

Washington Supreme Court

These races have no party labels. Comparisons reflect records and endorsements. Planned Parenthood's advocacy organization supports abortion rights.

Position 1

Colleen Melody — **Appears more progressive.** **Abortion:** favored keeping the federal right to abortion. Planned Parenthood support. Chosen for the Supreme Court by Gov. Bob Ferguson (D).

Scott Edwards — **Appears more conservative on taxes.** Republican and business support; challenged state and local taxes. **Abortion position unclear.**

Position 3

David Stevens — **Appears more conservative.** Republican support; favors the Constitution's original meaning. Abortion and LGBTQ positions unclear.

Jaime Michelle Hawk — **Appears more progressive.** Planned Parenthood and LGBTQ Democratic support. Appointed to a trial court by Gov. Jay Inslee (D). Advocated reducing very long prison sentences.

Position 4

Ian Birk — **More progressive backing:** Democrats and Planned Parenthood. Appointed to an appeals court by Gov. Jay Inslee (D). Argued a florist could be required to serve same-sex weddings.

Sean O'Donnell — **More conservative backers; Democratic support too.** Enforced gun surrender in a domestic-violence case. Abortion and LGBTQ positions unclear.

Position 5

Theo Angelis — **Appears more progressive.** Planned Parenthood support. Chosen for the Supreme Court by Gov. Bob Ferguson (D). Limited judicial record.

Dave Larson — **Appears more conservative.** Republican support; emphasizes religious freedom and limits on judges making policy. Abortion position unclear in 2024 answers.

Position 7

Debra L. Stephens — **Appears more progressive.** Planned Parenthood support. Chosen for the Supreme Court by Gov. Christine Gregoire (D). **Religious hiring:** argued a Christian ministry was not automatically protected from a discrimination lawsuit after rejecting an applicant in a same-sex relationship. Special protections for religious ministry jobs could still apply.

Todd A. Bloom — **Appears more conservative.** Republican support; former Republican candidate. Wants limits on judges making policy. Abortion and LGBTQ positions unclear.

"Unclear" means the reviewed sources did not supply an answer. Endorsements do not guarantee future rulings.

Yakima County

Both candidates in each race below identify as Republican.

Prosecutor

Tyler Haueter — **County Republican Party support**; recent criminal-prosecution experience.

Quinn Dalan — Legal and management experience; police-union and moderate-Republican support. Her organizational letter praised abortion-rights and gender-affirming-care advocacy. That is not a promised prosecution policy.

Sheriff

Jake Church — **Experienced agency lieutenant**; supported by the current sheriff and local police groups.

Roman Kilinkaridis — Endorsed by the Alliance for Gun Responsibility, a group advocating stricter gun laws. Would limit voluntary local immigration-enforcement work and seek a public vote on police license-plate cameras.

Assessor

Jacob Tate — **More than 30 years in the assessor's office**; emphasizes efficiency.

Keith Effler — **County Republican Party support**; emphasizes taxpayer service and clearer property values. Taking assessment courses; no completed appraisal credential reported.

Assessors value property; they do not set all tax rates.

Benton County and Prosser

Prosecutor and sheriff: Republicans. Court and PUD: nonpartisan.

Prosecutor

Eric Eisinger — **Says he will not prosecute cases he believes violate gun rights**; county Republican support. **Julie Long** — **Extensive trial experience**; criticizes delays and lenient plea deals. Those claims remain disputed.

Sheriff

Mike Clark — **Current agency leadership**; appointed sheriff in 2025. **Brad Klippert** — **Former Republican legislator**; longtime deputy with military-command experience and a government-overreach focus.

District Court Position 1

Mike Rio — **Local prosecution experience**; judicial and police support. **Talesha Sams** — **Broad legal experience**; served with organizations advocating LGBTQ rights.

Benton PUD electric utility Position 2

Dewey Holliday — **Farm and infrastructure experience**; farm/labor support. **Micah Valentine** — **Explicitly conservative platform**; school-board experience. All Benton PUD voters may vote in this race.

The three statewide initiatives

A Yes vote approves the proposed change. A No vote keeps the current law.

IL26-001 Parental rights in schools

YES — Restores broader parental rights from the 2024 law: access to school-held records, notices about medical services and rights to opt children out of certain activities. Records copies would be due within **10 business days**, instead of up to 45 days.

NO — Keeps the 2025 law: parents retain records and curriculum access, specified notices and certain opt-outs. Current health-information privacy protections remain.

Both versions include exceptions for certain abuse investigations. This changes one law, not every rule about schools or medical privacy.

[Official explanation](#)

IL26-638 Girls school sports

YES — Limits girls-only school competition to biological females. Students seeking to compete in those events must have a healthcare provider verify eligibility. Applies to public K–12 schools and participating private schools.

NO — Keeps existing rules: transgender girls can compete on girls' teams under current gender-identity rules. No new provider certification is required.

The text requires verification but does not specify a genital exam, chromosome test or separate appointment. [Official explanation](#)

IP26-645 New income tax repeal

YES — Repeals the new 9.9% tax on income above \$1 million, scheduled for 2028. Also prohibits state and local taxes on, or measured by, individual income. The state loses the expected revenue.

NO — Keeps the scheduled tax. Only income above the threshold is taxed, with deductions and credits. Married couples and domestic partners share the \$1 million deduction.

A Yes vote does not automatically repeal every other tax. Related tax breaks outside the income tax remain. [Official explanation](#)

Check which races are on your ballot

Grandview/Sunnyside addresses can fall in **Legislative District 14 or 15**. Prosser city is in **District 16**; nearby rural addresses can differ. Local measures have their own boundaries. Check your address at [VoteWA](#).

Congress and the state Legislature

Focus: life, parental rights, sex/gender, and religious liberty. If no clear position was found, we say so rather than assume from party.

Congressional District 4

Amanda McKinney (R) - Says life should be protected from conception; supports girls' sports based on biological sex and says there are two sexes. **John Duresky (D)** - Opposes IL26-638; says people should be free to live as their "most authentic selves." No clear abortion position found.

LD14 House Position 1

Gloria Mendoza (R) - Voted against expanding abortion-medication access; strongly defends parental rights. **Chelsea Dimas (D)** - Campaigns for "reproductive freedom" and LGBTQ+ advocacy; explicitly opposes IL26-638.

LD14 House Position 2

Deb Manjarrez (R) - Voted against abortion-medication expansion; supports IL26-001 and IL26-638: "We will not co-parent with the government." **Ezequiel Morfin (D)** - No clear direct position found on abortion or either school initiative.

LD15 House Position 1

Chris Corry (R) - Says life begins at conception; backs parental rights, girls' sports based on sex, and religious-ministry hiring freedom. **Jack McEntire (D)** - Did not answer a 2026 values questionnaire on abortion, parental rights, gender transition, marriage or women's sports.

LD15 House Position 2

Reedy Berg (R) - Says parents are the primary stakeholders in children's upbringing and should know what schools teach and what medical decisions are made. No clear abortion position found. **Liz Hallock (No Kings)** - Says "reproductive rights are being gutted." No equally clear gender-policy statement found.

LD16 House Position 1

Mark Klicker (R) - Says elective abortion should never be allowed; says physical or social gender transition of children is "child abuse." **Kyle Palmer (D)** - No clear direct position found on abortion or gender/parental-rights issues.

LD16 House Position 2

Skyler Rude (R) - Voted against abortion-medication expansion and opposed the 2025 rollback of parental rights. Plans to resign Oct. 31; if he wins, a replacement would be appointed. **Derek Sarley (D)** - No clear direct position found on abortion or transgender policy.

Washington 2026 election research

November 3, 2026 general election • Research cutoff: October 16, 2026

This packet compares the documented records, stated positions, and practical ballot choices affecting Grandview, Sunnyside, and Prosser. It covers Washington Supreme Court and local races, notable partisan findings, and the three statewide initiatives. Each race begins with the concrete difference; source links and evidence limits follow.

Supreme Court: [Position 1](#) · [Position 3](#) · [Position 4](#) · [Position 5](#) · [Position 7](#)

Local races: [Yakima Prosecutor](#) · [Yakima Sheriff](#) · [Yakima Assessor](#) · [Prosser / Benton](#)

Ballot details: [Rude, LD14/15/16, and local measures](#)

Added sections: [Partisan races](#) · [Initiatives in plain language](#)

Reading the evidence

Record means an opinion, signed brief, government document, or professional history. **Candidate statement** means the candidate's account, which may need independent verification. **Assessment** means an inference from the cited evidence. Endorsements identify supporters; they do not establish how a judge will rule. A lawyer's argument for a client is not necessarily a personal belief.

