



Illinois Civil Justice League

ICJL 2018 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

**Daniel Patrick Brennan
Cook County Circuit Judge**

1. State the main reason why voters should return you to the bench.

My varied experience as a judge since 2006 is the main reason why voters should vote yes for my retention.

Since I was elected, I have presided over felony trial calls, misdemeanor trial calls, bond courts, preliminary hearing calls, civil trial calls, domestic violence calls, eviction calls, a post-judgment collection call, an emergency civil order of protection call, a small claims trial call, a mortgage foreclosure call, a paternity call, and a mechanics lien call (current assignment).

I have presided over thousands of bench trials, jury trials and contested hearings in these courtrooms in fair and efficient manner.

2. What actions have you taken as a judge of which you are most proud?

While handling these calls, I have built a solid reputation as a judge who listens to both sides and treats all parties and attorneys before the court with respect. I am proud that, regardless of a particular case's outcome, the lawyers and parties leave my courtroom knowing that they had the opportunity to be heard.

I am particularly proud of my handling of self represented litigants. While I was assigned to a mortgage foreclosure call, I spent a large amount of time helping homeowners with the modification process. On the initial court date, I would refer all self-represented homeowners to a housing counselor, and follow up on the status of any loss mitigation on every subsequent court date. This approach resulted in countless loan modifications for homeowners.

3. Name and describe one change you would make in the Illinois court system.

We need to make our court system more affordable.

Expanding volunteer legal services and alternative dispute resolution programs would go a long way in this regard. While I was assigned to a mortgage foreclosure courtroom, we used case managers and Chicago Volunteer Legal Services to help defendants through our own mediation program. The foreclosure mediation process proved to be an outstanding tool for the parties, and successfully resolved

countless cases. Expanding programs such as this to other divisions would benefit all parties.

Additionally, court costs continue to rise at a startling rate. Being more efficient with the use of these funds would help prevent the steady increase of these costs in the future.

4. One prominent Illinois judicial evaluation survey asks attorneys to evaluate candidates on Integrity, Impartiality, Legal Ability and Temperament. Critique yourself in these four areas as to how you personally approach your job as a judge?

I believe that I am strong in each of these four areas.

First, as the youngest of five children of immigrant parents without any college education, I learned the value of hard work and being humble at a young age. Because of how I was raised, I truly feel fortunate to serve in my position. Because I try to approach my call with this in mind every day, integrity and impartiality come naturally to me, and I do not need to remind myself to "do the right thing" or to consider both sides of each issue presented to me.

My judicial temperament is one of my strongest qualities. I believe that this is the most important attribute of an effective judge. By being patient, I can be an active listener and can keep an open mind in every case. While I understand the importance of firmness, I always try to approach each dispute that I encounter, first, from a compassionate and understanding perspective.

As to legal ability, as I discussed above, my performance on the bench in my various assignments is the best indicator of my capabilities with respect to interpreting and applying legal principles. I also make a great effort to stay abreast of the latest case law and spend as much time as I can preparing for my call.

My bar ratings support my strength in the above four areas.