even if the public votes occasionally, they have no data to go on. Maybe commission can make public an evaluation of the judges on a yearly basis? Not clear what commission's role is from statement above!
• All people should have their say.
• Bi-partisan, non-political
• Assuming the commission was truly broad based and non-partisan, it should insure qualified candidates. The voters would also serve as a back up to make sure the commission got it right. I do suggest that the commission have at least some vetting members who could determine if the candidate had a basic understanding of the law.
• They would be vetted by people who know about them and their qualifications.
• Once selected to serve people are more concerned about staying in that position than doing what's right.
• Makes sense
• This could be tried if commission recommends at least 3 (hopefully). Maybe the appointment wouldn't be so completely political. Periodic "retention elections" sound good.
• It the same method most people are hired for jobs in the work places today.
• Same as above
• It appears to be an effective method.
• The voters must not give up their right to vote for the best judges. Keep any group out____
• I like peer and electorate review
• I don't know. I really don't know that much about this process...so, have so little info, I can't really say right now.
• Input comes from the level, and the colleagues, and staff at which the judges work. The last poll shed light on poor judges in Pierce County, [names omitted] and highlighted good judges like Jim Orlando.
• Because they need to keep up their knowledge of the laws and of all cases.
• The system seems to be a little better in keeping politics out of the system. Again only if the commission is fair.
• Incompetent judges more easily removed.
• The choice is not given to one person. Position less likely to be given as a favor or in return for something.
• Too much political influence.
• I think again it is good for the 25% of people who think. What you have to understand that many might not understand the_____.
• keeps them accountable
• Accountability.
• Gives governor too much power.
• The voters should do the deed and alert the people who are judges or want to be screened and background checks done.
• It puts the decision in the hands of more knowledgeable people and doesn't allow arbitrary & partisan decisions by the governor.
• Elections are great to have the public involved and heard.
• what "citizens" would be appointed, and by who, to this commission? it still ends up a closed group of people. term limits for all judges is the only solution to bad judges.
• People should elect/appoint judges not the Grinch-- / mean Governor.
• Self interest selected? Each judge should be judged on their values.
• Voters have a right to recommend judges they feel are qualified.
• People that know who to recommend do the work and we get better judges.
• I have had the displeasure of inspecting a good share of Washington's judges from past to present and have seen the difference between honorable and corrupted, my
life reflects the unacceptable behavior of judicial uninsightfullness, I have been displaced, disrupted, robbed repeatedly, assaulted incarcerated, and every injustice in the world placed on my liberty, for a repeated number of years. including my very right to raise and support my family as I see fit, as written. I'm broken to retirement by the "judicial overlords, court jesters and highwaymen" all interpreting their own versions of law, when is the last time your case was on time, and not "on the docket at general time" along with 40 others, professionally that varied time frame leaves much to be desired.

- You are getting people that have different backgrounds and values to make educated decisions on which judges are doing great.
- It could be good and it could be bad. I hope they don't have people picked that they know when a more qualified person should actually be picked.
- I don't trust groups of lawyers.
- Insures better qualified judges.
- More accountability.
- A commission is NEVER fair and representative. People's vote represents people not a commission.
- This approach sounds like it would vet the potential judges by people knowledgeable and concerned about the law and the important role judges play in our legal system. The public would have the chance to make their analysis also during retention elections.
- ?
- I have not thought or heard about this merit system before.
- merit selection
- Having watched the way our "leaders" in Washington DC can keep well qualified candidates from being confirmed, I am not certain that is the route to go. We do not need our state judicial system to be held hostage, however I would like to think that a "bipartisan, broad-based commission" could be counted on to make wise recommendations. Perhaps the provision for all judges facing periodic retention elections might work, but, once again, the public needs more information in order to make educated decisions. I would like to see term limits on judges.
- The major flaw would be the governor could pick on political views.
- The new system will reevaluate
- I think that it is wrong that a judge stays on without evaluation. It is because it is too expensive to run a campaign. That is wrong. We need more information about judges.
- Though this system would more closely resemble the U.S. Supreme Court system as public elections, it doesn’t hold "merit." The lower courts should be open to the public's scrutiny, but the public, once again, needs a choice (contested elections with back-ground about the candidates).
• Improves the quality of the electors but still gives governor a choice. Prevents
governor from freely appointing from among his political supporters. Need more
details on experience with system to rate very good.
• There is no publicity.
• The people don't even choose the lawyers, how is that fair?
• I like the Bi-Partisan commission of non-lawyers and lawyers.
• More input into the selection.
• A retention election that provides for a judge receiving sufficient no votes to be
removed from office would improve the quality of judges serving. All employees
in the corporate world have performance appraisals and a judge should not be above
this.
• Judge should be accountable to the voters.
• I would say it is very good. But not until the methods for selection of commissions
qualifications is proven fair and just; representative of the good of everyone in
society.
• A panel of lawyers and citizens can make a better informed decision!
• Because it would not be politically based.
• It sounds good--as long as the commission was composed of truly committed
concerned members. The public should be able to see the list and qualifications.
• Who chooses the commission members? Most lawyers are liberals. If we have a
liberal governor, we'll have liberal judges chosen, and if we have a conservative
governor, we'll have conservative judges chosen. If you have liberal commission
members recommending judges to a conservative governor, the governor will have
to choose among those probably not his or her first choice.
• Better for the people.
• I can't believe they don't do it this way already. The candidates should be picked
from all parts of the state not just Western Wash. I am from Eastern Wash. We have
fine lawyers there.
• Not sure a new process is necessary.
• parties knowledgeable in the law make recommendations
• It would depend on who sits on the commission and who appoints them to the
commission.
• More objective. Limits partisan bias. Retention elections are good.
• As long as the commission is made up of lawyers and non-lawyers equally, it would
make it harder for judges to persuade one side or the other.
• Because it is done non-partisan!
• The people should have the chance to vote for who they want in our courts.
• It is better than having beauty contests and candidates being heavily backed by
partisan groups.

- Politics affects commissions.
- I think that the Bar Association needs to play an important role as they are the group best placed to evaluate the quality of the candidates' education and experience.
- There would be process for selection not just automatically in and staying in forever.
- But seems better than old.
- Seems like a cumbersome process for filling vacant seats - could result in the court system becoming too backlogged if the commission doesn't get the work done. The commission would need to work in a collaborative, expedient manner - not sure that's possible with bipartisan commission. Witness how little Congress gets done these days. But bipartisan would be the only fair way to do it....
- The victims of the courts need to have a direct say in who will wield such power over them. I personally have gone to court to get back wages from a crooked employer, won the case, and still did not receive any of my back pay. The system as it stands is a sham. The court system only works for those rich enough to afford a good lawyer. And even then you have to know how to find an ethical one.
- Gives too much power to a (political) governor and/or a supposedly broad-based/bipartisan group of people. Regular people should be able to vote and elect judges to provide accountability.
- Many individuals from differing backgrounds are involved in the process, including the voting public.
- This should have been in place sooner. Judges serve a very important function in our society. We need the best.
- Helps eliminate potential favoritism
- This could have a great answer to a judge with a record of poor decisions.
- I think it would be great for a group of bipartisan people to recommend candidates for judicial positions, I'm just not sure that this is possible to accomplish.
- are the commissioners paid for this?
- Partisan selections of judges has no place in the judicial branch of government.
- See my example ("have 5 different cases and how the voted on 5 different topic of their responsibility"). Better way of doing this.
- Eventually the people have the final say.
- Some screening might help.
- I agree with "merit selection" but I don't like the idea of a small group making selection and the governor as the final selector. Particularly because the governor's values and opinions are partisan and not in agreement with mine.
- A responsible board has compared and evaluate candidates. Retention elections
hold individuals accountable to the public.

- Judges should be judged by lawyers, who have a better knowledge of the judicial system.
- I feel such a system would create additional bureaucracy. I also feel it would dilute the powers of the executive branch.
- The present system works well. If it ain't broken, don't fix it.
- Seems good.
- Combines best of both worlds - ensures that qualified candidates are considered and that judges are accountable to voters.
- Might have judge that is not very good
- Seems a way to assure nonpartisan qualified people who owe nothing for their selection and must earn re-election--it seems!
- I believe this may make judges more accountable for their rulings. It may also allow for removal of biased judges who may no longer be impartial.
- For the same reason as I wrote for the last equation.
- It would hold the judges accountable and they would be held to a higher standard. They couldn't just run because they wanted to.
- Removing citizen's choice from the process makes it too likely that radical ideologues will corrupt the courts.
- Less accountability to the voters will make
- If the people including myself do not take an interest and vote, I feel that the lawyers and non-lawyers will be more qualified based upon fairness/ law abiding records of judges.
- More broad based and centered on law than political whim.
- Theoretically the system would be less political. I wonder how the commission would be chosen?
- All of it sounds good except for the elimination of contested elections. Currently there is a 40/60 split of elected vs. appointed. There are pros and cons to both election and appointment of judges. I would prefer a system that retains a blend.
- Would make selection less political.
- Seems like this system has worked ok. Why change it?
- Seems to ensure that some care goes into the recommendations.
- Taking it out of the hands for one individual. Should not be stacked one way or another.
- Higher level of expectations & ensure qualified, knowledgeable candidates are selected.
- No one works for free. Sounds expensive. More Taxpayers money wasted.
Less control by one person.

