

Election 2020: What about the judges on the ballot?

[Click here for a list of judges up for retention in YOUR district and what is known about their record on life.](#)

In 2010, The FAMiLY Leader (then known as the Iowa Family Policy Center) vigorously opposed retention of three State Supreme Court justices who exceeded and abused their judicial power to foist same-sex marriage upon Iowa in the 2009 *Varnum v. Brien* case.

At TFL, we believe it is our responsibility as Christians to speak out for biblical values and our duty as American voters to defend the constitutional separation of powers and limited powers of the judiciary. We cannot be silent when our values – or the Constitution, the only contract by which Americans have agreed to be governed – are violated by judicial overreach.

In 2010 Iowans like you agreed and shocked the world when you voted *against* retaining all three of the State Supreme Court justices on the ballot.

Of the seven judges who ruled in favor of same-sex marriage in 2009, three left office after the retention vote in 2010, one has since retired, two have passed away, and the final justice will soon reach mandatory retirement age.

In the upcoming 2020 election, therefore, there will be *no* justices on the ballot remaining from the *Varnum* decision. The following State Supreme Court justices, however, will be up for retention vote:

Susan Christensen

- Appointed by Gov. Kim Reynolds and sworn in on Sept. 4, 2018.
- Christensen is the current chief justice.

Edward Mansfield

- Appointed by Gov. Terry Branstad in 2011.
- Mansfield sided with Planned Parenthood in 2015, overturning Iowa's ban on "telemed" abortions, effectively allowing a woman to get an abortion without an in-person doctor's visit.
- Mansfield, however, also voted against the abhorrent 2018 Planned Parenthood ruling that concocted a "right to abortion" in the Iowa Constitution. His dissent, joined by Waterman, has been a significant aid in arguing against that so-called "right."

Christopher McDonald

- Appointed by Gov. Kim Reynolds and sworn in on April 5, 2019.

Thomas Waterman

- Appointed by Gov. Terry Branstad in 2011.
- Waterman sided with Planned Parenthood in 2015, overturning Iowa's ban on "telemed" abortions, effectively allowing a woman to get an abortion without an in-person doctor's visit
- Waterman, however, also voted against the abhorrent 2018 Planned Parenthood ruling that concocted a "right to abortion" in the Iowa Constitution. He joined the dissent, written by Mansfield, which has been a significant aid in arguing against abortion as a so-called "right."

Unfortunately, the justices on the ballot this year have either too little or too mixed a record to reach a definitive conclusion on whether or not they should be retained. The FAMiLY Leader, therefore, cannot make an unequivocal recommendation on how to vote.

We can, however, celebrate the judicial nomination reform signed into law by Gov. Reynolds in 2019, a measure TFL has been advocating for years. Under this reform, the people of Iowa – rather than a small group of left-leaning attorneys – will now be given a greater voice through their elected governor in choosing Iowa's Supreme Court justices, hopefully

making the Court more representative of the people of Iowa and their values.

We can also make available what information we currently have available on judges up for retention. The FAMIly Leader and pro-life allies researched the records of the judges on life. While most judges have little record to be found, click the link below to see a quick, reference glance at what we discovered:

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And click this link below for a more in-depth look at judges and their backgrounds, compiled by our Coalition of Pro-Life Leaders allies at Iowa Right to Life:

[Learn more about the judges up for retention and their backgrounds here.](#)

As always, TFL recommends Christians research the candidates and issues that appear on the November ballot and take seriously the calling to vote. The voice we have at the ballot box is a gift from God (that not all Christians around the world enjoy), and it's a gift to be carefully and prayerfully stewarded for His glory!

To help with researching candidates:

TFL is also partnering this year with iVoterGuide.com, an extensively researched tool for making sense of who's running and what they stand for. Check it out today!