Faith and public service: Only publicly disclosed religious identification, affiliation, or church service is reported. Service and membership are distinguished. Religious schooling does not establish personal faith, and missing information does not establish its absence. Affiliation alone does not establish a candidate's policy position or qualifications.

Coverage limits: This is a substantive comparison of the accessible record, not an exhaustive docket or disciplinary-background search. A missing issue-specific opinion is identified as a gap, not converted into a political position. Historical rulings are dated; later federal developments are noted where material.

What is actually on the ballot

The [official state voters' pamphlet, judicial pages 40–44](#) confirms all five pairings. Positions 1 and 5 are **two-year unexpired terms**; Positions 3, 4, and 7 are six-year terms. Judicial contests are nonpartisan.

Seat	Candidates	Central comparison established by this research
1	Colleen Melody / Scott Edwards	Civil-rights litigation and judicial pragmatism / tax litigation and textual restraint
3	David Stevens / Jaime Michelle Hawk	Explicit originalism and criticism of court rules / public defense and institutional criminal-justice reform
4	Ian Birk / Sean O'Donnell	Appellate and civil-rights record / trial-court leadership with a cross-party coalition
5	Theo Angelis / Dave Larson	Newly appointed appellate advocate / long-serving municipal trial judge and court reformer
7	Debra L. Stephens / Todd A. Bloom	Extensive constitutional decisions / restraint-oriented challenger without a comparable judicial record

Supreme Court Position 1 Colleen Melody and Scott Edwards

Two-year unexpired term. Melody is the incumbent appointed to replace Justice Mary Yu.

The concrete choice: Melody brings civil-rights enforcement experience and an approach that considers text, history, purpose, and practical effects. Edwards brings tax-law expertise and a stronger stated emphasis on limits in the law's text.

Colleen Melody

- **Background and appointment.** Governor Bob Ferguson selected Melody in November 2025; she began Supreme Court service in January 2026. She previously led the Attorney General's Wing Luke Civil Rights Division, which she built beginning in 2015, after work in the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. Her first permanent judicial position is this Supreme Court seat. [Governor's appointment announcement](#)
- **Professional record.** Her government litigation included the first Trump travel ban, DACA protections, birthright citizenship, and limits on immigration arrests at courthouses. These are concrete civil-rights and executive-power subjects, not evidence that she personally authored every Attorney General lawsuit involving abortion or religion. [Appointment biography](#)
- **Philosophy, in her words.** She describes a pragmatic approach that examines text, history, intent, and practical consequences: "Judges must anticipate and consider the law's impact on everyday people." This supports a contextual, consequence-conscious characterization rather than strict originalism. [Candidate questionnaire](#)
- **Locally important case: State v. City of Sunnyside, 2024.** Melody delivered the State's Supreme Court argument challenging the city's use of its crime-free rental-housing program. The court allowed the Attorney General to pursue civil-rights claims; it did not finally determine every allegation against the city. The landlord-tenant statutory claim did not survive. Her role was **advocate**, not deciding justice. The case illustrates willingness to use state enforcement power to challenge local policing and protect tenants' due process. [Attorney General's account identifying her role](#) · [Opinion, No. 101205-5](#)
- **Abortion.** In an October 2026 interview, she said of Dobbs: "It was wrongly decided." This is a direct, unusually clear signal concerning the federal abortion precedent. It does not establish how she would resolve every question under Washington's statutes or constitution. [Seattle Times interview, October 6, preserved by Washington Courts](#)
- **Meaningful endorsements.** Ferguson, Attorney General Nick Brown, and retired Justice Mary Yu appear in her campaign's support; Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates also supports her. Together with her actual litigation and Dobbs statement, this is substantial evidence of a progressive coalition. [Campaign](#) · [PPAA judicial endorsements](#)
- **Faith and controversies.** No named church or personal religious identification was verified in the reviewed biography and questionnaire. The principal campaign dispute is whether the appointment of a former senior lawyer from Ferguson's Attorney General's Office reinforces an ideologically homogeneous court. Appointment is constitutionally authorized; that criticism is not evidence of corruption or a misconduct finding. Her short judicial tenure limits what can be inferred from her own Supreme Court opinions. [Race reporting](#)

Scott Edwards

- **Background.** Edwards is an experienced tax and appellate lawyer, not a sitting judge. His public career centers on state and local taxation and challenges to government taxing authority. No gubernatorial judicial appointment applies. His campaign emphasizes independent judgment and constitutional limits. [Campaign and biography](#)
- **Philosophy, in his words.** He says judges should “interpret the law as written,” emphasizing ordinary meaning, facts, and precedent. He distinguishes an unpopular precedent from one that is legally wrong and harmful; changing policy ordinarily belongs to legislators or constitutional amendment. [Candidate questionnaire](#)
- **Concrete constitutional litigation.** Edwards represented challengers to Washington’s capital-gains tax and Seattle’s payroll tax. The U.S. Supreme Court filing in Quinn lists him as counsel for the challengers. This supports describing his professional record as skeptical of expansive taxing power, but it is an advocacy record, not a judicial vote. [Quinn petitioners’ reply brief, November 21, 2023](#) · [Race reporting](#)
- **Abortion and other social issues.** Asked for his view of Dobbs, Edwards responded: “None that I’m going to share publicly.” A refusal to announce a position is not proof of a pro-life or pro-choice commitment. No comparably specific, verified record was located here on parental notification, gender treatment, religious exemptions, or firearms. [Same interview](#)
- **Meaningful endorsements.** The Associated General Contractors’ BUILD PAC and NFIB’s Washington PAC endorse him; current reporting also identifies state Republican Party support. These are meaningful business and conservative-coalition signals, especially when combined with his tax litigation and interpretation method. [AGC endorsement profile](#) · [NFIB general-election list](#) · [October 6 reporting](#)
- **Faith and controversies.** His official candidate statement lists community service with **St. Cecilia Parish**. That is a disclosed parish connection; the statement alone should not be expanded into an account of his theology or current membership. The campaign’s central controversy concerns his criticism of the court’s tax decisions and the appointment pipeline, rather than a verified personal misconduct finding. [Official pamphlet, p. 40](#)

Ideological signals and limits

Evidence: Edwards’s tax litigation, stated interpretive method, and business and Republican support indicate a more conservative outlook on taxation and judicial power. Melody’s civil-rights record, Dobbs statement, and endorsements indicate a more progressive outlook. **Important limit:** Edwards’s abortion and religious-liberty positions remain less documented; his supporters do not supply those missing answers.

Supreme Court Position 3 David Stevens and Jaime Michelle Hawk

Six-year term. Neither candidate is an incumbent Supreme Court justice.

The concrete choice: Stevens expressly favors originalism and challenges the court's criminal-procedure reforms. Hawk brings public-defense experience and a record of advocating sentencing, jury-selection, and voting-rights reforms.

David Stevens

- **Background and selection.** Stevens is a Mason County Superior Court judge. His campaign biography says he first won election in **November 2023**, defeating an Inslee appointee, and was reelected in 2024. His own route to that judgeship was election, not appointment by a governor. Earlier work includes Navy service, HUD civil-rights investigations, tribal public defense, prosecution, and justice-system work in Kosovo and Afghanistan. [Candidate biography](#)
- **Philosophy, in his words.** "I am a textualist and originalist." He emphasizes enacted words and their original meaning, rather than changing their meaning through current policy preferences. He says constitutional rules should be changed through amendment. This directly documents his interpretive approach. [Candidate questionnaire](#)
- **Judicial models.** In a recorded radio interview reported by the interviewer, Stevens identified Clarence Thomas, Antonin Scalia, and Samuel Alito as models. He criticized the court's capital-gains decision, public-defense rules, and restrictions on juvenile warrants. The interview is a primary statement in a conservative outlet, not a neutral evaluation of the legal merits. [Jason Rantz interview report](#)
- **Criminal justice and race.** His campaign opposes what he regards as racial preferences in jury selection and restrictions that reduce trial judges' ability to compel defendants' attendance. This is a public-safety and formal-equal-treatment critique of the present court. [Campaign's law-and-order statements](#)
- **Important qualification about GR 37.** The rule governs discriminatory peremptory challenges, which remove a prospective juror without proving disqualification for cause. It asks whether an objective observer could view race or ethnicity as a factor and treats some historically discriminatory explanations as presumptively invalid. **The rule still permits removal of an actually biased juror for cause; it does not guarantee a seat to every minority prospective juror.** [Official rule](#)
- **Faith.** Stevens's own biography identifies him as a member of **Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Shelton**; his official statement lists service as a deacon. This is self-disclosed affiliation, not an inference from his conservative views. [Biography](#) · [Official pamphlet, p. 41](#)
- **Controversy requiring both sides.** In 2010, Spokane Prosecutor Steve Tucker fired Stevens after Stevens announced a challenge for Tucker's office. Tucker characterized it as a management matter and alleged workplace statements about replacing management. Stevens called it political retaliation. The reporting establishes the firing and dispute; it does not establish a final judicial or disciplinary finding against Stevens. [Contemporaneous Spokesman-Review report](#) · [Election archive describing his response](#)
- **Endorsements and issue gaps.** His conservative alignment is particularly well supported by his own method and judicial models. Republican support is also reported. Opposition materials make additional claims about older ideological pledges; no authenticated original pledge was established in this review, so those claims are not adopted. The iVoterGuide profile reviewed contains unanswered issue questions; those questions are not his answers. No issue-specific abortion, gender, or religious-liberty ruling by Stevens was established here. [October 6 election reporting](#) · [iVoterGuide profile](#)