Because, I am a firm believer that every judge should be elected by the people, not other lawyers who belong to the same organization. And who decides who gets on the commission? Too many variables that would basically keep it the same way!

Those choosing the candidates would have more information about the individuals being chosen and hopefully be impartial enough to choose and knowledgeable enough to pick judges who will do the best job in the courts. The question is who chooses the members of the commission and how do they keep their own preferences and prejudices from making their choices?

The voters would have a say.

The public needs to vote or in this case "interview" the candidates.

People would get the appointment based on merit, not just how much campaign money they could raise and spend.

Judges need to be evaluated especially when they are still on the seat and very old.

Is there a tie breaker system? Would people just vote along their party lines?

There seems to be a good series of checks and balances, to weed out the unbalanced extremists.

Who appoints "The Commission?". This sounds like a group of politically correct process junkies who would nominate like-minded souls. What a nightmare. Digression here. One group of your questions address optimism vs. pessimism. I am a hopeless optimist, and a true believer in the form of democracy that we have - warts and all. This survey deals with judges - when in my opinion the whole legal system is screwed up - and judges are caught in the collateral damage. Another question you didn't ask deals with the practice of judges "endorsing" other judges in elections. Yes of course they have a free speech right, but this practice seems just weird. Finally, you should have included a text box at the end for people like me to unload. Question about trust in Govt: In my county (Snohomish) County Exec and County Council act like 3 year olds. City Gov't (Everett) on the other hand is very well managed, great Mayor, Council with more ego than smarts but fundamentally pretty solid. Lower courts good, State Supreme court so open minded their brains fall out. FINALLY - glad to see WSU is behind this. If this effort had been UW, I would not have bothered.

It still sounds as if the governor can appoint ONE OF THE recommended people, not the one that the commission singled out as the best. So it still has some element of "appointed" judges.

Back to page 4 … we have a system in place that checks on the people who are to be our judges.

Don't trust lawyers. Are they in the pocket of the judge? In fact, very bad.

This sounds good, but who makes up the commission? How does one get to be on the commission? Seems like it could be very political, but probably better than just one person selecting a judge.
• Would keep old and bad judges from remaining in office too long.
• This would take away some of the special interests getting people elected
• The judicial system should be as free as possible of partisan politics. This is why the judiciary is a separate branch of government.
• Politically influenced.
• Sounds like a fair system.
• I don't like that the ultimate decision is whoever the Governor likes best.
• The merit of a candidate's qualifications would be thrown out of the consideration and replaced with political partisan power moves and the stronger personalities on the commission trying to outmaneuver the supporter of another candidate. Judicial applicants would end up in a quagmire, just look at what happened on the federal level in Washington DC. The local people should have some say in who presides over their courts. I question the benefit of having "retention" elections as I don't see a high level of voter interest unless something negative was discovered and the media brought it to the attention of the voting public.
• Have to know record of candidates.
• My limited exposure.
• It would depend on their quality of work.
• It's good for the judges to be evaluated because it keeps them on top of their game.
• I think the first part of the system where the commission evaluates the candidates sounds like an excellent system because you have people who know what they are talking about nominating choices so it is based on merit not politicking. However having the elections take away that benefit and forces them to still cater to public opinion. However, if you took that away the small commission would be more susceptible to payoffs and corruption. It seems like a good system, maybe if the commission members constantly changed it would take care of that issue.
• Bi-partisan. Vetted by qualified, knowledgeable people. Merit selection. Periodic elections--don't really get this part.
• Keep politics out of it.
• Any public scrutiny is good. One of the problems with judicial election is lack of meaningful information about candidates.
• More accountability.
• Based on qualifications
• How do we know until the system is tried.
• Might allow the governor to pick one leaning towards their view
• A better, less partisan method for selecting judges
• some people would keep their friends in no matter what
• Again-the judges passed performance is then "judged" by voters.
• Keep judges honest and transparent in their rulings, and on the straight & narrow regarding their integrity and attitudes.

• That gives more power to the governor, who is a partisan being. It would be better to have the commission appoint judges if we are not going to elect them. That would be better than leaving it to governor's whims.

• Judges, in my opinion, should not be elected.

• I think this is a very impartial and fair way to pick our judges.

• I think it could be helpful to weed out politically active judges.

• Let the people evaluate the candidates and decide.

• The panel that would be interviewing the potential candidates (hopefully) would be educated enough to make good decisions. Then the people, in their vote, would have a chance to either keep them or not, after they see what they have done.

• I think this would allow qualified candidates a much better chance at being selected.

• Some judges should be replaced and/or held accountable.

• Being selected by your peers would hopefully put the right judges in place.

• Would have a more positive effect on getting qualified people than a narrower selection process by the governor.

• I feel it is good to have someone, several in fact, who can sit one to one and ask the questions and get a feel for the person being interviewed. We currently don't really have that option.

• I just feel we truly do have good judges and have had for 40 years.

• Public may be more aware of the judges abilities.

• It more closely resembles the system I described above. However, I have grave concerns that the commission would itself be driven by political bias - especially so if the commission relied disproportionately opinions reflected in the state bar association, which is highly biased politically.

• I don't believe lawyers have the public fairness in mind. Who they pick could very well be wrong for us, good for them.

• Checks and balances at all points.

• Because they should be elected by the people. Commission system good for filling a vacancy.

• It would remove politics from the selection. It would make the courts more impartial.

• At least people are involved in the selection.

• Too open to partisan politics--too bureaucratic.

• Do not know enough about judicial process.

• This option leaves out the voice of the people.
- Qualified people make the recommendations to the Governor.
- The lawyers that work in the legal environment "know" where the weaknesses are in the system and would be able to assess each candidate especially if they have had the opportunity to work with them.
- It could take the politics out of the judicial system.
- Why would one with no or little merit deserve to remain in position?
- (don't trust lawyers in the least), maybe we should have a non-lawyer, non-partisan broad-based commission made up of the general public
- Re-evaluation at periodic levels is important in any job.
- I guess my first question would be what if members of the commission are influenced by special interests? The public should have a say before the retention b/c the potential for abuse comes before they're appointed.
- Are you kidding me! The governor already appoints 60% now--and you want to allow them 100%?
- I think people would vote just because a name is on the ballot even if they do not know what the judge believes or if impartial.
- No one person has the huge responsibility of choosing a judge.
- At least there is input from the citizens and/or representatives.
- Present system provides too much payback for supporters with $.
- This would be a very good way to get the BEST Qualified person on the bench instead of being rewarded.
- It sounds fair.
- Less political in nature.
- Interesting--would the incumbent face competition in the election? Who sits on the commission? How do they get on it? Could become an "ol' boys club" and that would be bad.
- Too partisan
- Many times I don't know the individual I am voting for and don't know their qualifications. This would allow those that know to recommend the person they think is most qualified and the people would still be able to change them the next election if they were not satisfied with them.
- This is only good if the buddy system doesn't screw it up. Special interests will needs to be kept away from the commissioners.
- Seems like a fair situation
- This seems more fair and unbiased as opposed to the current appointments and elections. But it could be worse if the commission is biased itself.
- If the commission system is indeed bipartisan (I would prefer non-partisan) and broad-based, the process would be positive. The most qualified should succeed and
if that person fails to perform (even though qualifications were met), an opportunity would arise to reconsider. This would eliminate life time occupations of persons that have proved to be poor choices. This is where a non-partisan commission would be preferable, to me and I'm not sure how many lawyers should be allowed on the commission. Judges shouldn't be chosen because of their political leanings; they should uphold the laws as best as possible even though each case probably has its unique circumstances.

- Two ways to weed out poor judges--commission and voters.
- This commission system would filter for qualifications, but what about values? Values and qualifications are both important.
- I wish we would have had this system nationally for the past 200 years. Can we institute a "merit selection" for all public office holders including President please?
- They should make judges accountable
- Only if used to appoint judges to fill a vacancy. Voters should still elect judges not the governor alone.
- More nonpartisan way to pick judges. No politics just facts like a court should be.
- The people do not have a voice with this method in the selection of judges!!
- My concern would be the waste of tax dollars, who gets on the commission to choose, and ultimately the governor chooses anyway. There does not seem to be a lot of extra judge candidates to choose from if 84% are uncontested.
- Although I don't know how the commission will be selected and what it interests it could represent - I like the idea of periodic retention elections.
- This sounds reasonable but is missing specific important details like how many people do they consider "broad-based" and how will the commissioners be selected.
- I believe people can get stale in one position and it's always good to have new comers to even out the "veterans".
- Who creates the commission?
- I think it gives us as voters a chance to see how judges work and then decide if they are doing a good job or not.
- Only if commission system is made up of non-lawyers.
- It will make them more accountable, like the rest of us, and take away the untouchable feeling or look.
- Special interests may be represented
- The phrase "…bipartisan, broad-based commission…" says it all.
- Sounds like a beneficial process for the courts and the voters.
- The selection would be in the hands of a few and not a determination by the people who vote. My concern would also be on how the commission was selected. There are too many commissions now who function without the best interests of the people in mind.
• If the appointing governor was honest and impartial, maybe that would work, but look at what has happened to the national Supreme Court—with people being nominated for their beliefs and certifying a Wrong Florida election!

• This would ensure that judges are highly qualified and ensure that they are responsive to the public.

• I have no reasons to question the current system not eventually the voters decide.

• If I wanted to elect a judge who thinks the way I think, this system would not work. I think the people should elect judges. In most cases bad judges are weeded out in the end anyway.

