



ICJL 2012 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Christian Gramm 11th Circuit Court Judge – Prall Vacancy

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

I meet the Article VI Section 11 eligibility requirements for office defined by the Illinois Constitution. Licensed for more than ten years, my experience includes prosecution, public defense, private defense, and civil transactional counseling.

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 and impartiality are connected but have a distinct difference. With regard to integrity, I work with my clients to paint a reasonable picture for the outcome they desire. I find it important that I do what I say for my client seeking representation or guidance through my counsel. Impartiality is important and differs from integrity as it is how I treat my clients. I consider all my clients individuals. I do not group them in categories or classifications. My clients have an individual need. I serve them based upon their need and desired service with our judicial system.

Regarding legal ability and temperament, I maintain integrity in practice through my professional practice. I research and advocate for my clients utilizing all applicable statutes. Professionalism keeps the message clear and clients at ease despite the circumstances of their situation. I communicate with all parties so my client's message is clear, concise and understood by a presiding judge, opposing counsel or other parties in a civil transaction. This helps my clients maintain the same calmness despite some difficult situations.

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

While defending a client in a DUI case, it became clear that the evidence would not be clearly defined through testimony. Addressing those concerns to the prosecutor, we agreed to go to the scene to take measurements and gather information related to the case. Through this action, the client received a fair hearing and a reasonable outcome.

I am proud of all my cases for each one is an opportunity to serve my fellow man or woman by providing each the individual service and advocacy they need.

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

Our court system is clearly defined in the Illinois Constitution. As judge, I would be interested less in changing the court system and more about serving the people of the circuit on their bench as the law guides. If more judges operated in this manner, we would have less legislating producing a more fair system for all that come before our benches.

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?

The roles of Judge is so hear evidence and apply the law or instruct jurors to apply the laws as the law is written. As judge, it is important to maintain control of the courtroom to keep the evidence and other information relevant to the laws addressed. Maintaining a fair courtroom in that manner restricts counsel on each side to the law in question. Judges operating in similar fashion have less issues of misapplication of law or judgments wide open for appeal.

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

The free market is an effective gatekeeper for most situations. Court fees and attorney costs limit some cases to negotiations or prevent action. Like any other profession, we do have folks practicing law in a manner that may seem unseemly or frivolous. These situations are rare and paint a picture of uncontrolled judicial systems. A judge can limit frivolous litigation simply by abiding the law as written or intended. Practitioners limited by spirit of the law would have less ability to redefine the statute according to their will or purpose. For more overt action, it is the role of the legislature to write laws limiting awards, judgments and changing definitions for fair application of our laws.

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?

The legislative establishment may limit civil damages through the legislative process.

There are distinctions between economic, non-economic, and punitive damages. Our legislative branch of government can pass laws further defining and limiting awards and judgments.