

## What about judges?

In Nebraska, our governor appoints the judges. Every six years after being appointed, a judge's name appears on the ballot in the district or area their court serves, giving voters the opportunity to vote whether to retain that judge. Unfortunately, it is difficult for the voters to evaluate the judges' performance. VIP gathers information from several sources to aid voters in evaluating the judges. The information comes partly from selected portions of the Nebraska Bar Association's "Judicial Performance Evaluation." However, this information comes primarily (about 95%) from defense attorneys, so that gives a potential bias to the results. To counteract that, VIP also interviews lawyers, law enforcement personnel, and others who have contact with the judges, and reports their information anonymously. Most of the professionals interviewed by VIP have a pro-life, pro-family bias.

The judicial system in Nebraska has a variety of levels. The County Courts deal with "lower level" issues, for example cases under \$53,000 and misdemeanors. County Courts also handle juvenile issues, except for Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster Counties, which each have a separate Juvenile Court. Appeals can be made from County Court and Juvenile Court to the next level up, District Court. The District Court also handles "big" cases, hearing all felony criminal cases, equity cases, and civil cases involving more than \$53,000.

Appeals from District Court go to the Court of Appeals which consists of six judges. Appealed cases are heard by a panel of three judges from the Court of Appeals. Their decisions are final unless the Nebraska Supreme Court is willing to hear a case. The Nebraska Supreme Court is made up of a chief justice and six associate justices from six districts throughout the state. Another separate court is the Workers' Compensation Court, which deals with claims against employers concerning workplace accidents, and whose decisions can be appealed to the Court of Appeals.

More details are available at <https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/4853/nebraska-state-judicial-system#DC>