

MUST READ ALASKA

ALASKA'S JUDICIARY

PART III · THE 2026 ULTIMATE CONSERVATIVE VOTER GUIDE

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POLITICS

Alaska's Judiciary: Part III of the Ultimate Conservative Voter Guide

By [Natalie Spaulding](#) · October 26, 2026 · [Politics](#)Original article mustreadalaska.com/alaskas-judiciary-part-iii*Featured image from the original article.*

VOTE NO ON RETENTION · EVERY JUDGE

The judiciary often fades into the background amid all the political ads, mailers, signs, and door knocking for candidates seeking election. However, the judiciary derives its power from the people like any other branch of American government.

For most Alaskans, the courts remain a distant, somewhat abstract concept until a high-profile case comes into focus, and even then, attention often quickly shifts back to the Governor and the Legislature. But court decisions have real-world impacts on everyday Alaskans. Court rulings affect the things that matter most to Alaskan families: public safety, education, and economics.

In Part I and Part II, we looked at each individual candidate, combining information from various conservative sources, and making our recommendations. For Part III, we are approaching the judicial branch as a whole with this question in mind: Is the judicial system serving Alaskans and upholding our Constitution?

Our answer: No. The Alaska judicial system has gone astray from constitutional intent and co-opted power for itself not given to it by the people. This is not just an MRAK opinion. Alaskans like Rep. Ben Carpenter, Sen. Mike Shower, David Haeg, Robert Wall, Ed Martin, Bob Bird, Greg Sarber, David Ignell and others have put extraordinary time and effort into bringing constitutional issues within the judicial system to the public's attention. Awareness of judicial corruption is spreading wide, grabbing the attention of the state's leaders.

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How Alaska's judiciary works

Alaska's judicial system rests on a merit-selection model established in Article IV of the Alaska Constitution. For the Supreme Court and Superior Court, the Alaska Judicial Council screens applicants and forwards at least two nominees to the governor, who must appoint from that list. The governor cannot appoint anyone who is not on the Council's list.

The Alaska Judicial Council consists of seven members: three attorneys appointed by the Alaska Bar Association, three non-attorney public members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislature, and the chief justice as chair ex officio.

Judges are subject to a retention vote three years after their appointment and then either every ten years for a Supreme Court justice or every six years for Superior Court judges.

Read more about Alaska's judiciary: <https://ltgov.alaska.gov/information/alaskas-constitution/>

The people's voice: Alaskans demand judicial accountability

Below is just a handful, not an exhaustive compilation of quotes from Alaskans dedicated to holding the judicial branch accountable.

For a full timeline of grand jury events, please refer to the [Alaska Judicial Corruption Timeline](#) provided by the Alaska Grand Jurors Association.

David Haeg, founder of the Alaska Grand Jurors Association

“We recently discovered a Creighton Law Review (Omaha, Nebraska Vol. 33, No. 4, 1999-2000) article explaining how grand jury handbooks have sometimes been altered by public officials to hide, from the public and the grand jurors themselves, the true power of the grand jury to investigate and indict public officials – and to hide the right of common citizens to access the grand jury to ask for investigations and indictments of public officials.... After reading the Creighton Law Review article, I researched everywhere to find an old Alaska Grand Jury Handbook. Susan Faulk, Alaska State Court Law Librarian, finally came up with one – attached. As feared, Alaska’s Grand Jury Handbook is now unrecognizable from that which Alaska’s founding fathers intended We-the-People to read, know, follow, and cherish.”

[5-3-22 Haeg-Carpenter Email.pdf](#)

Bob Bird, host of “The Talk of the Kenai” radio show

“They have stolen our constitution. It does not belong to the courts, the executive, the Legislature. It is OURS. It is time we pull together on the same end of the rope.”

[OPINION: Restoring AK Grand Jury rights requires Governor’s intervention · Alaska Watchman](#)

Jon Faulkner, President of Alaska Gold Communications, Inc, the publisher of MRAK

“Many Alaskans have come to believe the power of grand juries to investigate corruption and abuse of power within our government has been suspended by the judicial branch. When Alaska’s citizenry cannot reasonably understand or comply with the procedural complexities the judiciary has erected to process citizen complaints, then a “de-facto” denial of constitutional intent and due process is present. Proof of this exists, and Alaskans are pressing their case.”

[The Grand Jury: Constitutionally Based Power Retained by the People – Must Read Alaska](#)

David Ignell, forensic journalist

“This makes at least five attempted investigations into the OCS over the past six years that have been hijacked by the efforts of Alaska judges and the Attorney General’s office. Now they’re trying to eliminate every citizen’s constitutionally protected right to approach the grand jury. They’ve literally enacted illegal legislation requiring us to approach the government to be saved from the government. We’re in serious trouble folks.”

