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The Stouffer Report: *Judges Will Be on Your November Ballot*

With a critical election on the way, it is important to remember that there are many more races than the statewide and federal mid-term seats that will appear on your ballot. Voters will also be asked to decide the future of most of the judges in the state of Missouri.

Missouri's Non-Partisan Court Plan, also known as [The Missouri Plan](#), applies to judges who sit on the [Supreme Court of Missouri](#) and the [Missouri Court of Appeals](#). Voters will be asked whether or not to retain these judges on November 2.

The 21st Senatorial District is in the Court of Appeals' [Western District](#). In addition to Missouri Supreme Court Justice [Zel Fischer](#), folks will be asked "yes" or "no" to retain Appeals Court judges:

- [Alok Ahuja](#), who was nominated in 2007 by Gov. Blunt;
- [Victor Howard](#), who was nominated by Gov. Carnahan in 1996;
- [Karen King Mitchell](#), who was nominated in 2009 by Gov. Nixon;
- [Mark Pfeiffer](#), who was nominated by Gov. Nixon in 2009; and
- [James Welsh](#), who was nominated in 2007 by Gov. Blunt.

[Clay County](#) also has some of its own judges in the Seventh Circuit, as mandated by the Missouri Plan:

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- [Shane Alexander](#), who was nominated by Gov. Blunt in 2008; and
- [K. Elizabeth Davis](#), who was also nominated in 2008 by Gov. Blunt.

In Clay County, voters will also decide the fate of two Associate Circuit Judges:

- [Donald Norris](#), who was appointed in 2004; and
- [David Chamberlain](#), who was appointed in 2008.

There will be other judges on the ballot in other parts of Missouri, including the Court of Appeals' [Southern District](#):

- [Robert Barney](#), who was nominated by Gov. Blunt in 1995; and
- [Donald Burrell, Jr.](#), who was nominated in 2008 by Gov. Blunt.

There will only be one judge up for retention in the [Eastern District](#):

- [Mary Hoff](#), who was nominated in 1996 by Gov. Carnahan.

Larger areas of the state are divided into circuits as well, including:

- [St. Louis](#) (22nd Circuit);
- [St. Louis County](#) (21st Circuit);
- [Jackson County/Kansas City](#) (16th Circuit);
- [Platte County](#) (6th Circuit); and
- [Greene County](#) (31st Circuit).

Even though the Missouri Plan has seen its fair share of criticism over the years, it continues to be a model for other states and gives folks the opportunity to have their say in who stays and who goes. Occasionally, a judge will not be retained, at which point picking a replacement is up to the governor and a lengthy, thorough screening process. This is yet another reason why voting is so very important.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.