Jaime Michelle Hawk

- **Background and appointment.** Governor Jay Inslee appointed Hawk to King County Superior Court in July 2022; the clerk announced her August 2022 investiture. Her earlier career includes public defense and legal-strategy work for the ACLU of Washington's criminal-justice program. [Official King County clerk announcement](#) · [Campaign biography](#)
- **Philosophy.** Hawk emphasizes the constitution, statutes and precedent, fair treatment, identifying bias, and access to justice. Her model is Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The evidence supports a reform-oriented approach, but she does not claim authority to disregard binding law because she dislikes the outcome. [Candidate questionnaire](#)
- **Court-imposed debts.** In her Democratic-district questionnaire, Hawk describes work on the Wakefield litigation involving Kennewick and Richland, inability to pay, Social Security income, and legal financial obligations. She contributed amicus advocacy: arguments submitted by an interested person or organization that is not a party to the case. This documents her focus on unequal treatment tied to poverty. **It was advocacy before her judgeship, not a ruling she issued.** [Her detailed account](#)
- **Juries and criminal justice.** The same questionnaire discusses organizing work supporting GR 37 and fair jury participation. Her published ACLU advocacy also challenged extreme sentences as a driver of incarceration. These are identifiable policy and professional commitments, not merely an ACLU affiliation. [Questionnaire](#) · [ACLU report announcement, 2020](#)
- **Writing.** Hawk coauthored a Seattle Journal for Social Justice article arguing that a criminal conviction should not eliminate voting rights. It is a direct source for her civil-rights and reintegration perspective. [Article and downloadable paper](#)
- **Meaningful endorsements.** Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates, organized labor, Fuse, and LGBTQ-oriented Democratic organizations appear in her support, alongside current and former judges. The progressive coalition fits the substance of her earlier work. PPAA's endorsement is relevant to reproductive-rights expectations; it does not substitute for an abortion ruling or a promise about a future case. [PPAA endorsement](#) · [Campaign endorsement list](#)
- **Faith, controversies, and limits.** No named church or self-identified religion was verified. Her campaign's claim that no trial has been overturned for legal error is a campaign claim, not an independently audited appellate statistic. The central ideological controversy is her ACLU reform record versus Stevens's law-and-order criticism. No separate adjudicated misconduct finding was established in this review. Specific abortion, parental-notification, and firearms holdings by Hawk remain unverified. [Campaign](#)

Ideological signals and limits

Evidence: Stevens's express method, judicial models, and criticism of jury and criminal-procedure rules support a more conservative characterization. Hawk's sentencing, jury-selection, and voting-rights advocacy and endorsements support a more progressive characterization. **Important limit:** These records do not establish Stevens's position on every social issue or show that Hawk would disregard law favoring conviction.

Supreme Court Position 4 Ian Birk and Sean O'Donnell

Six-year term. This race requires particular care: conservative endorsements for O'Donnell coexist with substantial Democratic and judicial support.

The concrete choice: Birk has an appellate and advocacy record on antidiscrimination law and religious exemptions. O'Donnell brings longer trial-court leadership and support spanning political parties. His conservative endorsements do not establish a uniformly conservative record.

Ian Birk

- **Background and appointment.** Inslee appointed Birk to Division One of the Court of Appeals in April 2022. He previously spent roughly two decades in civil litigation, including consumer and insurance cases, and clerked at the Washington Supreme Court. He is a University of Washington law graduate. [Campaign biography](#) · [Official candidate statement documenting appointment](#)
- **Philosophy.** Birk describes law as rooted in text, precedent, and fair treatment, while allowing precedent to change when legally justified. He identifies Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson as a model. His discussion of changed circumstances should not be paraphrased as permission to ignore precedent whenever society changes. [Candidate questionnaire](#)
- **Same-sex marriage and compelled speech — advocacy, 2016.** Birk is named as counsel on the Washington State Association for Justice amicus or friend-of-the-court brief in *Arlene's Flowers*. The brief argued that selling wedding flower arrangements did not implicate protected speech and that enforcing the antidiscrimination law did not compel endorsement of same-sex marriage. This is a direct, relevant advocacy record supporting equality-law enforcement over the florist's speech defense. It predates his judgeship and the 2019 remand decision. [Signed brief, cover and pp. 6–19](#)
- **Religious institutions and abuse investigations — authored opinion, 2026.** In the Seattle Archdiocese subpoena case, Birk rejected a categorical religious-corporation exemption from the Attorney General's investigation. He permitted inquiry into criminal or tortious conduct, including abuse, while preserving constitutional limits on inquiry into religious doctrine and internal religious purposes. The court reversed the ruling and sent the case back to the superior court to define the subpoena's precise boundaries. This is not a holding that all church affairs are open to state supervision. [Opinion, No. 87005-0-I, March 2, 2026, especially pp. 25–26](#)
- **Religious health sharing and abortion coverage — joined opinion, 2026.** Sitting with Division Three, Birk joined Chief Judge Lawrence-Berrey's opinion in *Zion HealthShare*. The court treated Zion as an insurer and rejected its challenges to the statutory exemption's date requirement. On the state free-exercise claim, the opinion reasoned that Zion had not shown the required coercive burden; it observed that abortion coverage was required if maternity coverage was retained, and that Zion had not argued dropping maternity coverage would itself burden its beliefs. Birk **joined** this opinion; he did not author it. [Opinion, No. 40454-4-III, February 5, 2026, pp. 15–19](#)
- **Child protection — authored opinion, 2025.** In *Jones ex rel. C.J. v. Darragh*, Birk held that a child's capacity to commit a crime was not a prerequisite to a civil sexual-assault protection order. The opinion treated older appellate authority as displaced by the Supreme Court's later *DeSean* decision and remanded the protection-order matter. This concerns civil protection and statutory interpretation, not a general position on parental authority over schooling or medical care. [Opinion, No. 86397-5-I](#)
- **Endorsements and faith.** Ferguson, Nick Brown, Democratic elected officials, and PPAA support Birk. These reinforce, rather than create, the progressive signal supplied by the legal record. No publicly disclosed church or religious affiliation was verified. [Campaign](#) · [PPAA list](#)

Sean O'Donnell

- **Background and route to office.** O'Donnell was elected to King County Superior Court in 2012 and began serving in 2013; he was not initially placed there by a governor. Before the bench he spent 12 years as a King County prosecutor, including work associated with the Green River investigation and trafficking prosecutions. On the court he has led criminal and family-law divisions. [Campaign biography and record](#) · [Candidate questionnaire](#)
- **Philosophy.** His framework combines constitution, enacted law, and precedent with attention to dignity and practical effects. He discusses systemic inequities and admires Earl Warren's leadership. These are significant qualifications to any portrayal of him as a Scalia-style originalist or uniformly socially conservative candidate. [Questionnaire](#)
- **Firearms and domestic violence — trial ruling, later affirmed.** O'Donnell rejected a challenge concerning firearm surrender in the Montesi domestic-violence litigation. The Court of Appeals affirmed in 2025, applying, among other authorities, the U.S. Supreme Court's Rahimi decision. The published appellate opinion was written by **Judge Lori Smith**, not O'Donnell. This supports a record of enforcing protective orders and firearm restrictions in a specific domestic-violence setting; it does not establish support for every proposed gun restriction. [Official case information](#) · [Appellate opinion, especially pp. 14–17](#)
- **Meaningful cross-party support.** His campaign lists former Democratic governors Chris Gregoire and Gary Locke, Democratic members of Congress, and Justice G. Helen Whitener, alongside law-enforcement and business organizations. NFIB independently confirms its endorsement. His support from Republicans is real; so is the counterevidence to a simple partisan label. [Campaign endorsements](#) · [NFIB](#)
- **Faith and issue gaps.** No named church or religious identification was verified. Family-court leadership does not itself establish a position on parental notification, gender medicine, or abortion. No direct, adequately documented statement on those specific policy questions was established in this review.