• Seems to encourage more cronyism

• Chosen by people who have greater knowledge than recommendations to governor.

• Might work, but could raise a whole new set of unforeseen problems.

• Judges should be as impartial and objective as possible—elections inherently detract from their being objective. The commissions system insulates judges from direct politics and overt influence.

• I don't think you could come up with a bipartisan commission. You don't say who would appoint the members.

• Sounds very complex and I'd like to see more info regarding pros and cons.

• Definitely an improvement, provided it is nonpartisan. How would voters know if a judge should not be retained?

• I would want to research the issue and see how other states have managed the filling of judicial positions.

• It seems likely that such a system could/would be controlled by the political party in power.

• no mention is made as to who picks the commission. If the governor picks the commission and then the candidate, I feel too much control rests with one person.

• I am concerned that the panel would allow their own personal political, religious or other beliefs influence their decisions too much, like we see in politics overall.

• They are being rated by qualified people, including their peers.

• Holds judiciary more accountable; input from members of the bar--the most familiar w/the bench.

• It's going to be time-consuming and expensive.

• It seems to be working.

• Would a commission system require compensation? We don't need the added expense.

• Like anyone applying for a job--the best qualified should come from interviews and evaluated by those experienced, then give the governor the best facts to make the best selection.
- Citizens don't always know what the case is on/ when a potential candidate is ________something.

- The commission idea sounds like a fairly good idea. This is really just a more formalized nominating process. Obviously the Governor doesn't just pick the nominee out of thin air. People around her/him make recommendations, however not all of them probably have the public's interests as first on their agenda. This would make the process more open. The commission being based on a jury of their peers is also a good idea. That being said, I don't know if one should force the Governor to choose one of the commissions picks. I think they should be allowed to pick whom they what, because they will still be accountable to the public. Another thing I do not know whether I agree with is the periodic retention elections. I don't know how the public will respond when presented with only an option to keep or get rid of a judge. Not knowing who might replace the judge could lead to the retention of so-so judges, and the outing of unpopular ones in favor of the idea that the next person couldn't be worse. I think the public would respond favorably and responsibly to the option of being able to remove a judge, but the previous statement is a fear of mine with regards to possible failures of this process.

- The combination of lawyers and non-lawyers make the recommendations more impartial.

- It ensures the judge has met qualification standards and the selection is made from "best qualified". Retention elections allow voters to "keep judges honest".

- It would seem to give the system a broader selection from which to choose competent judges. It would descend a lot on the integrity of the commission

- Most voters don't know anything about judges qualifications anyway.

- It would show that the governor has a group of judges that the public is aware of.

- I look upon lawyer types with great suspicion.

- No sure. Perhaps, keep everyone involved more honest.

- The problem with any non-elective process is its politicalization. While it sounds great in theory to have a selection based on "merit", the first problem is defining "qualified" candidates. How do you compare the hard-working, common sense candidate with the scholar? More importantly, I am concerned about politics being involved throughout the system. Who picks the commission members? If selected by either the Governor or the legislature (or both), does anyone really believe the members won't be political in nature? That is contrary to virtually every commission/Board/Agency that I have experienced after an administration change. Furthermore, even when narrowed down by the commission, the Governor still has to make a choice, and again, I think we are all being naive if we think politics won't be involved. We have had an ongoing concern that a west-side urban Governor will have considerations which are markedly different from a rural east-side county. In sum, I could support a merit-retention process, but I would have to be convinced that it is structured in such a way as to eliminate, or at least minimize, politics overriding the system. In that change can come only through the political process itself, that may well be a difficult goal to obtain.
- No one party or person has control.
- All judges should be elected unless filling a vacancy due to death.
- It should present the most qualified
- Excellent system used to evaluate and retain quality most needed.
- Merit selection would seem to be a good thing…
- The person running would be evaluated as to his or her qualified to be judge.
- I believe this is the way to go if we can keep the politics out of it.
- Makes more sense and intelligent.
- Lawyers selecting lawyers.
- The voters elect the governor. I do not believe one should be forced to accept the
  commissioners recommendation. This system is not necessarily free of partisanship
  by the commission.
- Their peers put their names forward.
- The governor can stack the commission.
- Each judge should be accountable to remain in office.
- Should be on ballot if possible
- Seems to be a way to meet the needs of the general populations.
- The judge would be chosen based on qualifications not what they could do for the
  Governor.
- This seems to be a better way to select judges.
- It has a clearing house of qualified persons evaluating the ability to serve.
- It gives the Governor too much power in the selection process.
- Better qualified candidates! I like this method!!
- Limited input--how are members appointed to the commission. Why do attorneys
  have a 50% representation on the committee? Define periodic retention election--what period?
- I like the merit system, but how is an incumbent replaced? If voters "decide
  whether each judge should remain in office" then this further favors the incumbent
  as they "appointed based on merit." Is the voter decision with a challenger or just
  an up or down vote? If there is a challenger then he/she will not have the
  imprimatur of the merit selection process. This system does NOT remove the faults
  of judicial elections, it just slightly modifies the initial selection process.
- Only using it would tell if it's an improvement.
- The Governor appoint interim replacements, however, judges must establish and
  maintain their credibility with the public. I do not want another "layer" of
government to enable and hide corruption.
- The judges should be accountable to the people not the governor.
• The judges shouldn't be "grandfathered" in because they were selected by the governor, but rather have to be chosen by the people.
• Bipartisan is a bad idea, nonpartisan needs to be retained- also there is not enough involvement of the people's vote.
• I don't understand the court system so my comments can't count.
• How do you vote against a non-contested judge?
• Now people vote for governors and judges a lot because they recognize a name or for a certain party's ads. The commission system would only have qualified people who know the applicant's merits. There could be some bias but better qualifications with the commission.
• Helps the governor makes less political decisions and better ones. Might cost money...Judges would still need vote of populace.
• It helps put the people back in charge of their government and places a qualified individual in ___ position.
• Depends on the Governor's values. I may or may not agree w/ his/her values.
• Seems more fair.
• The Governor can still pick any of the selected ones but not the one that’s the most qualified. Governor could be pick a friend or somebody that would be helpful to them in the future. Not good!
• I am against anyone choosing candidates picked under their values, priorities, or political leanings. They should be by people’s choice only.
• I think it's bad because people should have the position.
• It would depend on who or how the commission is selected.
• I agree in the 'merit selection' but think the commission should select their recommendations and allow us to vote on them.
• It's based on what they have done in the past and how qualified they are.
• Current governor could be a problem and looking for their own agenda.
• Just a mechanism for self-regulation and self-betterment.
• It would get corrupt and waste tax dollars.
• Again it come down to a group and not a one person choice.
• Would rather keep the present system.
• I don't know who would choose the commission members.
• Presuming the Governor selects this group, they may reflect the current Governor's standards, which may not reflect my views.
• No lawyers should have any input. As most judges are lawyers and as ______ a defense or prosecutor their job seems to be to find loop holes in laws instead of reading the law as written.
this would be a group of peers asking the right questions before the individual is put on the ballot.

Too vague. What's on the evaluation form? What is the interview process like? Would the findings be made to the public?

My belief is they should always be voted in by the people. Not the Governor or some commission.

They will pick their friends. This system needs to be balanced by non-lawyers.

Giving control to a small select group.

Because Ruth Bader Ginsburg is "qualified" for heaven's sake and she's a danger to the United States of America! The governor is still going to pick an activist judge to stonewall initiatives put forth by the people and streamline and approve everything the governor wants. Thus turning Washington state into a dictatorship. I want strict constructionist judges who keep their personal agenda out of the courtroom.

Wider based thought and evaluation by others---but still not perfect.

Judicial positions voted by people.

Voters should always have the ability to vote for judges. These are the people that make decisions that affect voters lives.

If the commission system could truly be representative of not just west side or eastside, but of all the people... then that concept would have some possibilities. I wonder how the commission would be selected. Seems there could be some possibility of corruption opportunities. The commission could be a very powerful position. Seems some real thought would need to be placed in that concept. Want to look at other states who do this and see if what success they have had.

I would need more information about the process. It sounds much like the current process, except now political party affiliation is a significant aspect of the that decision. It also has potential to provide improvement in selecting judges that have the skills and knowledge to interpret the laws and constitutions of the country and state. One of the benefits of open elections is the opportunity to learn of a candidates’ positions and philosophy towards judicial matters, and for the public to be able to make a choice on those differences. A retention election would only be a vote on the decisions of judges court. If recent findings are unpopular, a good judge could be removed.

Its as good as it can be.

Good idea for the people to have the last say for who stays in office.