[Grand jury investigations into OCS continue to be hijacked – Must Read Alaska](#)

Ben Carpenter, former Alaska State Representative

“Further complicating the matter, officers of the court employed by the executive branch have, until recently, enabled the court to control the grand jury to the extent that its authority to investigate matters concerning public welfare and safety have been effectively suspended – I suspect for nearly 30 years.”

[Ben Carpenter: Alaska’s grand jury system has been compromised by the judicial system that controls it – Must Read Alaska](#)

Greg Sarber, conservative writer and former board member of Alaska Gold Communications, Inc.

“This issue began with the Alaska Supreme Court’s order 6.1 in 1988. That order restricted the grand jury’s power in Alaska. They followed that up with SCO 1993, which was issued in 2022, in the middle of an ongoing Kenai Grand Jury investigation into allegations of judicial misconduct. The courts dismissed the Kenai Grand Jury’s indictment of a retired state judge on a technicality and then sealed the Grand Jury’s public report without additional findings. Rule 6.1 and SCO 1993 were then used to make sure there would never be another Grand Jury investigation of judicial misconduct. You can find more details about how we got to this place [here](#), [or here](#), or at the [Alaska Grand Jurors website](#).”

[Opinion: Gaining Ground in Grand Jury Battle – Must Read Alaska](#)

Ed Martin, Jr., conservative writer

“This issue transcends party lines and policy debates. It goes to the heart of whether Alaska remains governed by its Constitution or by institutional convenience. The Constitution was not written to be admired. It was written to be used. When its safeguards are diminished quietly, common sense demands that citizens speak plainly and act lawfully to restore them.”

[Restoring Alaska’s Constitutional Grand Jury Power Is Common Sense – Must Read Alaska](#)

Failed attempts at checks-and-balances

In an official opinion, former Attorney General Treg Taylor told Governor Dunleavy straightforwardly: “Article II, section 3 of the Judicial Council’s bylaws is unconstitutional. Any way the Council used this bylaw would exceed the authority the constitution grants to the Council and infringe on the authorities the constitution grants to the Governor and the legislature.” ([Microsoft Word – 8-28-25 AG Opinion re Constitutionality of AJC Bylaw Art II Sec 3](#)). Despite this determination, Article II, section 3 of the Judicial Council’s bylaws is still on the books.

Bob Bird discussed Alaska corrupt judiciary problem with former AG Taylor on his radio show “Talk of the Kenai” earlier this year. They disagreed heartily on how to solve the problem, but they agreed that courts are getting it wrong. ([Bob Bird and Treg Taylor talk Alaska law and justice \(or lack of\) – Must Read Alaska](#))

Furthermore, Alaska legislators are also keenly aware of these problems, attempting to solve them through legislation. But the legislation has never gotten over the line.

[SJR 3](#) (31st Legislature, 2019) proposed a constitutional amendment requiring legislative confirmation, in joint session, of the three attorney members appointed by the Alaska Bar Association to the Judicial Council. Non-attorney members already require confirmation. Sponsored by Senator Shower, the measure was heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee and advanced to Finance. It did not pass.

[SB 14](#) (32nd Legislature, 2021), also sponsored by Senator Shower, addressed selection and review of judges for the Court of Appeals, District Court, and magistrates only. These are statutory courts created by the legislature rather than the constitution. The bill would have allowed the governor to appoint a qualified person who was not limited solely to the Judicial Council’s shortlist, required legislative confirmation, and made related changes to retention processes and evaluation duties (shifting some responsibilities from the Judicial Council toward the Commission on Judicial Conduct). It left Superior Court and Supreme Court selection unchanged. The measure was heard extensively in Judiciary and moved to Finance but did not pass. Contemporary reporting noted that it would have upended aspects of the process for those lower courts while preserving the constitutional framework for higher ones.

[SJR 2](#) (32nd Legislature, 2021) revived the same constitutional concept as the 2019 SJR 3: legislative confirmation of the Bar-appointed attorney members of the Judicial Council. It was referred to State Affairs, Judiciary, and Finance and

did not advance far.

[SB 31](#) (33rd Legislature, 2023) was a reintroduction and update of the SB 14 approach. It would have allowed the governor to appoint magistrates, district court judges, and Court of Appeals judges after Judicial Council screening and recommendations (but not from a mandatory exclusive list), with legislative confirmation. Constitutional courts remained unchanged. It was heard in State Affairs; a sponsor substitute was introduced. It did not pass.

[SB 25](#) (34th Legislature), titled “Judicial Retention Election Information” and sponsored by Senator Robert Myers, is “An Act relating to information on judicial officers seeking retention in office.” It seeks to expand or refine the material available to voters in the official election pamphlet regarding judges standing for retention, including distinctions between first-time retention and subsequent retention, statements of professional philosophy, educational and professional background, ratings, disciplinary history, and related details, subject to word limits. It was referred to State Affairs and then Judiciary.