The September campaign dispute

Birk accused O'Donnell of a partisan agenda in connection with Republican support. A September letter signed by 62 current or former judges defended O'Donnell and criticized the accusations as inaccurate. The letter is important evidence of judicial colleagues' reaction, but it is an endorsement-side statement, not a disciplinary adjudication. It also says the signers respect Birk and want the race to focus on qualifications and ideas. [Full signed letter](#) · [Contemporaneous interview/report](#)

Ideological signals and limits

Evidence: Birk's Arlene's Flowers brief and progressive endorsements provide clearer evidence of a progressive orientation. O'Donnell draws more conservative support in this pairing. **Important limit:** O'Donnell's admiration for Earl Warren, Democratic endorsements, and domestic-violence firearm ruling qualify that comparison. His specific positions on abortion and gender-related policy remain unverified.

Supreme Court Position 5 Theo Angelis and Dave Larson

Two-year unexpired term. Angelis was selected to replace Justice Barbara Madsen.

The concrete choice: Angelis brings complex appellate practice and immigrant-rights advocacy, with a short judicial record. Larson brings long municipal-court experience, court-administration work, and an emphasis on limiting judicial policymaking.

Theo Angelis

- **Background and appointment.** Ferguson announced Angelis's appointment in March 2026; he began serving that spring. He came from a lengthy K&L Gates litigation and appellate practice, including intellectual-property matters, and had not previously held a permanent judgeship. He is a Yale Law graduate and former D.C. Circuit clerk. [Governor's announcement](#) · [Campaign biography](#)
- **Philosophy.** Asked about interpretive approaches, Angelis answered "all of the above": text, structure, purpose, and precedent. Precedent means earlier court decisions used to guide later cases. He sets a high threshold for overruling those decisions and identifies John Marshall as an admired justice. His answers describe several methods rather than an express commitment to originalism. [Candidate questionnaire](#)
- **Immigration and due process — documented advocacy.** Angelis worked with the ACLU and other organizations challenging the government's failure to provide lawyers for children in deportation proceedings. This litigation was directed at the federal government during the Obama administration, an important qualification to treating all his advocacy as simply anti-Republican. The primary announcement identifies him and the pro bono work. [ACLU announcement, July 2014](#)
- **Broader professional service.** His campaign identifies representation of refugees, asylum seekers, and children, recognition from KIND and the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, and an ACLU Humanitarian Award. His professional experience includes commercial clients as well as public-interest litigation. [Biography](#)
- **An actual 2026 court vote.** In the September 3 ballot-disclosure dispute, reporting based on the court's spokesperson places Angelis among four justices favoring the challenge, with Melody and Stephens among four opposing it. The tie left the commissioner's ruling in place. This is evidence against assuming Ferguson's appointees vote as a bloc. It does not reveal Angelis's reasoning on the underlying tax or establish a broad ideology; the accessible account reports votes, not a signed explanatory opinion. [Washington State Standard, September 3](#)
- **Meaningful endorsements.** PPAA and OneAmerica Votes support him, and his campaign aligns with the progressive-supported judicial group. Those are meaningful reproductive-rights and immigrant-rights coalition signals; no case-specific abortion pledge follows automatically. [PPAA](#) · [OneAmerica Votes](#)
- **Faith — strong primary evidence.** Angelis's own 2026 Metropolis Council profile identifies **Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, Seattle** and describes parish leadership, Sunday-school teaching, and pro bono church legal work. His personal statement discusses strengthening the Church and protecting parishes' tax-exempt status. His faith is therefore documented independently of his progressive endorsements. [Greek Orthodox Metropolis candidate profiles, PDF p. 11](#)
- **Controversy and limits.** The main campaign dispute is appointment advantage and whether the court is too politically homogeneous, versus Angelis's appellate qualifications. His short tenure supplies much less judicial evidence than Stephens's. No verified opinion establishing his personal approach to abortion, parental rights, gender care, or firearms was identified here. [Spokesman-Review comparison, September 27](#)

Dave Larson

- **Background and appointment.** Larson served approximately 18 years on Federal Way Municipal Court after a trial-law career of approximately 23 years. He also served on the Federal Way school board. His original municipal appointment was local, not gubernatorial. His campaign now identifies him as a retired judge. The relevant contrast is extensive trial-court administration versus Angelis's extensive appellate practice. [Campaign](#) · [Candidate questionnaire](#)
- **Philosophy, in his words.** "Being a judge is a responsibility, not a power." He emphasizes lawful limits, equal dignity, practical court administration, and keeping policy choices with the institutions authorized to make them. [Questionnaire](#)
- **Criminal justice.** His campaign promotes accountability combined with treatment, problem-solving courts, and responses to underlying behavioral-health problems. These are important qualifications to a simplistic punitive-versus-lenient comparison. Municipal courts generally do not produce the kind of published constitutional-opinion record available from appellate judges. His campaign's large case totals describe court workload, not hundreds of thousands of personally tried cases. [Campaign record and court-role materials](#)
- **Abortion, religion, and parental questions — historical questionnaire.** In 2024 Larson criticized courts setting public policy when discussing both Roe and Dobbs. He did not provide an unqualified endorsement of Dobbs or a personal abortion position. He emphasized protection of religious exercise, declined to answer a parental-rights question because litigation was pending, and treated gender-classification policy as principally legislative. These are dated 2024 answers, not a newly obtained 2026 pledge. [Full 2024 primary questionnaire](#)
- **Faith.** In that same questionnaire he stated: "I am a Roman Catholic." His 2016 official candidate statement listed St. Vincent de Paul Church service. The former is explicit religious identification; the latter is a historical church connection. [2024 questionnaire](#) · [2016 official statement](#)
- **Meaningful endorsements and controversy.** NFIB endorses Larson, and Republican organizations recommend him. His repeated campaigns have challenged the court's institutional direction and appointment advantage. The dispute is whether his independence/restraint argument offers needed diversity of thought or obscures a conservative political coalition. Neither characterization establishes a judicial misconduct finding. [NFIB](#) · [Republican recommendation](#) · [Race comparison](#)

Ideological signals and limits

Evidence: Larson has more conservative support and more explicitly emphasizes limits on judicial policymaking. Angelis's rights advocacy and endorsements place him closer to a progressive coalition. **Important limit:** Both disclose Christian affiliations. Those affiliations do not establish future rulings, and Larson's dated abortion answers do not promise a particular outcome.

Supreme Court Position 7 Debra L. Stephens and Todd A. Bloom

Six-year term. Stephens is the incumbent chief justice; the election is for her justice position, not a separate popular election for chief justice.

The concrete choice: Stephens has a long constitutional record covering religious exemptions, criminal law, and school funding. Bloom emphasizes limits on judicial power, but has no comparable record of judicial decisions against which to test those commitments.

Debra L. Stephens

- **Background and appointments.** Stephens practiced appellate law in Spokane, taught at Gonzaga, and served on a school board. Governor Christine Gregoire appointed her to the Court of Appeals in 2007 and to the Supreme Court in December 2007, with Supreme Court service beginning January 2008. Some short biographies say “appointed in 2008,” conflating selection and the start of service. [Official appointment announcement](#) · [Court of Appeals history](#) · [Campaign biography](#)
- **Philosophy, in her words.** She respects constitutional text and structure but describes the constitution as “a framework for a future they could not fully anticipate.” She emphasizes independent state constitutional protections and identifies Justice William Brennan as a model. This supports a broader, evolving application of constitutional principles rather than fixed original-public-meaning interpretation alone. [Questionnaire](#)
- **Religious hiring — Woods v. Seattle’s Union Gospel Mission, 2021.** Stephens wrote separately, agreeing with part of the decision and disagreeing with part. Her separate opinion would invalidate the religious-nonprofit employment exemption as applied under Washington’s privileges-and-immunities provision and reject the asserted free-exercise defense, while preserving consideration of the constitutionally required ministerial exception on remand. **Her “dissent” was not a dissent favoring a broad religious-employer exemption.** The distinction is critical when evaluating the case by vote labels alone. [Official opinion, Stephens’s separate writing begins at PDF p. 33](#)
- **Same-sex wedding services and speech — Arlene’s Flowers, 2019.** Stephens joined the unanimous decision reaffirming application of Washington’s public-accommodation law to the florist’s refusal to provide services for a same-sex wedding. The opinion rejected the asserted speech and religious defenses and found no religious animus requiring a different result after Masterpiece Cakeshop. This is a documented judicial choice in a direct conflict between equality law and religious objections. [2019 opinion, introduction and pp. 74–76](#)
- **Criminal justice and restraint — State v. Blake, 2021.** Stephens agreed Blake’s conviction should be set aside but rejected the majority’s broad constitutional invalidation of the possession statute. She would instead interpret it to require proof of knowing possession and overrule contrary statutory precedent. Her opinion expressly favors avoiding an unnecessary constitutional ruling. This is significant counterevidence to a claim that she always chooses the broadest reform result. [Separate opinion, PDF pp. 37 onward](#)
- **School funding and judicial power.** Stephens identifies the McCleary school-funding decision as an important part of her record and defends enforcing the state’s constitutional education duty. Bloom criticizes the court’s subsequent use of sanctions as legislative overreach. This is a concrete separation-of-powers disagreement, not simply a difference over whether education matters. [Joint candidate interview, October 4](#)
- **Endorsements, faith, controversies.** PPAA and Fuse support Stephens. Her campaign mentions church volunteering while growing up, but no named present church or specific religious identification was verified. Her most consequential controversies are public legal decisions—religious exemptions, school funding, and the court’s institutional role—not an established personal misconduct finding. [PPAA](#) · [Fuse’s own endorsements](#) · [Biography](#)