Because I like how it is now.
COMMENTS ABOUT JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

- The more people judging the more sure of straightforward. Hopefully a more honest choice.
- I think it sounds like a good way because the people (attorneys or jurors) know what questions to ask and would know more about choosing.
- I believe that this evaluation would be helpful so that judges would not get comfortable in their positions and stay on top of the game.
- In order for judges to be fully accountable for their decisions prior to, and after taking office.
- As long as those who lose cases aren't allowed to weight the findings, it would be fine.
- Everyone needs to know well or bad they are performing their job. It would also be a good way for voters to know whether or not to vote for them the next time.
- Feedback may provide mechanisms for accountability and transparency.
- Creates accountability.
- It seems fair.
- It gives the public more if a voice of our judges performance. But it could be very biased.
- Don't know
- If done in the right way it would help me know what kind of person I'm voting for. Judges are often not really nonpartisan.
- I don't know enough about judges, even though I vote for them. Put this evaluation in the voter's pamphlet.
- It incorporates people who are most knowledgeable about a judge's competence, fairness and honesty
- It would provide better accountability
- As long as the evaluations are over a broad base of people then it could prove beneficial.
- Average citizens are idiots, it's a Me, Me, Me mentality so our beliefs of what a judge should do are biased & subjective, "Lets have a group hug now!"
- Changes are needed.
- These are the people who have first-hand knowledge of a judge's performance.
- It would keep bias judges from making rulings that Judges would be more careful with their rulings because it could cost them their job. When your job can affect someone's life so drastically the more evaluations received the better. (Like inspection @ hospitals and Dr's and such).
- I think this would be fair way to determine if the judge should continue or not.
- More information would be available to consider in an election.
- It would provide more information on the judges to aid in the voters’ decision. My biggest concern with the current system is that the voter has to blindly vote for judges.
- Not necessary.
- We have too many judges who are bought off or biased.
- Because they don't seem to even get evaluated. I think their personal lifestyle is important.
- Unless something is written in the Voter's Pamphlet, it's hard to get anything but second-hand info on judges.
- Judges need to grow with the job and should always be seeking to improve.
- It would be beneficial to have input of person's that experience the judge, but it should also be published as to who said what: I would want to know if it was a prosecutor, witness, or defendant that made the evaluation.
- Judges should be reviewed regularly.
- Judges need to be accountable. They are human and can also make mistakes.
- I feel all should be evaluated on performance. That’s what happens in most jobs!
- There has to be accountability for judges
- I think it is important that they are held accountable for their actions.
- I feel all public employees should have at least a semi or annual evaluation.
- Makes judges performance more transparent.
- Everyone needs to be accountable to someone.
- Input
- Maybe this would assist in helping liberal ("let everybody go") judges take a closer look at themselves. People are tired of the leniency given to criminals.
- Voters should know judicial track records to stay informed for elections.
- It’s a way to judge a judge.
- It provides more information that the public may use to evaluate the judges' performance.
- The goal of evaluation is always to do better--for a judge that would involve adhering to the Constitution, being honest and fair, listening, etc. Interpreting the law without prejudice--I would expect all judges to want to do their best!
- Good accountability. Improvement from uncontested format.
- Judges should have no political affiliation.
- A view inside the process helps with knowledge of what is going on in system.
- It is always a good idea to conduct a performance evaluation!
- Performance evaluation will tell the voter the information they need.
- It gives the judge feedback on performance and keeps the public informed.
- Because even though each individual might be prejudiced, the total result should form a good evaluation of the judge.
- If the results are made available to the public, it could be good then the public could
decide whether to reselect the judge.

- Judges need to uphold laws.
- I have been in 2 civil cases. One took 6.5 years, the other is ongoing divorce case since early 2005. Makes no sense and until the laws and courts change it will get worse. Judges are under the gun to move massive amounts of cases and it is I think in overload now.
- 1. I feel the public should have all the judicial information in posting their judicial selection. 2. Evaluation should be _____ by an appointed committee or committee and also used in ______ additional action.
- I feel there should be a number of ways to evaluate judges by the group who assesses conduct of judges and their performance. I was not able to see much material evaluating judges performance.
- The vast majority of lay people would only provide superficial evaluations. But it is better than nothing.
- Would hopefully continue to improve the judicial system.
- Most citizens do not have exposure to the court system and those that work within the judicial system are more knowledgeable.
- Every job should have some sort of evaluation sometimes.
- Accountability, competence. No one should be above process of evaluation and self improvement.
- Once judges are appointed, I think they should be allowed to operate independently unless they break the law.
- It would hold judges accountable to the victims. Some judges believe themselves above accountability.
- Better understanding of their qualifications based on performance and merit.
- This method is the fairest.
- The judge has to know that he/she is, or will be, accountable to the electorate.
- I don't like hearing about incompetent judges after some huge lawsuit was just paid for with tax dollars w/ others pending because the public was not informed of problems w/competency or personal health issues.
- As noted before, judges get very little feedback, and when it, is it is sugarcoated, so as to not alienate the member of the Bar. I spend a significant portion of each year in attendance at court proceedings. If a judge is fair and impartial, they get respect. When they are less than impartial, they do not pay the penalty for inappropriate conduct. They are always a judge and their actions outside of the courtroom are just as important as when they are presiding. Example is Judge Wulle and his racial slanders.
- Its about accountability. Everyone I know has some oversight and review in their own jobs, why not government officials like judges?
- Need this information to make wise choices in election.
- It seems like everyone evaluating a judge in this position would be biased, possibly based
on the outcome of the trial in which they interacted with a judge. Also, it seems silly for a juror to evaluate a judge's legal ability.

- I support the evaluation, but I don't know how I feel about it being released to the public.
- More information available to citizens about their judges.
- Sounds like a positive thing.
- Although you would get some extreme performance evaluations, I think it would be easy to spot trends and similarities, more information can never be a bad thing.
- Such feedback, if needed, can help keep judicial performance optimal.
- Judges currently are unaccountable to the public in any concrete way.
- It would be good to know.
- All government personnel should be evaluated on their jobs.
- The public would have more info.
- We all need evaluation by peers and those we work with on a regular basis to prevent stagnation and inflated egos.
- This way the voters and the judge can review how the judge has been doing while on the bench.
- There are better ways to help judges improve. In my experience, when a person loses a case or the judge rules against them then that judge is a bad judge in their mind. That is not fair to the judge. Unfortunately, in court cases most often there is a winner and a loser. Many studies show that those that have a bad experience will tell more people than those that have a good experience. This puts the judge in a losing position. Our judges are not there to make the public happy, they are there to ensure that the laws are followed and to ensure fairness in administering the laws. If the judges are more worried about making everyone happy than about doing a good job they will lose objectivity.
- we need more 'checks and balances"
- A judge could be dismissed because of personal vendettas.
- Feed back to the Judges is a good way for them to improve based on what the people want.
- To make sure the law is being upheld, not personal opinion.
- because any evaluation process is something every state worker should go through.
- Voters would be better informed.
- If implemented correctly, this would help both the judge and the general public to understand better what expectations we truly have of our judicial system and those elected to oversee legal disputes. It would help tremendously to bridge the eroding gap between the public and our judges, promote better communication between the general public and the judicial system and possibly help to restore our faith and trust in the legal system as a whole.
- It is always good to see what they can improve on and also help to eliminate possible
fraud or special favors.

