

# VID Candidate Survey: Civil Court Judge

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## Civil Court Judge • Questions

Why do you want to be a judge? \*

Public service has always been an important part of my life. I've spent most of my life either as an attorney advocating for my clients, volunteering to help formerly incarcerated citizens, homeless and LGBTQ youth. I've also volunteered for President Obama's Clemency project and I'm a volunteer attorney for National Action Network with Rev. Al Sharpton. In addition, I adopted my African American son from the foster care system because I understood the challenges he would face and I wanted to help. My purpose has always been and will always be to help other people change their lives for the better. To me, being a Judge is an extension of how I can serve the public and help people solve important legal issues they are facing. To quote former President Barack Obama, "The greatest quality a judge can have is empathy".

What are some of the ways a civil court judge can advance progressive ideals in their rulings? \*

A judge's rulings can reflect the current values of today's society on issues such as diversity and inclusions, and marriage equality. Where possible, a judge can interpret the laws broadly and seek out new cutting edge areas of law. Albeit the Decisions may not be popular viewpoints. However, in the words of Ruth Bader Ginsberg, "Dissents speak to a future age. It's not simply to say, 'My colleagues are wrong and I would do it this way.' But the greatest dissents do become court opinions and gradually over time their views become the dominant view. So that's the dissenter's hope: that they are writing not for today, but for tomorrow."

What are some of the ways a civil court judge can create a courtroom that reflects progressive ideals? \*

- Hire a diverse staff in my courtroom
- Make sure discrimination laws are stictly enforced
- Interpreters are available in the parties native language
- Apply the law to treat everyone fairly

What are some concrete ways you would make your courtroom more accessible for pro se plaintiffs and defendants? \*

- Grant an extension of time where needed
- Refer them to the help center and Access to Justice where attorneys are able to offer them assistance for free
- Refer them to legal aid or other legal entities where they may qualify for counsel based upon their income
- Ensure I explain the next steps in the process, give pro se litigants a road map and help guide them in the process
- Give pro se litigant an oppotunity to be heard.

Each judge is able to create certain personal court rules governing procedure in their courtroom. What are some personal court rules that you plan to adopt, and why? \*

- Parties will be addressed by their surname or their preferred pronoun
- Accommodate scheduling needs of senior citizens and disabled
- Ensure parties get their day in court regardless of their income level

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

Please see my Personal Statement attached separately.

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