Todd A. Bloom

- **Background.** Bloom is a tax/business lawyer, CPA, financial professional, Navy veteran, and former Washington State Bar Association governor. His education includes Tulane JD/MBA and a University of Washington tax-law degree. He has arbitration and investigative experience, but no comparable record of service as a sitting judge was established. No gubernatorial judicial appointment applies. [Candidate questionnaire](#) · [Joint interview](#)
- **Philosophy, in his words.** He stresses “exercising judicial restraint, respecting the separation of powers,” with decisions grounded in constitutions, statutes, precedent, and evidence. His method and criticism of the court’s policymaking support a conservative characterization; they do not supply a judicial voting record he does not have. [Questionnaire](#)
- **Political and institutional signals.** Bloom previously ran for Congress as a Republican. In 2026, Republican organizations recommend him; the state party announced a recommendation in June. He criticizes the perception of unequal justice and the court’s McCleary sanctions. These are more concrete signals than his professional credentials alone. [State party’s published announcement](#) · [Skagit GOP’s current list](#) · [Interview](#)
- **Faith — historical self-disclosure.** A 2018 pastoral-council candidate biography at **Saint Patrick Catholic Church, Tacoma** identifies Bloom’s parish involvement and earlier service as a Eucharistic minister and finance-council member in New Orleans. Its law, finance, and Navy biography matches the candidate. This establishes a public Catholic parish connection at that time; current 2026 membership was not independently confirmed. [His parish biography](#)
- **Issue record and controversies.** No authored judicial rulings or sufficiently documented current positions on abortion, parental rights, gender treatment, religious exemptions, or firearms were established in this review. His complaint that the court produces unequal justice is a campaign criticism requiring evaluation, not proof that Stephens acted corruptly. The main evidentiary limitation is comparing his promises with her extensive actual record.

Ideological signals and limits

Evidence: Bloom’s separation-of-powers views, prior Republican candidacies, and party recommendations support a more conservative characterization. Stephens’s religious-exemption decisions and supporting coalition provide more progressive signals. **Important limit:** Her narrower approach in Blake is evidence of restraint in that case. Bloom’s stated philosophy has not been tested through a comparable judicial record.

Legal context that changes how to read the judicial records

Do not treat historical state decisions as the whole current federal framework. In [303 Creative v. Elenis, 2023](#), the U.S. Supreme Court protected a designer against compelled creation of expressive wedding websites. That later decision matters when discussing Arlene's Flowers, although it involved different services and facts. Birk's 2016 brief and Stephens's 2019 vote remain relevant historical records; neither establishes the disposition of every future expressive-services case.

The Yakima religious-employment development is especially relevant. In [Union Gospel Mission of Yakima v. Brown, January 6, 2026](#), the Ninth Circuit affirmed a preliminary injunction protecting a religious ministry's faith-based hiring of co-religionists for nonministerial positions. It distinguished that protection from a general right to discriminate on any ground and limited its holding to religious organizations of the kind before it. This is materially broader religious-hiring protection than a ministerial-exception-only account. It is a separate federal case, not a decision authored by any candidate in this packet.

Legal terms in plain language: An appellate court reviews lower-court decisions. An amicus brief gives the court arguments from an interested nonparty. A remand sends a case back for further proceedings. A concurrence agrees with the result while adding or differing on reasoning; a dissent disagrees with the majority. [U.S. Courts glossary](#)

Open judicial questions worth pursuing selectively: issue-specific records for Stevens, Edwards, Larson, and Bloom where their published answers are general; detailed trial rulings for Hawk and O'Donnell; and a fuller authored-opinion record for the two new Supreme Court appointees. These are genuine gaps, not evidence that the candidates have no views. A broad label cannot fill them.

Yakima County Prosecutor Tyler Haueter and Quinn Dalan

Both appear as Republicans. The prosecutor's practical responsibilities include charging and plea decisions, trial quality, victim communication, supervision of lawyers, and civil representation of county government. The office does not legislate general abortion or school policy.

The concrete choice: Haueter offers recent hands-on prosecution and formal county Republican support. Dalan offers broader legal and management experience with substantial attorney, judicial, and law-enforcement endorsements. Their comparative trial quality and management results remain less well documented.

Tyler Haueter

- **Experience.** Haueter's career includes Air Force paralegal service, criminal investigation for Yakima's Department of Assigned Counsel, a University of Idaho JD, Yakima Special Assault Unit prosecution, and current service as a Kennewick assistant city attorney. Military/paralegal/investigator years should not all be described as years practicing as an attorney. [Campaign biography](#) · [Local candidacy report](#)
- **Professional emphasis.** He presents himself as the candidate with recent hands-on criminal prosecution experience, contrasting his current practice with Dalan's later management and civil-legal-aid work. His campaign highlights serious sexual-assault and homicide cases and discusses both justice and mercy. Recent municipal prosecution and past county felony work should be distinguished; they are not identical workloads. [Campaign record](#)
- **Meaningful endorsements.** The county GOP's current formal endorsement page lists Haueter. His campaign also lists La Voz. Party support is useful evidence of coalition alignment but does not establish his office-management capacity. [County GOP endorsement list](#) · [Campaign](#)
- **Faith and controversies.** His biography mentions a mission in Brazil, but this review did not verify a named church or an explicit denominational identification. The mission reference alone is insufficient to assign a denomination. No adjudicated professional misconduct finding concerning Haueter was established in the reviewed material.

Quinn Dalan

- **Experience.** Dalan has worked as a deputy prosecutor, public defender, civil attorney, legal-aid executive, and temporary or pro tem judge. She has led Central Washington Legal Aid since 2019. Her resume emphasizes breadth, supervision, community partnerships, and domestic/sexual-violence work; Haueter emphasizes recency of prosecution. [Campaign biography](#) · [Washington Courts speaker biography, March 2025](#)
- **Professional philosophy.** Her campaign stresses accountability, public safety, fairness, and collaboration. Public defense is constitutionally necessary work, not proof of unwillingness to prosecute. The fair question is how effectively she would supervise charging, trials, and staff after years in other legal roles. [Campaign](#)
- **Meaningful endorsements.** Her list includes the Yakima County Sheriff's Office Guild, numerous local attorneys and retired judges, and retired Justice Barbara Madsen. Mainstream Republicans of Washington independently lists her. These endorsements make it inaccurate to portray the race as law enforcement unanimously favoring Haueter. They are substantial professional-confidence and moderate-Republican signals. [Dalan's endorsement list](#) · [Mainstream Republicans](#)
- **Documented wider advocacy.** In her own letter as 2024–2025 Washington Women Lawyers president, Dalan praised the organization's legislative work, including "Reproductive Freedom and Gender-Affirming Care," contraception coverage, and caregiving as a mitigating factor in sentencing. The letter describes board-approved organizational advocacy, not a specific charging policy she promises to implement as prosecutor. It nonetheless supplies real evidence of a more progressive advocacy environment than the Republican ballot designation suggests. [Signed president's letter](#)
- **Faith.** No named church or personal religious identification was verified. Regent University legal education is not enough to infer current faith or denomination. [Published biography](#)

Claims and evidence limits

The county GOP funds an opposition website at [quinndalan.com](#); that is **not Dalan's campaign website**, which is [vote4quinn.com](#). The opposition site alleges Democratic presidential-primary declarations and highlights Democratic connections. Those allegations should not be repeated as independently verified voting records here. Its documentary links led to the authentic WWL letter above, which can be assessed directly. A party preference on a Washington ballot is not certification by that party. [Opposition site and sponsorship disclosure](#) · [Official candidate list](#)

Important limits: Haueter's campaign claims Dalan has not handled a felony prosecution since 2013; an independently audited case history was not obtained. Campaign conviction lists alone do not establish comparative trial quality, reversals, office morale, or fiscal management. Dalan's organizational advocacy letter documents wider views, not a promised charging policy.