- If it isn't broken, don't fix it!
- Would need more information with pros and cons.
- Many people (teachers, scientists, governors, Presidents) are subject to peer reviews. It should remove (or expose) unqualified people.
- I feel if they are doing the right things there should be no opposing. We as workers are evaluated every year. They are doing job and people have a right to know how they doing (they _____ for the people).
- Every job should have checks and balances. Judges should be reviewed for declines in performance, adherence to the law, & timely completion of duties.
- I have personally observed judges that were totally bias in their decision make, so much in fact, it felt as if the person on the bench acted like he was unimpeachable.
- There is always a chance of have a judge who shouldn't be on the bench.
- How else can John Q Public know outcome without evaluation results.
- Don't have enough knowledge of system.
- Their verdicts and why should be given to the public for consideration.
- While judges need to be independent and honest, they serve the people and should be given feedback on their performance as well as know that the people can remove them if they feel the judge is out of control
- It would give people who had adverse decisions to "crap" on the judge.
- Accountability
- So everyone is heard.
- By giving feedback to the judge and the voter the potential for more non-biased work may be positive for all.
- Let criminals rate judges! Why not just let them write law and carry guns too! I'm a coug grad and I'm disappointed in my school for asking such a ludicrous question.
- I think it is a great idea. How does a judge or anyone else improve without being assessed in performance you have to know where you have been so you know where you need to grow to.
- It's a good way.
- Judge need to be held accountable.
- Again, I feel they have to be accountable to the voters, and thus their actions be evaluated
- Those persons familiar with the court system would have a clear picture of the qualities of the judges and could best convey them to the voters.
- I would like real-life, hands-on information regarding a sitting judge, not just fluff written by supporters. I'm choosing "somewhat more likely" below because I already vote, but I could be better informed.
• The judges need to kept in check with the public. Keep them fair and balanced.
• Judges should be held accountable for their actions just as the public is.
• Even though some personal evaluations are biased--it gives a lot of information we do not have now.
• This performance evaluation method will allow the public to have input into the judicial system. Many people do not trust a system that is controlled by politicians, no matter how unbiased they seem.
• These opinions could be biased.
• Checks and balances are usually good.
• This would give you an idea/information on how well they are doing in their position as a judge.
• This would give voters important input to consider when voting for judges. In one court case I was a juror for, the prosecutor came nowhere close to having concrete proof against the accused. Considering the "proof" and the judge's "instructions," I didn't think much about the judge's knowledge, advice, or integrity. I am listening to a Book on Tape about the Innocence Project, and some of the stories of judges' handling of their responsibilities in cases (that were later overturned for various reasons) were pretty scary. I wouldn't want one of those judges to be trying a case here in Washington! I always vote in the elections for judges, in spite of often not knowing much about the candidates. I always vote for the one I think would be the best candidate, but I would like to be better informed about performance of sitting judges, if possible. (But I will continue to vote, even without this information, so I am saying "no effect" below.)
• I believe it would promote accountability and expose poor quality judges.
• Too many judges are not qualified and/or fit to be in office.
• No person is above the law. Too often people in power act as if the public is there to serve them, instead of v.v. A dedicated professional - whether she be a judge, teacher, doctor, etc. - needs to be evaluated from time to time in order to stay ahead of the curve and to see how they are performing their job.
• We don't know enough about judges to elect them. It would be nice to see what the legal community thinks of them.
• This would keep judges moving forward with the times.
• I've read about some poor judging, but my only time in court, I was very impressed with our fair, sensible judge. A performance evaluation would be a pat on the back for many who deserve it.
• One bad judge can ruin a whole court system; we need the best.
• Again it would provide accountability and incentive for the judge to do his/her job effectively.
• Accountability.
• Serving as a juror, I have been asked by a post-trial judge to evaluate his performance.
• This would give the citizen some input into the system.
• Having taught classes in the past where my performance as an instructor has been evaluated, I found it helpful in modifying my presentation to improve its quality. Critical evaluation is always helpful regardless of the position.
• Like my evaluation, there is positive results and those involved evaluate these judges.
• Keeps them on their toes.
• It tend to develop the strongest system.
• I would think that this evaluation would be what voters could use rather than fund raising.
• Evaluation is important.
• It is good to be challenged when necessary to grow.
• This would be a great way to keep the judge accountable.
• Sounds familiar--like the performance evaluations of tenured faculty--never very effective on the ones you wanted to evaluate most--those "bad" "bullies" "soap-boxers" etc.
• Not being the court system I don't know the judges performance if I want a voting system.
• Judicial performance has a very _______ effect on the communities we live in.
• I think everyone should be held accountable for the decisions they make, an opportunities to improve upon them
• Excellent way to learn if the judge is truly competent from those who have worked with them or has been in contact through judicial system.
• Feedback from the public and peers is important
• Oversight and review are generally positive. It all depends on the independence of reviewers
• Great info to use to determine quality of judges.
• Being evaluated would be a motivating tool for the judges to perform their best.
• Currently we do not have an easy way to evaluate judges' performances.
• Uses opinion of experienced people.
• It seems that there is not currently an effective evaluation process in place for judge's to receive feedback and the public to get information about judicial candidates that is not developed by special interests.
• Everyone can benefit from a performance evaluation.
• The opinions could be biased and slanted and not represent a fair view of the judge. An attorney who has a grudge against a judge could give a poor rating and the judge doesn't have recourse to prove otherwise.
• There needs to be some periodic, unbiased, nonpolitical, confidential review of judges so voters have some information from which to make decisions.
• Some judges are too lenient.
• As long as these evaluations are used for informational purposes only. It could only show to educate. The moment it is used to determine employment or pay it becomes a weapon in the hands of the unjust.
• Different for average citizen to evaluate judges.
• Dominant culture bias would have impact.
• Would be partisan.
• Judges should be held accountable like the rest of the world.
• It would give the citizens of Washington insight into the makeup and character of the members of the judiciary, something they most likely would not have if they haven't been a part of a court proceeding.
• Makes sense!
• Quality judges.
• This is a great incentive to weed out bad judges and encourage the good ones.
• Feedback is needed!
• Sounds like good feedback for everyone.
• I like the idea, but I am concerned about how these programs are actually implemented. These should ask very specific questions, not be a popularity contest.
• Like all others in the private and public sector, they should be evaluated.
• Everyone should be evaluated on the way they do their job. The important question is what will happen as a result?
• It is always a good idea to get/give feedback on one's job performance.
• The rest of us have to submit to performance evaluation programs. I don't know why someone as important as a judge shouldn't too, unless one considers election to be that evaluation. An election tests judges by other criteria than those suggested above. It might be good to have the evaluations suggested above as another factor used in considering whether or not to vote for a particular individual.
• This is what is done in Alaska and it works fine. If a judge cannot stand up to the scrutiny of those that they work with then they should not be on the bench.
• Performance evaluations by (hopefully) competent people is a good idea as well as judges improving themselves.
• Somebody's got to watch performance.
• Who picks the commission? Seems like a very political process susceptible to tampering.
• I think that kind of feedback would be appreciated and responsible people will consider it.
• It's good to have regular feedback and make it available to the voting public. Hopefully it wouldn't kill too many trees.
• They should be held accountable by the people with whom they have worked directly.
• Choice of groups polled would determine the outcome.
• As a juror I have had opinions on the judges I have seen.
• Feedback is always useful.
• This could be a good step, but there are already a number of groups that rate judges, so I'm not sure this will result in a dramatic improvement.
• All good running CO have evaluation programs.
• This would help weed out incompetent judges.
• Keeps judges on the narrow. If he/she does not perform their job as an impartial judge, the it should be known to the citizens
• It will promote self-improvement for the judges, and keep them from getting in a rut.
• Feedback is generally a good thing - lawyers angry about rulings would be balanced with those who are happy with the outcome... overall, genuine feedback would get through
• This is good because it gives the judge the opportunity to grow and learn from those people who have direct experience with them.
• We need feedback from those affected by the judge's rulings.
• The public would have more information on electing judges!
• This is the way the rest of our world works!
• Adds oversight to the judiciary other than the judiciary itself. Presently, the system (the integrated bar and the Supreme Court) is a bunch of old lawyers telling a bunch of young lawyers what they may or may not do.
• Holds them more accountable.
• It would give the public more information upon which to base their opinions.
• It would be interesting to have more information about the candidates.
• Because of my limited knowledge of the judicial system.
• We may get the best judges available.
• We need as much information on judges as we can get.
• Feedback could improve judges handling of cases--even in terms of efficiency.
• I get so tried. I don't know.
• From personal experience I feel that Judges are partial to law enforcement. They assume what is written in a police report is factual. A Judge should remain neutral until all facts in a case are presented. A defendant should be considered innocent until proven guilty. I will never vote for a Judge who is endorsed by a law enforcement agency or organization.
• The public needs to know those representing them, and their qualities, be them good or bad.
I have little faith in the judges we now have. There are those influenced by money and power not ethics.

We as citizens have the right to choose the best person for the position

It seems a way of electing judges who are chosen by a more qualified group.

Hopefully unbiased reviews would provide opportunity for the judge to serve in the courts in a manner that benefits all involved.

As professionals with responsibility for public safety, their performance should be evaluated and should influence their tenure in office.

Would create positive accountability in most cases, possible exception being 'poor losers'.

Opportunity for periodic evaluation of judges' performance is of value to both the judges and the public. It offers opportunity for professional growth and also means prompts the public to consider occasionally the importance of the judicial system and those in it.

seems kind of obvious

It would give a better idea of how they are performing.

Because there is currently ___ oversight.

I research the candidates, but the majority of voters do not.

It gives an opportunity for the public (such as jurors) to share their opinions based on their experiences with the general public which I believe would provide very valuable information to voters.

All jobs have evaluation programs. They should not be excluded.

Accountability is always good and prevents judges from rendering themselves above the law or community they serve.

I support this type of evaluation because the attorneys, jurors, and other individuals are there before the judge and know better of what type of judge he/she is than the people that just hear about him/her by flyers or from other people. The jurors and attorneys are actually in the court room with the judge and can see for themselves how well or how poorly the judge is.

If you’re not involved with courts on a regular bases you'd have no clue as to the judges performance. There is a need for this kind of information to make an educated decision.

To make judges accountable.

Everyone can use feedback on their performance.

Great idea to get reviews to general population. Negative would be the cost and time to gather and distribute such info.

Need more of a checks and balances system.

Judges need to be accountable like anyone else for their performance.

This is consistent with all other professions where evaluations are an important incentive to perform well.

I feel it's fair that information is gathered and that people's opinions count for something.
I think that everyone should be accountable.