[HB 207](#) (33rd Legislature; also introduced in the 32nd), titled “Judicial Impeachment,” addresses standards for supreme court justices. It provides that a supreme court justice is subject to impeachment by the legislature for malfeasance or misfeasance in the performance of official duties, and explicitly states that malfeasance includes exercising legislative power. Sponsored by Representative Eastman, it was referred to the House Judiciary Committee. Existing statute already addresses impeachment of superior court judges; this measure focuses on the high court and attempts to define the boundary against judicial lawmaking. It did not pass.

[SB 270](#) (34th Legislature, 2026), sponsored by Senator Jesse Bjorkman (with cosponsor Senator Myers), is “An Act relating to grand juries; amending Rules 5(e), 6, and 6.1, Alaska Rules of Criminal Procedure; repealing Rules 6.1(b)(2) and (3), Alaska Rules of Criminal Procedure; and providing for an effective date.” It was referred to Senate State Affairs and then Judiciary. The bill seeks to codify and clarify procedures for investigative grand juries, simplify aspects of Rule 6.1 governing their authority to investigate matters of public welfare or safety, affirm constitutional investigative and reporting powers, and make related adjustments to panel composition, instructions, evidentiary rules, subpoenas, and secrecy. Certain rule changes require a two-thirds vote of each house under the constitution. It received a hearing in Senate State Affairs in March 2026 (heard and held), with substantial public testimony urging stronger citizen access and reduction of gatekeeping.

More problematic judicial decisions

Right to life: The Alaska Supreme Court ruled that abortion is protected under the state constitution’s “right to privacy” clause. An erroneous ruling that directly conflicts with the constitutional right to life and Alaska statute [11.41.150](#) that explicitly identifies the crime of murdering an unborn child: “A person commits the crime of murder of an unborn child if the person with intent to cause the death of an unborn child or of another person, causes the death of an unborn child.” Read more here: [The Alaska Law Mainstream Media Hopes You Never Hear About: AK Stat § 11.41.150 \(2025\) “Murder of an Unborn Child”](#).

Election integrity: The Alaska Supreme Court allowed on the 2026 ballot both [Eric Hafner](#), an incarcerated felon in New York who has never stepped foot in Alaska, and [Petersburg’s Dan J. Sullivan](#), who has attempted to confuse himself with the incumbent Senator Dan S. Sullivan.

Transparency: Critics of Alaska’s judiciary have long been frustrated with its lack of transparency. The most recent example of the judiciary’s deliberate attempt to avoid transparency is the lawsuit now before the Alaska Superior Court regarding the Alaska Judicial Council’s [refusal to provide information](#) following a lawful public records request. The request was submitted by American First Legal Foundation, seeking information on how the Council implements its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) directive, especially in regard to judicial selection.

Must Read Alaska's recommendation: vote “no” on retention

There is no simple answer to these issues, but Alaska voters have a chance in November to voice their political will and take a step in the right direction. Must Read Alaska recommends every voter vote “no” for retention. It is time for a clean slate.

Our recommendation is not about any one individual judge. Each judge is part of a system that unconstitutionally suspended a grand jury, sealed a grand jury report on judicial corruption, adopted unconstitutional bylaws, and avoids transparency. Voting “no” on all judges is one way we, the people, have to tell the system that we see what’s happening, and we do not approve.

Vote “No” on retention for every judge.

Other helpful guides

Alaska Watchman published a helpful guide on which judges have done what for Alaskans, along with their recommendations on who Alaskans should retain or not. Readers can review the Watchman’s recommendations here: [A conservative’s guide to voting on Alaska judges · Alaska Watchman](#).

The Alaska Judicial Council also published a guide— as required by law— which is included in every voter’s official state election pamphlet. Readers can review AJC’s recommendations here: [2026 Alaska Judges Standing for Retention | Alaska Judicial Council](#)

UCVG Parts I and II

Web versions:

[The Ultimate 2026 Conservative Voter Guide Part I – Must Read Alaska](#)

[Alaska Legislative Races: Part II of the 2026 Ultimate Conservative Voter Guide – Must Read Alaska](#)

PDF versions:

[The-Ultimate-2026-Conservative-Voter-Guide-Part-I-Must-Read-Alaska-1](#)

[Alaska-Legislative-Races-Part-II-2026-Conservative-Voter-Guide-Must-Read-Alaska](#)

GO VOTE

Early voting is underway, so cast your ballot today! Go vote!

November 3: Election Day

Sample ballots: <https://www.elections.alaska.gov/sample-ballots/>

Find your precinct and polling place:

<https://akelections.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=579890d66c7e40ae9f7cc227d76669b1>