Yakima County Sheriff Jake Church and Roman Kilinkaridis

Both appear as Republicans. The important choices involve agency leadership, staffing, enforcement priorities, constitutional limits, surveillance, and relationships with residents and other agencies.

The concrete choice: Church offers deeper documented sheriff's-office leadership and strong local police support. Kilinkaridis offers an outside perspective and specific proposals on surveillance, immigration resources, and deputy wellness. His full supervisory history and several implementation details remain unverified.

Jake Church

- **Experience.** Church is a Yakima Sheriff's Office lieutenant responsible for professional standards, training, and policy. He previously served at Toppenish Police Department and earlier taught vocational agriculture at Sunnyside High School. His "28 years of public service" includes teaching; it is not 28 years as sheriff or necessarily 28 years of policing. His cited FBI-LEEDA training should not be confused with having been an FBI agent. [Campaign biography](#)
- **Management philosophy.** The platform emphasizes supporting deputies, professional standards, interagency partnerships, and community safety. His experience offers continuity with the current agency and familiarity with its personnel and procedures. That is a management advantage and also a reason to examine whether improvements require an outsider. [Campaign](#)
- **Meaningful endorsements.** His list includes Sheriff Robert Udell, the agency's command team, Yakima County Sheriff's Office Deputy Guild, Sunnyside Police Officers Guild, and the Yakima Valley Fraternal Order of Police. These are particularly relevant endorsements for a Lower Valley voter assessing operational confidence. [Detailed endorsement list](#)
- **Faith and controversy.** No publicly stated church affiliation was verified. No adjudicated misconduct finding concerning Church was established. Institutional support should be evaluated as evidence of colleagues' confidence, not an independent audit of all agency practices.

Roman Kilinkaridis

- **Experience.** Kilinkaridis is a West Richland police officer and business owner. West Richland’s December 2023 council minutes identify him as the department’s Officer of the Year and report a community-service award. This is useful independent evidence of police service and recognition, but it is not equivalent to experience commanding a county sheriff’s office. A complete verified supervisory history was not obtained. [Official council minutes](#) · [Campaign](#)
- **Specific governing commitments.** His campaign seeks a lawful public vote on Flock/license-plate-camera policy, limits on voluntary local involvement in federal civil immigration enforcement, and voluntary confidential wellness access for deputies. It also promises a substantial salary donation. The site itself identifies unresolved implementation details: the ballot mechanism, final immigration policy, and donation formula. These are proposals, not measures already enacted. [Current campaign commitments](#)
- **Constitutional philosophy.** His surveillance position combines recognition of police utility with demands for public consent and safeguards. His immigration position says deputies should not obstruct lawful federal action but should not volunteer local resources beyond legal requirements. That is more specific evidence than a generic “constitutional sheriff” label. [Campaign policy statements](#)
- **Meaningful endorsement.** The Alliance for Gun Responsibility’s own 2026 list includes Kilinkaridis. This is a notable gun-policy coalition signal, but the endorsement alone does not establish his answer to every firearm-policy question. [Alliance endorsement page](#)
- **Faith and controversy.** No named church or personal religious identification was verified. No substantiated personal misconduct finding was established. His campaign’s linked “transparency” archive is campaign-associated material, not automatically independent verification of accusations about other officials.

An endorsement conflict that should remain visible

The current formal endorsement page at [yakima.gop](#) lists **Jake Church**. A separate GOP-branded outreach page at [yakimagop.com](#) describes a publication supporting **Roman Kilinkaridis**. These conflict. This packet does not silently merge them or call Kilinkaridis the unqualified county-party endorsee. The formal list is the stronger current party statement, while the conflicting publication merits a dated party clarification if endorsement identity becomes decisive. [Formal list](#) · [Conflicting outreach page](#)

Yakima County Assessor Jacob Tate and Keith Effler

Both appear as Republicans. The office handles uniform valuation, exemptions, appeals, public information, and assessment administration; it does not independently set the county's entire tax burden.

The concrete choice: Tate offers decades of technical assessment and office-management experience. Effler offers an outsider's proposals for clearer valuations and taxpayer service. Comparative service, appeal, and workload data are needed to test their performance claims.

Jacob Tate

- **Experience.** Tate became assessor in 2023 after more than 30 years in the office, progressing through valuation, technical, and leadership roles. He also reports Navy service. [Biography](#)
- **Philosophy and record.** He emphasizes lower administrative costs, automation, and public sales information. Reported reductions in staff and office footprint span decades; they are not all savings produced during his current term. [Campaign](#)
- **Independent-review claim.** His modernization page quotes a 2025 Department of Revenue review praising resource efficiency while noting appraisal-workload pressure. The full report was not independently obtained, so these claims remain attributed to his campaign. [Modernization account](#)
- **Transparency.** His site links existing county sales and levy tools. These provide concrete benchmarks for assessing Effler's proposed improvements. [County levy trends](#) · [Comparable-sales tool](#)
- **Endorsements and faith.** No significant named organizational endorsement or publicly stated church affiliation was verified for Tate. [Campaign endorsement page](#)

Keith Effler

- **Experience.** Effler describes 15 years in commercial photography/business, property ownership and development, nonprofit work, and Republican precinct service. His degree is in psychology. He reports enrollment in assessing-officer courses, not a completed appraisal credential. [Biography](#)
- **Philosophy.** He promises better valuation explanations and to "treat taxpayers like kings." Proposed online information includes formulas, comparable properties, and market data. He acknowledges that state law requires property taxation. [Platform](#)
- **Endorsements.** The county GOP endorses Effler; his campaign also lists La Voz and Washington Patriot PAC. These establish coalition support, distinct from technical qualifications. [County GOP](#) · [Campaign](#)
- **Faith.** His biography describes him as a preacher at a growing nondenominational church. The church name was not established. [Public ministry disclosure](#)

Claims and evidence limits

Important limits: No adjudicated misconduct finding against either candidate was established in this review. Tate's efficiency claims and Effler's accessibility criticism require current service, valuation-appeal, and workload evidence. Effler's disclosed ministry and political endorsements do not establish appraisal qualifications.

Prosser and Benton County races

The [official Benton County general-election candidate list](#) confirms the following contests. These are material differences from a Yakima County ballot.

Benton County Prosecutor Eric Eisinger and Julie Long

The concrete choice: Eisinger offers incumbent leadership, prosecution policies, and an explicit gun-rights position. Long offers a longer prosecution-focused trial record and challenges the office's handling of referrals and pleas. The competing backlog and performance claims lack a reconciled independent audit.

- **Eisinger: experience and philosophy.** The incumbent since 2023 previously prosecuted for Kennewick and worked in private practice. His campaign stresses strong charging, firearm enhancements, serious juvenile cases in adult court when appropriate, victim protection, and treatment courts for suitable defendants. It also says he will not prosecute cases that infringe Second Amendment rights. That last position makes his interpretation of prosecutorial discretion a concrete question. [Campaign](#) · [Candidate's own questionnaire answers](#)
- **Long: experience and philosophy.** Long reports 28 years as a deputy prosecutor in Benton and Franklin Counties, substantial chief-deputy service, and more than 100 jury trials. She moved to Franklin County in 2025 after long Benton service. She emphasizes courtroom leadership, faster charging decisions, tougher plea negotiation, victim communication, and appropriate therapeutic courts. [Campaign](#) · [Detailed biography](#)
- **Concrete dispute.** Long alleges a backlog exceeding 500 law-enforcement referrals and excessive leniency under Eisinger. Eisinger points to his office's convictions and enforcement policies. A referral is not necessarily a trial-ready case or proof of neglect. The accessible evidence does not supply a reconciled case-aging audit, staffing-adjusted comparison, or independent measure of plea quality. The disagreement should be presented as a management dispute requiring those records. [Long's stated priorities](#) · [Eisinger's record](#) · [Tri-City Herald candidacy report](#)
- **Endorsements.** Eisinger lists the Benton County GOP, Sheriff Mike Clark, county commissioners, and mayors including Prosser's Gary Vegar. Long lists substantial active/retired law-enforcement and victim-advocate support. An individual officer's support is not an agency endorsement; read the actual names and organizational labels. [Eisinger's list](#) · [Long's list](#)
- **Faith.** Eisinger's published candidate statement identifies volunteer service at **New Vintage Church, Richland**, and pro bono work for You Medical. Long's own biography identifies volunteering at **St. Joseph's Catholic Church** and Catholic schools. These are disclosed service connections; they should not be enlarged into unverified doctrinal positions. [Candidate statements](#) · [Long biography](#)

Benton County Sheriff Mike Clark and Brad Klippert

The concrete choice: Clark offers current sheriff's-office management and promotion through its ranks. Klippert offers broader elected-office experience and military leadership. Their records describe different experience; neither endorsements nor religious language establish comparative effectiveness.

