



Illinois Civil Justice League

Candidate: Matt Sullivan

Fifth Circuit, Cini Vacancy

1. State the qualifications and experiences that make you qualified to serve on the bench in Illinois.

After graduating (with honors) from the Univ. of Illinois College of Law, I was an associate in a general practice law firm for two years. In that time, I represented clients in family law, estate planning, municipal law and criminal law. I have served as the elected State's Attorney in Edgar County since December 1, 1996. In that time, I have prosecuted every level of misdemeanor and felony criminal offense, including first and second degree murder, aggravated criminal sexual assault/abuse, aggravated discharge of a firearm, robbery, aggravated domestic battery, residential burglary and violations of the controlled substances act.

I believe that a judge should also be a community leader. I have served our community by being a YMCA board member, coaching youth sports, serving as president of Paris Junior League Basketball and participating in Rotary and Knights of Columbus community activities.

2. 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 they make you qualified to serve on the bench.

Integrity: I frequently tell people that I would rather have an honest disagreement with them than a dishonest agreement. I think that is reflected in the ISBA poll results where 97% of the respondents favorably viewed my integrity and ethical conduct.

Impartiality: As State's Attorney, there is often a feeling that someone is being treated preferentially due to their community/financial/political status. I have prosecuted a sitting county board member and a family member and they were treated just like everyone else. Again referring to the ISBA poll, 91% of the respondents favorably viewed my impartiality.

Legal ability: Honors graduate from the Univ of Illinois College of Law, recommended by my peers in the ISBA poll.

Temperament: 92% of the ISBA poll respondents view my temperament favorably.

3. Describe the case in which you are most proud of your work as a lawyer.

I had been in office less than 10 days when a fourteen month old baby was raped and murdered in our county. The first case ended with jurors being unable to reach a verdict. The second case concluded with convictions for first degree murder and predatory criminal sexual assault of a child and the defendant received a life sentence plus 60 consecutive years in prison.

4. Name one change you would make in the Illinois court system.

Not that I believe the system is perfect, but there is no specific change I would propose. I would always be in favor of changes to the system that simplify and speed up resolutions.

5. Are there civil litigation reforms that you would like to see enacted to remedy particular problems that you have detected, either as a practicing lawyer or as a sitting judge? Are there reforms that would benefit the civil justice system? What needs to be changed? Should the enactment of any such changes be the province of the legislature, the Supreme Court or by Constitutional amendment?

Same answer as question 4.

6. Do you believe that our judicial system adequately deters and penalizes frivolous litigation? If not, what reforms would you like to see?

There are currently sanctions available for frivolous litigation. Whether there is an adequate deterrence and penalty hinges on a judge's willingness to enforce these rules.

7. Do you believe the Illinois Constitution precludes legislative establishment of limitations on civil damages? Are there or should there be distinctions among economic, non-economic and punitive damages?

I believe the Code of Judicial Conduct precludes me from answering this question as the issue is currently pending.