

The Electoral Procedure

Under the California Constitution, justices of the Supreme Court and the courts of appeal are subject to confirmation by the voters. The public votes “yes” or “no” on whether to retain each justice.

These judicial offices are nonpartisan.

Before a person can become an appellate justice, the Governor must submit the candidate’s name to the Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission, which is comprised of public members and lawyers. The commission conducts a thorough review of the candidate’s background and qualifications, with community input, and then forwards its evaluation of the candidate to the Governor.

The Governor then reviews the commission’s evaluation and officially nominates the candidate, whose qualifications are subject to public comment before examination and review by the Commission on Judicial Appointments. That commission consists of the Chief Justice of California, the Attorney General of California, and a senior Presiding Justice of the Courts of Appeal. The Commission on Judicial Appointments must then confirm or reject the nomination. Only if confirmed does the nominee become a justice.

Following confirmation, the justice is sworn into office and is subject to voter approval at the next gubernatorial election, and thereafter at the conclusion of each term. The term prescribed by the California Constitution for justices of the Supreme Court and courts of appeal is 12 years. Justices are confirmed by the Commission on Judicial Appointments only until the next gubernatorial election, at which time they run for retention of the remainder of the term, if any, of their predecessor, which will be either four or eight years. (Elections Code section 9083.)

For more information about Supreme Court Justices and Appellate Court Justices, visit voterguide.sos.ca.gov or courts.ca.gov.

Justices of the Supreme Court Statement of Qualifications

Kelli M. Evans, Associate Justice, Supreme Court of California

Bar Admission: 1994

Education: University of California Davis School of Law, J.D., 1994; Stanford University, B.A., 1991.

Professional Legal Background: Chief Deputy Legal Affairs Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom (2019–2021); Special Assistant Attorney General, California Department of Justice (2017–2019); Senior Director, Administration of Justice, State Bar of California (2014–2017); Federal Court Monitor, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California (2003–2010) & U.S. District Court, Northern District of Ohio (2015–2017); Attorney, Relman & Associates (2001–2004); Senior Trial Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division (1998–2001); Staff Attorney & Associate Director, ACLU of Northern California (1995–1998 & 2010–2013); Assistant Public Defender, Sacramento County (1995); Ruth Chance Litigation Fellow, Equal Rights Advocates (1994–1995).

Judicial Background: Associate Justice, Supreme Court of California, 2023–present; Judge, Alameda County Superior Court, 2021–2022.

Joshua P. Groban, Associate Justice, Supreme Court of California

Bar Admission: December 1998

Education: Harvard Law School, J.D., 1998; Stanford University, A.B., 1995.

Professional Legal Background: Law Clerk to Judge William C. Conner, Southern District of New York, 1998–1999; Attorney, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, 1999–2005; Attorney, Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP, 2005–2010; Senior Advisor to Governor Jerry Brown, 2011–2018; Lecturer, UCLA School of Law, 2014–2018.

Judicial Background: Associate Justice, Supreme Court of California, 2018–present.