- **Clark.** A long-serving Benton deputy who rose through supervisory ranks, Clark was appointed sheriff by county commissioners in November 2025. His statement emphasizes management of the existing agency, training, collaboration, and public safety. He lists support from the county GOP, commissioners, prosecutor, and area mayors. His claim that crime declined should not be credited solely to his short tenure without comparable crime data. [Campaign](#) · [Appointment account](#) · [Published candidate statement](#)
- **Klippert.** A longtime sheriff's deputy, former 14-year state representative, and current Kennewick councilmember, Klippert brings military command, school-resource-officer, and legislative experience. His platform emphasizes support for officers, citizen rights, and resistance to government overreach. His statement says, "I believe in God, the Constitution," but that is not a verified named-church affiliation. [Candidate statement and qualifications](#) · [Campaign biography](#)
- **Concrete difference and controversy.** Clark's strongest qualification is current agency management and promotion through its ranks; Klippert offers a longer elected-political record and military leadership. Former sheriff Tom Croskrey's departure and credibility controversy form background to the vacancy, but allegations concerning Croskrey must not be attributed to Clark or Klippert without candidate-specific evidence. The reviewed material did not establish personal misconduct findings against either finalist. [County GOP appointment account](#) · [Local reporting on Croskrey](#)
- **Faith and endorsements.** No named church was verified for Clark; Klippert's public statement explicitly invokes belief in God. The published comparison lists Stand for Health Freedom and retired sheriff Croskrey among Klippert's supporters. Clark's broad officeholder support is the stronger documented institutional coalition. [Comparison with attributed endorsements](#)

Benton District Court Position 1 Talesha Sams and Mike Rio

The concrete choice: Rio emphasizes local prosecution and courtroom administration, with substantial judicial and police support. Sams emphasizes varied practice, vulnerable-adult protection, and equal treatment. A complete comparison of their temporary judicial work remains unavailable.

- **Rio.** His experience includes municipal prosecution for several cities, including Prosser, district-court prosecution, temporary or pro tem judging, a Benton City hearing-examiner role, and teaching. His platform emphasizes consistent, firm, impartial application of law. His campaign lists support from Eisinger, former prosecutor Andy Miller, judges, and police groups—a professional coalition crossing some local political divisions. [Campaign](#) · [Endorsements](#)
- **Sams.** Her published statement describes approximately 25 years of varied practice, prosecution and defense, vulnerable-adult protection, court-visitor work, and King County District Court temporary or pro tem service since 2015. She also reports healthcare and Army experience and public service with PFLAG, Pride Foundation, legal-aid clinics, and veterans. She promises impartiality rather than personal-agenda judging. [Published candidate statement](#)
- **Meaningful distinction.** Rio’s strongest documented specialization is local prosecution and courtroom administration; Sams emphasizes breadth, vulnerable people, and equal treatment. Her publicly stated LGBTQ advocacy is a progressive community-service signal, not evidence of a promised ruling in a gender case. Rio’s volunteering with Liberty Christian School is a disclosed service connection, not proof of church membership. No named church was verified for either candidate. [Candidate statements](#)
- **Controversies and limits.** No relevant adjudicated professional misconduct finding was established in this review. No complete docket comparison of their pro tem work was obtained.

Benton PUD Position 2 Dewey Holliday and Micah Valentine

The concrete choice: Holliday describes agricultural, infrastructure, and large-budget experience with a farm and labor coalition. Valentine offers elected-board experience and an explicitly conservative approach to governance. Neither biography alone establishes better electricity rates, reliability, or investment decisions.

- **Who votes.** This is not restricted to commissioner District 2 in the general election. State law permits voters throughout the public utility district to vote in the general election; district-only voting applies at the primary. Prosser's PUD voters therefore have a material utility-governance choice. [RCW 54.12.010\(3\)](#) · [Benton PUD commission](#)
- **Holliday.** His campaign emphasizes agricultural operations, large operating/capital budgets, irrigation and hydropower experience, and appointed fire-district service. It favors reliability, affordable rates, infrastructure planning, and consideration of multiple practical energy resources. Support listed includes Farm Bureau, Teamsters Local 839, and Prosser Mayor Gary Vegar personally. [Campaign](#) · [Published candidate statement](#)
- **Valentine.** A Kennewick school-board member and businessman, Valentine explicitly campaigns on conservative governance, fiscal discipline, individual liberty, and local control. The useful PUD comparison is the specific rate, power-supply, and capital-investment program behind those principles. School-board culture disputes do not establish what a PUD should do. [Campaign](#) · [PUD platform](#)
- **Evidence limits.** No verified named church affiliations or candidate-specific adjudicated misconduct findings were established here. Holliday's large-budget experience is a campaign claim; Valentine's ideological language is self-description. Neither alone establishes superior rate outcomes.

Ballot verification and local measures

The announced Skyler Rude resignation

Verified as an announced future resignation, not a completed resignation as of October 16. On September 29, Rude announced he would leave the House on **October 31** and begin work on **November 1** as Secretary of State Steve Hobbs’s legislative director. The Benton sample ballot still prints **Skyler Rude (Republican) vs. Derek Sarley (Democratic)** for LD16 House Position 2. His announcement did not substitute another Republican’s name.

[Contemporaneous report with direct statements](#) · [Official candidate list](#)

If Sarley wins, he is the elected successor for the new term; an appointment can address the remaining current-term vacancy. If Rude wins, an appointment process would be needed for the seat he says he will not serve, as well as the current-term vacancy. It is therefore a choice involving an **as-yet-unselected Republican replacement**, not a reliable expectation that Rude will personally serve another two years. The reporting identifies Republican party officials and the relevant county commissioners as participants in the replacement process. No particular replacement should be presented as already chosen. [Same report](#)

Grandview and Sunnyside legislative districts

The county’s **April 2026 precinct/district list** establishes the split at precinct level. For example, Grandview precincts 0305, 0306, and 0308 are LD14, while 0309 is LD15. Sunnyside precincts 1714 and 1715 are LD15; many other city precincts are LD14. Rural precinct **4105 is LD15**. A city name or mailing address alone is insufficient. [Official precinct list](#) · [County address/map lookup](#)

Ballot line	LD14	LD15	Prosser city precincts: LD16
State Senate in November 2026	No regular Senate race listed	Jeremie Dufault (R), unopposed	No regular Senate race listed
House Position 1	Gloria Mendoza (R) / Chelsea Dimas (D)	Chris Corry (R) / Jack McEntire (D)	Mark Klicker (R) / Kyle Palmer (D)
House Position 2	Deb Manjarrez (R) / Ezequiel Morfin (D)	Reedy Berg (R) / Liz Hallock (No Kings Party)	Skyler Rude (R) / Derek Sarley (D)

Sources: [Yakima official sample ballot](#) · [Benton official candidate list](#) · [Benton official precinct mapping data](#).

Prosser verification. The Benton precinct layer identifies the City of Prosser’s 450, 455, 460, 465, and 470 precinct splits as LD16. Nearby rural addresses can differ; do not apply that city result to every Prosser mailing address. The countywide sample includes LD8 and other districts because it combines ballot styles. The same-party Nikki Torres/Gabe Galbraith Senate contest is LD8, not a Prosser-city LD16 contest.

