



Illinois Civil Justice League

2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

**Patrick Kevin Coughlin
Cook County Circuit Judge**

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

As a judicial candidate in 2014, I was found qualified or recommended by every member of the Alliance of Bar Associations for Judicial Screening, highly qualified by the Chicago Bar Association, and received the endorsement of the Chicago Tribune. For the upcoming retention election on November 3, 2020, the Chicago Bar Association and every member of the Alliance of Bar Associations has recommended that I be retained as Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County. I was also the only member of my starting class of Judges to receive the rating of "well qualified" by the Chicago Council of Lawyers.

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

As a judge, I am most proud of how I explain the court process to the parties appearing before me. I understand that it may just be a routine status hearing, arraignment, or plea for the attorneys, but I am always mindful that this is all new for the defendant and may be very confusing. I always make sure that the defendants and complaining witnesses know what is occurring at every court appearance. I also make it a point to explain my rulings in detail, citing to relevant case law, and going through the factors that I considered when reaching my verdict.

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

After the current pandemic crisis has passed, consideration should be given to having in-custody defendants continue to appear via videoconference on routine status dates. Not only would this eliminate the costs, delays, and security concerns associated with transporting in-custody defendants, but often the availability of a short court date for an in-custody defendant is unavailable due to security concerns when the courtroom's lockup is at capacity. If an in-custody defendant is appearing via video, this would eliminate any overcrowding concern with the courtroom's lockup and give more flexibility to all parties when selecting continuance dates. Attending court dates via video may also be beneficial to defendants who are out on bond -- instead of missing an entire day from school or work to attend what may be a court appearance that will last just a few minutes, a defendant released on bond could appear on video when their attorney is ready to have the case called.

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 am very mindful that the public have entrusted me with protecting their rights, and with applying the law fairly and impartially. I strive to meet those expectations to the best of my ability every day. I keep up on legislative changes and appellate decisions. I think I have a good judicial temperament and I treat everyone who comes before me with respect. I also believe I have good courtroom management skills that allow me to handle a very heavy felony court call at the Markham Courthouse.