



JUDICIAL SELECTION IN WYOMING JANUARY 2025

How Judges Are Chosen

When a judicial vacancy is announced, the **Judicial Nominating Commission** interviews qualified Wyoming attorneys that have expressed interest in serving as a judge.

Who is the Commission?

- The Chief Justice
- Three attorneys selected by the Wyoming State Bar
- Three non-attorneys chosen by the Governor

The Judicial Nominating Process

When there is a judicial vacancy:

- The Judicial Nominating Commission announces the opening
- They review expressions of interests, interview candidates, and pick the three most qualified
- The Governor selects one

This process ensures a new judge is appointed to serve the citizens of Wyoming within 90 days. Election and Senate confirmation processes take much longer to seat a judge and degrades judicial independence.

Why Judicial Independence Matters

Judges need to be fair and make decisions based on the law - not politics or public pressure. In Wyoming, judges are chosen and reviewed in ways that balance **independence** and **accountability**.

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For more information, please visit the Wyoming Judicial Branch's website: www.courts.state.wy.us

Judicial Accountability

Voting to Keep Judges

Wyoming judges don't run in regular elections. Instead, Wyoming voters decide if they should stay in their job through **retention elections**.

- Voters answer “yes” or “no” to keep the judge.
- Judges serve different terms:
 - Supreme Court: 8 years
 - District Court: 6 years
 - Chancery Court: 6 years
 - Circuit Court: 4 years

Code of Ethics

Wyoming judges follow strict ethical rules referred to as the **Wyoming Code of Judicial Conduct**. Complaints about judges are handled by the **Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics**. This group can recommend actions like retirement or removal if a judge breaks the rules.

Appeals

If someone thinks a judge made a mistake, they can ask a **higher court to review** the decision.

Public Hearings

Most court cases are **open to the public** (some cases are confidential pursuant to statute), so every one can see how judges make decisions.

Impeachment

Wyoming judges can be removed for serious misconduct **by the Legislature**.

Qualifications to Be a Judge

To be a judge in Wyoming, you need:

- Live in Wyoming for several years.
- Authorized to practice law in Wyoming.
- Experienced in the practice of law.
- Not over the age of 70 (Supreme Court and District Court)

State vs. Federal Courts

Most cases happen in state or local courts. Wyoming's judges are:

- Local attorneys who understand community values.
- Guided by the rule of law, not public opinion.