Other local ballot differences

- **Yakima commissioner District 1: Udell vs. Strutner.** This is another Republican-versus-Republican contest, but it is **district-only in the general election** under Yakima’s court-ordered system. Grandview/Sunnyside precincts in the reviewed list are commissioner District 3. Consequently, this contest is not treated as a Lower Valley voter’s countywide choice. The county’s 2026 guide explicitly states this rule. [Election guide, printed p. 15 / PDF p. 19](#) · [Precinct list](#)

- **Other Yakima judges.** The reviewed general-election sample lists the local Court of Appeals candidate and district-court candidates without opponents. There is no additional contested Yakima district-judge comparison to manufacture. [Official sample](#)
- **Prosser-specific measures.** No City of Prosser or Prosser School District proposition appears on the reviewed Benton general-election sample. The contested prosecutor, sheriff, District Court Position 1, and PUD races above are the principal additional choices identified for Prosser. [Official sample](#)
- **Benton City measures are not Prosser city measures.** Benton City Proposition 1 would replace mayor-council government with council-manager government, effective March 1, 2027. Proposition 2 concerns a community-safety property-tax levy lid lift, restoring a \$1.60-per-\$1,000 rate for 2027 and specifying later inflation-based adjustments. Eligibility depends on Benton City boundaries. [Ballot text](#)
- **Kiona-Benton school levy.** The sample includes a replacement educational-programs-and-operations levy for 2027 and 2028, estimated at \$1.30 per \$1,000 each year. This follows school-district boundaries, not the county as a whole. It should not be added to a Prosser voter's list without checking the registered address. Richland's contested council seat likewise is not a Prosser city contest. [Ballot text](#)

Narrow unresolved questions for any next research pass

1. Obtain case-aging and staffing records to test the Benton prosecutor backlog dispute, rather than collect more campaign slogans.
2. Obtain the dated county-party decision resolving the contradictory Yakima sheriff endorsement pages, and the exact scope of the gun-policy endorsement.
3. Obtain the complete 2025 DOR review cited by Tate and comparable current service/appeal metrics for the assessor's office.
4. Locate additional issue-specific judicial decisions for candidates whose public record here is mainly biography and philosophy; seek precise questions rather than assume answers from endorsements.
5. Confirm the eventual Rude replacement process after the announced resignation and election results. As of this cutoff, no replacement is represented here as selected.

The final address-specific ballot should be checked through [VoteWA](#) or the county auditor. The countywide sample ballots are reference compilations, not proof that every contest printed on them applies to every resident.

Partisan positions and unexpected findings

The seven contested November races in CD4 and LD14, LD15, and LD16 are summarized below. “Expected” describes the broad partisan contrast; “Surprise” identifies documented details that a party label may conceal. Statements and records are current through October 16, 2026.

Congressional District 4

Expected: The Republican and Democratic labels suggest a broad conservative-versus-progressive contrast between Amanda McKinney and John Duresky.

Surprise: Duresky explicitly supports congressional term limits, a congressional stock-trading ban, and a lobbying moratorium after leaving office. McKinney says life “must be protected from conception”; **the statement does not specify exceptions.**

Sources: [Duresky platform](#) · [McKinney statement](#)

Legislative District 14 House Position 1

Expected: Gloria Mendoza (Republican) emphasizes taxes and public safety; Chelsea Dimas (Democratic) emphasizes public investment and social protections.

Surprise: Dimas highlights Mendoza’s vote against police recruitment and retention funding. The vote is verified, but HB2015 also authorized a new local sales tax. **The vote opposed that combined package; it does not, by itself, establish opposition to hiring police.**

Sources: [Dimas claim](#) · [HB2015 roll calls](#) · [Bill analysis](#)

Legislative District 14 House Position 2

Expected: Deb Manjarrez (Republican) emphasizes lower taxes and business concerns; Ezequiel Morfin (Democratic) emphasizes workers, housing, and immigrant protections.

Surprise: No major departure from the expected partisan contrast found.

Sources: [Manjarrez campaign](#) · [Morfin platform](#)

Legislative District 15 House Position 1

Expected: Chris Corry (Republican) emphasizes limited government, lower taxes, and parental rights; Jack McEntire (Democratic) advocates public investment and universal healthcare.

Surprise: No major departure from the expected partisan contrast found.

Sources: [Candidates’ own statements, printed page 37](#)

Legislative District 15 House Position 2

Expected: Reedy Berg (Republican) faces Liz Hallock, whose “No Kings” party label does not explain her broader platform.

Surprise: Hallock’s own statement lists experience as a Bernie Sanders convention delegate and Democratic precinct committee officer. She emphasizes reproductive rights and opposition to Trump. These are documented signals of a progressive challenger.

Sources: [Candidates’ own statements, printed page 38](#)

Legislative District 16 House Position 1

Expected: The Republican and Democratic labels suggest a broad conservative-versus-progressive contrast between Mark Klicker and Kyle Palmer.

Surprise: Palmer explicitly promotes advanced nuclear power and small modular reactors, an area of agreement with Klicker. Klicker answers “None” when asked when elective abortion should be allowed, and strongly agrees that physical or social transition of a child constitutes child abuse. He identifies himself as a practicing Catholic and lists membership at Assumption of the Virgin Mary Catholic Church.

Sources: [Palmer questionnaire](#) · [Klicker questionnaire and affiliations](#)

Legislative District 16 House Position 2

Expected: The ballot appears to offer returning Republican incumbent Skyler Rude or electing Democrat Derek Sarley.

Surprise: Rude announced plans to resign October 31 and join Democratic Secretary of State Steve Hobbs’s staff November 1. His name remains on the November 3 ballot. A Rude victory would lead to selection of a Republican replacement through the vacancy process, rather than Rude serving the next term. If Sarley wins, he is the elected successor. The earlier ballot-verification section explains the current-term vacancy separately.

Sources: [Official November candidate list](#) · [Rude announcement and direct quotations](#)

The three initiatives in plain language

All three measures appear on the November 3 statewide ballot. A **Yes** vote approves the initiative's changes; a **No** vote leaves the existing law in place. The explanations below describe the practical choice.

IL26 001 Parental rights in public schools

The concrete choice: Restore the parental-rights list adopted in 2024 through I-2081, or keep the Legislature's 2025 revisions to that list.

If it passes — Yes: The earlier records, notification, and opt-out provisions return for parents of public-school students under 18. The main changes would be:

- **Faster and broader records access.** Copies would be due within 10 business days, instead of the current maximum of 45 days. The list expressly includes school-held medical, health, and mental-health counseling records.
- **Medical-service notices.** Parents would receive advance notice when medical services are offered, except for emergencies, when notice would follow as soon as practicable. Notice would also cover certain insurance costs and school-arranged treatment requiring follow-up care.
- **Broader opt-outs.** Notice and an opportunity to opt out would cover assignments and other activities asking about sexual experiences or attractions, family beliefs, religion, politics, or mental-health problems. Sexual-education opt-out rights also remain.
- **Removal and police notices.** The earlier notification language would return for law-enforcement questioning and removal from campus without parental permission, including removal to a youth shelter or host home.

If it fails — No: The 2025 version remains. Parents retain rights to inspect education records and curriculum, receive specified notices, and opt out of comprehensive sexual-health education and protected surveys. The 45-day records limit and existing health-information privacy provisions remain.

Important qualification: Both versions retain exceptions during certain abuse or neglect investigations targeting a parent, absent a court order. Current law also covers a parent charged with a crime against the child and a broader range of records. This vote changes one parental-rights statute; it does not repeal every other school or child-protection law.

Sources: [Initiative text, section 1](#) · [Current parental-rights statute](#) · [Attorney General explanation](#)

IL26 638 Eligibility for girls school sports

The concrete choice: Use biological sex to determine eligibility for girls-only school competitions, or retain the current rules allowing participation based on gender identity.

If it passes — Yes: Eligibility for girls-only competitions would be based on biological sex, with provider verification required. Students the measure defines as biologically male could not compete in those interschool teams or individual events. Each student seeking to compete in a girls-only event would need a signed statement from their personal healthcare provider verifying biological sex. The measure covers public K–12 schools and private schools participating in WIAA or similar organizations.

If it fails — No: Current participation rules and protections based on gender identity remain. Transgender girls could continue participating on girls' teams under those rules. The initiative's new provider-verification requirement would not be added.

Important qualification: Provider certification is required; the exact medical and administrative process is not fully specified. The statement is submitted as part of the routine sports physical. The provider must rely on anatomy, genetics, or naturally produced testosterone levels. The text does not expressly require a genital examination, a chromosome test, or a separate appointment.

Sources: [Initiative text, section 3](#) · [Attorney General explanation](#)

IP26 645 Repeal of the new income tax

If it passes — Yes: The new income tax would be repealed before its scheduled 2028 start. The tax is 9.9% on income above the \$1 million threshold. The initiative would also prohibit state and local taxes on, or measured by, individual income. The state would lose the revenue expected from the repealed tax.

If it fails — No: The scheduled tax stays in law. It applies to taxable income above the threshold, with the law's deductions and credits; it does not impose a 9.9% tax on everyone's entire paycheck. Married couples and domestic partners share the \$1 million deduction.

Important qualification: The accompanying non-income-tax credits, exemptions, and deductions would remain, according to the Attorney General's explanation. The new income tax is the only tax expressly listed for repeal; the broader prohibition should not be described as automatically repealing every other Washington tax.

Sources: [Attorney General explanation](#) · [Tax rate and start date in current law](#) · [Official measure materials](#)