- Because that would help me know more about the judge, stuff I want and need to know.
- As stated prior, this system is okay, however, I still feel the public should not be making the decisions regarding judges.
- So that population would know more about the judges during an election. Right now, we know nothing about most of the judges.
- I believe they should be judged on the above qualities as well as other people on their jobs.
- Fairness
- It would improve the quality of the judges--or at least it has that potential.
- Results should be given to the judges for self-improvement but way too contentious for such "opinions" to be distributed to general public. We've seen the out and but lying by Presidential candidates--I may never "trust" again.
- There is a potential for distortion and personal agendas by those contributing to such a survey for political motivation.
- It sounds like a good way to give voters information about judges. If enough individuals evaluate judges, the information should have some validity.
- There is no substantive information available on judges or judicial candidates to guide cognizant voting.
- Even judges should have feedback.
- I think this would help voters make better selections.
- Gives the voters an informed basis for selecting judges.
- Judges need to be held accountable for their decisions as it affects people’s lives.
- Out of fairness
- Ruling are often unfair.
- The public would be able to choose the best judges.
- check on system
- I get a performance review at work to see how well I did. They should too.
- I would like to have access to the performance of a particular judge. It would also be helpful to be able to access the judicial records of a judge seeking office.
- Poor judges would be evaluated.
- Need to know about bad decisions and rankings.
- Opening discussion on the criteria will focus attention on quality.
- How judges are doing is lost or unknown to the majority of voters--they just leave the person in position out of ____ info or info from the judge himself--this evaluation system would lead to more informed voters.
• Would hope this feedback from actual participants in the _____ would make for improvements.
• Feedback allows for improvement and performance measures.
• We all need to be held accountable and improve in ways necessary.
• It would stress a measure of accountability.
• I think they need to be held accountable.
• Accountability.
• Good employees inherently seek continuous improvement and feedback from participants in the process affords judges the opportunity to do so from those they are in place to serve. The feedback also allows the court system to determine which judges may need further coaching in certain areas. This information could be used as a part of determining judges annual compensation.
• Any position should be evaluated.
• For any professional, feedback is extremely important in performing self evaluation. Given the continuation of contested/retention elections it is important for the public to have a way to evaluate the performance of the candidates. There is very little information currently available on which to base voting decisions.
• It should facilitate the acquisition of important information for the responsible voters.
• How are those people qualified to give a performance review? I think another judge or judges (preferably with more experience) should evaluate them.
• Judges would be more interested in good performance in all cases.
• Due to so many races being uncontested I think it is important to have judges that stay on the bench for years because no one wants to run against them be evaluated.
• I have never been called for jury duty. I have never been prosecuted. I have never served as a witness. I have never served as an attorney. I have never had any contact with the judicial system at all. so what do I know about electing a judge? I read the voter's guides put out by organizations whose values I agree with, and I assume that I will agree with their recommendations and that they have done the appropriate research, but I don't really know that. this system would give me the opportunity to make some of my own assessments.
• It has been this way for teachers in public schools for a long time.
• Judges, like everyone else, need to be held accountable for their decisions.
• More transparency is needed and a sense that politically appointed judges are not given a pass.
• Consistent evaluation on performance is imperative since we pay (taxpayers) their salaries.
• If they are not doing excellent work perhaps they can be improved through this method.
• In most professions you are evaluated on job performance. I think in a profession where citizens are vulnerable and could lose a lot, judges need to stay real and know that their
actions will be viewed and judged itself.

• Only fair--everyone else has an evaluation with their job.
• It can only help out the system if the judges know that they are being rated on performance.
• Like any profession there is always room for improvement and self reflection. This could lead to positive changes in the judiciary.
• Judges and their decisions should be 100% visible and disclosed to the public they affect.
• Performance evaluations almost always lead to professional development.
• Some people (perhaps more vocal ones) have an axe to grind. Personal animosity should not be included in judging judges.
• Oversight
• Everyone--even judges must have a process to be held accountable.
• As an average Joe voter, I usually don't have the time or resources to adequately study the judges I vote for to see if they would be acceptable or not.
• There could be room for improvement
• Accountability.
• Accountability
• Voice of the people gets heard on performance. Isn't the working class evaluated on performance...I can see no reason why NOT to use performance evaluation.
• Constructive criticism is good. Everyone has room for improvement.
• All employees are evaluated, so should judges.
• Even though there might be some very part ___ attorneys opinions mixed into this system--overall it is a way of "grading" judges.
• Judges need to be accountable to the people of Washington.
• Only if both parties sent back their opinion of the judge.
• Personal, political causes could influence a judge’s decision and interpretation of law be skewed.
• Choosy task-didn't find this worked well in the workplace-although some review is critically prudent.
• Again, who has the burden to pay for this? I think it's a good idea IF you can use volunteers or law students to all of the distribution, collection and compilation.
• Good means and ______ no ______ type judge. Should be of good temperament and fair w/______.
• Judges performance is too important to not have some expectations oversight system.
• As much transparency as possible!
• I am surprised that there is not a performance evaluation program already in place. I
can't think of a reason to oppose such a program, if it is crafted to produce fair and balanced evaluations.

- Standard scoring system that applies to all levels of judgeship and results printed by the county or state commissions similar to the voters’ pamphlets.
- To get outside opinions is good.
- No other way to evaluate their performance.
- Gives everyone a feedback on a judge's performance.
- If done fairly, it would provide a baseline for evaluation hopefully non-political _____.
- To hold a judge's accountable for their performance and retain the public's power to retain or remove.
- Recognizes good judges, identifies areas for improvement and identifies those few unsatisfactory judges.
- Judges enforce the law. The law protects citizens. Judges should be the most officials of society and as such, must be continually scrutinized and held to highest accountability.
- Gives you a clearer picture of the judges' abilities and decision records
- Judges should feel accountable for what they do.
- Judges should be held accountable by those in position to see them in action. Rather than worrying about catering to the voters, the judges would know they are judged by those they work with and see in court. Too many times we hear of judges who stay on the bench despite their incompetency....they are not voted out as the average voter does not know about their actions. How do we get that kind of information prior to voting for these people? We get a 4-6 liner in the voter's pamphlet (which is more than some other states do!) which does not tell us how their rulings are rated...good, bad, unfair, ludicrous..etc.
- It should be posted as well for the public too. We have the right to know the demeanor of our judges.
- Judges need to be accountable
- Self reflection and introspection are qualities we all need to engage in and embrace. Good or Bad.
- Judges would held accountable and given room to improve.
- I don't know how people might use personal gain to skew the process.
- The best judges could likely get bad reviews from the court losers (lawyers and clients)
- Judges and politicians put themselves above the law--along with our police officers--we all know that there should some kind of check system.
- Anything to make the system better
- Accountability and opportunity for self-improvement.
- I would support this idea if like stated above the evaluation is taken from a broad based of individuals to ensure an unbiased evaluation.
For retention old judges
Checks on system.

These would likely be very biased opinions, subjective, perhaps motive driven. Focus may shift to surface rather than substance.

Judges are just people with power. If they don't follow the will of the people they should get the boot.

So we get the judge in office.

Hopefully it would be used in a positive way by the public submitting the info and helpful to the judges.

Accountability is a key element of any job. People need to know their actions are going to be reviewed by people who understand the profession and are impacted by their work.

Feedback is important.

The attorney should be a good judge of a judge.

It seems a fair way to evaluate performance, to inform the public, to respect the public's input, and to lead to self-improvement.

They need to be held accountable.

Evals--if done in a non-biased way must be positive.

Because some judges are not very fair, they're prejudice sometimes to defendants.

The performance review is being conducted by a panel of people.

Colleagues are often the best judge of character and they have other judges for comparison.

We all need feedback on how to improve.

Would provide more info for citizens and make judges accountable.

My feeling is: All of us are human and being in this category leaves each of us with, home families, friends, wants and likes and dislikes. All of this comes into play. Human is human! Thus evaluations should be a regular practice.

I think evaluation is always healthy. Any person who serves the public and wishes to improve should welcome evaluations.

If teachers have to, judges should.

Proof that they are good and for the people.

We need to better know the persons judging our most important cases that effects life.

I believe more information available to the voters is good. Personal evaluations provided to each judge would also be constructive.

Judges tend to be bias and partisan sometimes, this would keep them in check.

Everyone should face merit evaluations.

Some judges abuse their power--evaluations might keep this in check. However, quality
judges could be crucified by parties who are disappointed that cases didn't go their way.

- It gives the public information to vote intelligently.
- I would support this as I feel judges should follow the law not be beholden to some elected official (political Hack).
- NA
- Judges need to be accountable.
- Chance for change.
- It makes judges answer to people they serve.
- Evaluation among peer would enhance judge ability to perform well in their decision making.
- This provides the public more information about their judges performance and beliefs.
- I believe in accountability.
- Great idea!
- Does away with the "Good old BOY system"
- Provides more opinion on performance. Pierce County Bar Association did this recently. I think it helped educate the public.
- Accountability. Not sure I would seek out opening jurors etc.
- Keeping informed
- Everyone needs performance evaluations.
- Voters would have a chance to see how a judge's peers consider his work.
- Accountability
- It's really the only way to make an informed decision.
- Otherwise the public really has no way to evaluate performance!
- The public needs to know how their peers see judges.
- Maintain quality and fairness
- As long as the evaluation pool is large enough to neutralize any particular hot button cases (i.e.: O.J or other high profile cases) I believe this would be a valuable tool for voters. I am often frustrated about the small amount of information I find on judges from sources other than the judge's campaign literature. I try to make the most informed choice I can on available information.
- Everyone can use constructive criticism. It helps one see where they can improve.
- This would assist commission and also voters as to quality of judges' performance. It should help the judges also.
- Verdicts could be tainted to or for evaluations outcomes.
- Same as above
- It is a good method of "Grading" the performance of judges.
- The more info, the better for the public.
- Judiciary needs evaluation and oversight
- It's always good to keep some people of power "in check".
- Difficult to strongly support system with personalities and potential personal conflicts between judges and raters. I still support it as I would like to have as much information as possible when making election decisions
- Because the judges become better judges.
- It gives an opportunity for people who have some experience with the judge to voice their opinions. I agree that the individuals who know the judges should evaluate them.
- Better info regarding judges.
- The general public would have a better way to make a choice of who to vote for.
- Open to public.
- All people need to be held accountable for their actions.
- Keeps them accountable
- Checks and balances to ensure that everyone is being treated as fair as possible and the law is upheld.
- I'm all for accountability.
- Seems it would enlighten the voters and keep the judges aware of their bedside manner.
- Openness in the system is the best way to go.
- Being involved to keep or changes things for the better to all.
- Judge Armijo ruled against me for no other reason than I'm the father and not the mother.
- The people have a say in selection.
- They need to know they are accountable in their decisions.
- Awareness
- To keep them in touch with reality of who they are and what they are doing.
- Providing public ability to decide.
- They can be more aware of things they may need to improve.
- Lawyers and judges would develop the system. It would be like Fox's guards changing combos on the hen house lock.
- Would make judges more accountable to public.
- Feedback is always enlightening of your own performance.
- I can't quite say why.
- It is the only way to find out about the judge.
- Performance evaluation
- It's a review
• I like the idea of input from those who see the judge in action, however I would like this to be used as a productive tool for judges to use for self improvement and reflection, not for punishment purposes. We don’t want criminals or others having undue influence.
• Performance evaluations would keep judges doing an excellent job and weed out week and inefficient judges.
• All citizens need to be responsible for their actions.
• Since most voters in this state do not have experience in the courtroom, we really do not know what to think. Just because someone has been a judge for 8 years doesn’t mean they are the best person for the job!
• It's sound, common sense.
• Again the details would matter. Would results be reported by winning attorney, losing attorney, litigation winners, litigation losers, or all lumped together?
• We need to know how to vote!
• We should know how they act with people around them.
• A judge is not above being required to meet performance standards. This will improve efficiencies and outcomes.
• Judges are only humans. Their power should be freely commented upon and fairly recorded for all and allowed to effect in positive/constructive ways…change in judicial behavior.
• It produces some accountability.
• Because it would make them be fair in all their decisions.
• Any public employee should be held accountable to the people he/she serves.
• It's always a good idea for people to understand that their behavior has consequences.
• Because being a judge is too important of a position not to.
• To help keep people honest and not greedy. They need to put aside personal feelings on issues and vote wisely and under the law.
• Performance evaluations are always a good idea.
• Judges should be under review at all times.
• Accountability to the public.
• It sets a higher standard for judges, and hopefully allows them to become better at what they do.
• It makes judges accountable to the public.
• To protect people like myself who can't afford a lawyer.
• The people who see a judge in action would be a better judge than someone who only sees a name on a ballot.
• This is probably a good idea but very difficult to administer fairly. Too often judges are condemned by groups because they disagree with the decisions which are made by
applying the law. The real recourse should be to change the law, not condemn the judge.

