

What is a **RETENTION ELECTION**



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What is a Retention Election?



What is it?

A retention election is a type of election where voters are asked whether an incumbent judge/judges should remain in office for another term. The judge, who does not face an opponent, is removed from the position if a certain percentage of voters (often 50%) indicate that he or she should not be retained.

Why do They do That?

States may choose a retention election primarily to balance the need for judicial accountability with the desire to keep judges free from excessive political pressure once they are in office.

A Case Study: Pennsylvania

Three seats on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court are up for a retention election on November 4th, 2025. There has only been one instance where a judge has not been retained in PA. Justice Russell M. Nigro lost a retention election in 2005.

Sources: www.pacourts.us

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