- Everyone in the courthouse knows how a judge is viewed—they should know too and so should the public.
- It will demonstrate to the judges that they are not invincible as some think that they are. It will also correct poor performance; feedback is always valuable.
- Open communication for continuous improvement.
- People who are convicted/ set free will have an automatic bias.
- Seems like a fair way to get information (albeit subjective) on how a judge performs. Presently the general public doesn't have much knowledge on how well any judge does their job.
- Judges need to be held accountable for doing their jobs for the best benefit of the general public.
- I feel there needs to be more accountability in the system to help weed out bad judges if necessary. Would help curb any abuses of power a judge might engage in and encourage good judges.
- It is important to evaluate and re-evaluate the performance of a judge over their career.
- This would benefit everyone.
- Everybody should have performance evaluations as part of their job.
- I have read of quite a few decisions where this might help.
- A lot of people get their information about judges from the voters pamphlet. It would be GREAT if these reviews were formatted somehow and the results shown in the pamphlet because the current pamphlet just lets the candidate discuss all of their positive selling points.
- fine idea
- They need to be accountable for what they do.
- Some judges feel they can do anything because their performance is not questioned.
- I would like to see the evaluation report.
- It is good to know how a judge does his/her job but I wonder how objective the opinions would be. Maybe a record of judgments/decisions is best.
- We are not aware of a judge's conduct and it allows us to look at that information.
- If I was a judge I would use the information to improve the work I do.
- Judges must be accountable. They are being paid by taxpayers.
- Most people do not have direct contact with judges. They need to rely on people who do.
- Good method for helping get important information to voters.
- A. Promote self improvement first. B. If that is not effective--throw the bum out!
- To keep judges fair, impartial, and accountable.
• The public needs to know more about the judges—then he knows.
• Some judges are too set in their ways and they may need to be told that they have areas that need improving. I think that sometimes they know that there isn't anyone to tell them what to do, so it would be nice to have observers give them some insight.
• I would get more and perhaps better info about the judges I'm voting for.
• More accountability.
• No matter how you feel your performance is—to get best feedback from peers (attorneys/jurors, etc.) can be taken best.
• This would give voters better insight into a judge's courtroom decision making preferences.
• Because judges would be too susceptible to public opinion. Should they make decisions based on the law or based on what would make them popular?
• Judicial elections do not draw as much attention as legislative and executive elections. More information is good.
• People of state would have more input without political "elections".
• Everyone in a position of authority should be held accountable.
• Judges presumably reflect societal moves tempered by experience and judgment—1st part seems to indicate review is useful.
• Judges need to be held accountable on their verdicts.
• Would ruled out the "Crappy" judges who are on one ___ or the other (Common sense needed).
• Higher level of accountability & performance
• Here again, no one works for free
• Some judges think they have God like powers and can change the course of people lives at a whim.
• People need to see and hear what the judge is really like. We really need some of the people that face these judges to tell "us" the rest of us what they are like. Not what some campaign slogan tells about them.
• If we are going to continue choosing our judges by vote of the people than anything that provides the voter with more information should be welcome.
• Particularly the part of having people who have appeared before a judge. Their evaluation is bound to be slanted by whether the judge ruled for or against the individual.
• There needs to be accountability.
• I get yearly evaluations at work as far as how I am doing—why shouldn't they?
• Judges are human—if they had to get performance evaluations, they might try harder.
• Judges must be evaluated often especially when complaints are made about their abilities. No good old boy mentality should exist ___ with police and doctors.
• I think everyone needs job evaluations to be better at their job even if they are already good - there is always room for improvement!
• I would love the opportunity to give feedback to abusive, disrespectful judges.
• Most normal civilians have no clue how the legal system functions - they only hear or read about situations that have broken down. So an evaluation would be good. BUT I always like to know something about the background of a person who is evaluating something else - like a book review. Like a restaurant review. It helps me weigh their opinion.
• Sometimes I don't understand some judges rulings. Overturning rulings people have voted on by jury.
• There is very little accountability for judges at this time.
• When it comes to the law we must always be on guard.
• To have a better idea of who this person is and if he or she would have an honest and calm nature. That's if the people giving this info is honest.
• I believe it is important for positions such as a judge to be evaluated regularly. They essentially public employees and too many public employees aren't evaluated or if they are nothing is done about poor performance.
• Because judges at this point do not have to answer to anyone they get elected then they carry out their own views, values, and agenda's regardless of the attributes of the cases.
• Judges should have feedback, subjective as it may be, on their performance by those that directly interact with them on a regular basis.
• No way to correctly evaluate it. How do you even define 'Judicial Performance'?
• Hopefully judges would not be beholding to anyone.
• The public gets info on this important position. They can make an educated vote if a replacement is needed.
• Feedback from people who have been in the presence of the judge is valuable to all.
• We need one place to look for evaluations when we are considering a candidate during an election. I have found it very hard to find out information other than the voter's pamphlet. Tracking down newspaper reports of a legal decision and searching through the state's judicial website is tedious. Not every voter has equal access to information of this sort.
• Voters don't study candidates.
• Everyone can do a better job if input for improvement is an expectation.
• Not enough information to form opinion.
• Judges need to know their areas of strongs and weaknesses.
• The people who have involvement in the system are the ones who know about the judges, so their input is definitely helpful to voters who otherwise are just randomly choosing names.
• Performance evaluation would help so that a judge would be less likely to abuse the power of the bench once selected. Keeps everybody honest.
• Keep them on their toes.
• Again, the more public scrutiny, the better.
• It allows the people to have a say in judge performance. It also gives the judge feedback allowing them to improve themselves.
• There's a lot of judges that will take your side if you're in the right.
• Most citizens haven't a clue how effective judges are.
• Need to know more about who were voting for
• All employees of the government ought to be evaluated by the peers, their supervisors, and the public.
• We have a system why change it it would cost a lot of money we [ the state doesn't have]
• Every case is different
• everyone should be evaluated by their performance
• Providing the evaluations are not bias.
• Input from laymen reinforces our confidence in our judges. Our opinion matter!
• Would provide voter with more info, but could falter due to the conservative nature of most voters--who may prefer those who are "toughest" and not most judicial.
• It provides a vehicle to evaluate a judge in retention elections.
• no opinion.
• As I said, I am strongly opposed to activist judges and I am for any method which could possibly curb this behavior.
• I don't think that any position in our government or job market should be without evaluations. People are people and need to be held accountable.
• We need the best possible judges in our state and their lives and qualifications should be available to the public.
• Keeps judges honest.
• Need for accountability. However, at what cost to taxpayer?
• Would make judges more accountable and hopefully get rid of those aren't doing a good job.
• they too must be held accountable
• Success.
• I feel that this might be a benefit to the judges as well as keeping others aware of the performances.
• I believe such a system could have a beneficial effect, as long as political bias does not play into the evaluation. On the other hand, I strongly favor judicial independence, which
is essential to facilitate decision based on law rather than on public opinion.

- I think the public would be able to know more about the judge this way and we should have that info.
- More accountability.
- It would help the judges determine any perceived weakness.
- May we could have checks and balances.
- Greatest failing of current system is lack of feedback to voters on judges performance.
- Do not know enough about judicial process.
- Most jobs require performance reviews. Why not judges? They should be held accountable for their actions and behaviors like the rest of us.
- Those individuals would have personal experience as to the performance of the judge.
- I recently was involved in a court matter where the judge made an error in his decision because he did not read the statute correctly. When I found out the error, the only way we could get it fixed was to have the public defender take it further. That did not happen based on time and money. After time in jail (20 days), bail money of $10,000 and a reputation ruined, I was told the judge had immunity. Where is the justice?
- Peer review and feedback would improve a person.
- It would be a check system.
- The public is allowed more info on judge preceding his placement.
- I does give the average voice of experience to express their views about the judges.
- Evaluation at any job is important periodically.
- Sounds like a fair system. If anything, it helps judges to know they are accountable.
- Maybe this would bring most judges back down to earth.
- I think the "self improvement" is very important. No one is perfect but we expect our judges to try to be.
- Feel judges have no accountability once on the bench.
- Because many heads are better than one.
- They use this system in our college system and I seen very little change because of it. Waste of manpower, paper, and money.
- Help get rid of the ol boy network.
- Everyone can use an evaluation on job performance. Most of the public doesn't see what happens unless it in the news. I would rather have the people dealing with the judges giving a true & honest answer instead of a biased news report.
- Faculty and staff employees in the state are evaluated. Judges should be evaluated too.
- Unless I'm in court, I have no access to this type of info.
- Currently very little valuation is done or available to the public that is nonpartisan.
• It's hard to get in depth information on judges. This would help.
• I was involved in a court case in davenport we and the judge was an embarrassment to the system. He actually almost fell asleep.
• I feel everyone should be evaluated as to how well they perform and many of our appointed and elected officials are not.
• Strongly needed!
• Good to be evaluated
• This gives voters some way to judge the candidate as opposed to picking a name or someone they saw on a commercial.
• This would not only give feedback to the judges and give them a chance to be more self-reflective, but it would be a way for ordinary citizens to weigh in. (I worry that this would start to be a popularity contest and a way of "drumming-out" a good judge just to satisfy whims; uneducated opinions and/or mass ignorance could ruin good, but maybe not popular candidates.)
• Feedback is a great tool for improvement.
• The more educated, informed and involved is the civic participation in the process of government, the more humanity has a chance of survival and perhaps even maturing into a true and evolving civilization that benefits planet Earth and all that lives upon, above and within her.
• It would keep them accountable for their actions. As they expect us to be.
• It would compel a judge to be a fair, honest and good one.
• The more information of judges the better.
• I think feedback is important in order to improve. Additionally, voters would have more information with which to make a decision. Most jobs have performance evaluations.
• How could an evaluation program be a bad thing?
• I think the judicial process is inefficient and too time consuming. It often takes judges so long to make a decision that both sides of the issue lose. The only winners are the lawyers and judges who are getting paid and there is no incentive for them to work harder or more efficiently.
• Performance evaluation is always good--however, I don't think that should be public information.
• It would make it easier to find out about the judge
• I think this gives the public the knowledge we need to be assured the judges are doing the best job possible.
• This lends itself to more accountability on an ongoing basis.
• To follow the law not the whim of the day or money or self pleasure.
• Everyone is judged in life. So should a judge be judged.
• Judge who ridiculed black attorney should have been removed.
• The more information provided to a voter the better informed the vote.
• Evaluation can be a positive way to insure accountability and to inform the voters of judicial performance.
• People don't observe or evaluate judges on a daily basis or even at all, so an evaluation system would give the people an objective overview of how they performed. It would also help the judge to make adjustments in how they conduct their court.
• I have watched a questionably competent and obviously opinionated local judge make rulings that caused great harm, and he keeps being re-elected, without opposition.
• It provides accountability and gives opportunity for professional growth.
• Increased accountability.
• The all the people need to know how effective a judge is.
• I like performance evaluations for all employees in public employment.
• Assessment is always a good option
• Checks and balance = the American way.
• Judges should hear from those appearing before them in order for them to learn from their mistakes and their successes.
• The more we know about the qualifications of judges, the better our ability to make a choice. The voter needs to know that the group that makes this evaluation has its own bias, just like a newspaper's editorial board.
• Not every jury member is qualified to begin to evaluate a judge.
• The would ensure excellence and weed out the bad apples--the unfair ones.
• When the judges are running for re-election a lot of misinformation is disseminated. This would provide some balance.
• There is little information currently available on performance of judges. This would provide some input.
• Who is better able to understand the knowledge, fairness, etc. than those trying cases and observing the judge at work? While that may not agree with judges opinions, they should at the very least know if the judge has qualities to hold office.
• As stated earlier, I feel we hear very, very little about judge performance. We only hear the spectacular gossip on the "news."
• We will get better judges through that system.
• Judges need feedback and need to know they cannot sit on the bench without any accountability.
• Prevents complacency.
• So that we have fairness and equality. Maybe there could be more trust.
• It would help in making an informed decision.
• Everyone needs accountability and self-improvement opportunities.
• Evaluations tell individuals what they are doing right/wrong.
• The public needs to have faith in their judicial system. It is the backbone of society, holding all persons accountable and protecting each individual. Anything that will increase the quality of the system and the confidence of the public is a good thing.
• Some control of the system must be in place.
• Retains more qualified judges.
• Accountability is a good thing.
• I believe the "feedback" would be valuable to the public as well as to the judiciary.
• Everyone should know how they are doing in their jobs.
• I don't trust politicians or lawyers.
• This system would give me a voter needed information to make a better intelligent selection for a candidate.
• The performance of a judge is so removed from the experience of most people that an independent process would be helpful.
• Not sure how objective this information would be.
• Any job needs outside review to address possible problems/conflicts.
• Public should be informed of judges performance.
• Another way to evaluate a public servant.
• Performance evaluations show effort and commitment given.
• I am evaluated by job performance at my job. That is appropriate.
• We need the most qualified person to service.
• I support self-improvement.
• General public has a say.
• Still lawyers, … Who are the other person. Winners--Losers?
• This sounds like a reasonable proposal. Of course, losers will give different responses from winners at the end, but worthwhile to sift the wheat from the chaff.
• Public should not be able to evaluate performance. Most people would not know or care.
• Like the initiative process, somebody will gain something in the proposal.
• To promote judge self-improvement.
• Would help voters decide who to vote for. My support would depend on cost to voters!
• Insures a better chance of fairness, honesty, competence etc.
• It is a great way to keep the judges accountable.
• This system gives public input into the selection process.
• Every judge has to be accountable.
• A person whose duty it is to uphold the laws of, by, and for the people should be held
accountable to the aforementioned.

- Provides important information to the public.
- As long as it is purely informational and not interpreted "for" voters I believe the info would be extremely valuable.
- Most judges are biased and do not follow the law. They should be removed from office regularly unless highly qualified and performing well. It is a elitist club that protects itself at the expense of the people and the administration of justice.
- Could be a good source of information.
- I don't know of Judicial incompetence / prejudice, however given there is probably some, then the more "accountability" mechanisms the better.
- Hold the judges accountable.
- As with any job or business it is good to receive feedback on your strong and weak points to know in which areas you can improve.
- It keeps judges accountable
- It would let you know the back-ground of the person running for judge.
- I believe many judges have a "god complex" and don't feel accountable. They need to know they are required to uphold the qualifications and duties of their office. Plus, corrective criticism can be used to improve anyone's performance. We don't need any more special interest judges.
- A report card is a motivator.
- I think it would help in the ways suggested, but only if the P.C. wasn't used harshly.
- It would force judges to be responsible for their actions.
- We all need evaluations if by capable people.
- I feel performance evaluations would lead to a better system of justice.
- So the public can be more informed by the real performance instead of paid advertisements.
- Some judges seem to be in that office much like teachers (bad teachers)--holding the position because of tenure.
- I believe it is good to know how a judge thinks before he is giving the position of being a judge.
- Judges should be accountable for their actions.
- Judges need to be kept accountable more than anyone else!
- Because it might help improve the system.
- All elected officials should be held accountable to "we the people".
- More info is needed to choose good judges.
- We have a system if we want something done. Stop whining and all get involved and vote.
• He would be judge by his peers those who deal with him on daily basis.
• To promote improvement in information of the judges.
• I think everyone can benefit from constructive criticism -and others see more clearly than we.
• As I see, all judicial appointments must be held accountable. Even judges are subject to the Peters Principal.
• Some judges seem to think they own the court and what they say is law. Judges do not write or enforce law and any judge found doing so should be impeached.
• I believe the judges need to hear from everyday people how they rate.
• Since I'm not in the courtroom, if I ever have to be in court, I'd like to know I have the best judge up there.
• I would love to see an evaluate that was honest and true. If that would ever happen.
• This would help weed out the bad judges.
• They are not kings and queens who sit above the people, and they should treat the citizens they serve with the same respect they demand. The tax payers pay their salaries! They need to be held accountable to someone and there need to be consequences when they veer from their required duties.
• Every business has a performance evaluation and outcome measurements. Politics is a business.
• Provide voters more information to make a decision.
• I would like to know what others who have appeared before a judge feel about his/her abilities. I strongly recommend this.
• I think the evaluation process is good. Currently the only process that an attorney has is to a judge if they don't feel the judge can be impartial. Recently a judge over turned a Jury’s verdict even though it was clear what the verdict should have been. The jury has no way to review the Judges performance and their behavior in the court.
• It is a strong means by which the public will be appraised of a judge's performance over many issues, and it would be an evaluation of persons practiced and knowledgeable in the field. It would lessen an opportunity of one issue being controversial and causing the removal of a good judge.
• I do not believe a person appearing before a judge should have the ability to vote on him.
• If the judge doesn't know what he's doing wrong, how can he fix it? Peer evaluations are important.