

Ohio Supreme Court

CANDIDATES

**JENNIFER
BRUNNER**

DEMOCRAT · INCUMBENT



**COLLEEN
O'DONNELL**

REPUBLICAN

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Why your November 3 vote matters

The election on November 3 will decide a seat on the Ohio Supreme Court. Democrat Jennifer Brunner and Republican Colleen O'Donnell are running for a six-year term. Brunner is the incumbent candidate, while O'Donnell most recently served as a federal immigration judge in Laredo, Texas. Republican justices currently have a 6-1 majority on the Court.

The Ohio Supreme Court decides important questions of state law

In recent years, the Court [allowed](#) Ohio judges to publicly make political endorsements, [allowed](#) prosecutors to appeal when a judge sets aside a jury's guilty verdict in a criminal case, and [held](#) the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which legalized same-sex marriage, could not be applied retroactively to determine child custody cases.

Matters that may come before the Court in the near future include [one](#) that could clarify requirements for renewable energy development in the state.

To give you an introduction

This guide provides an introduction to each candidate, with statements, relevant rulings, experience, and publicized endorsements. The topics listed below are not comprehensive, but represent what's available for each candidate through research into news accounts, judicial records, speeches, and other sources. Given that the candidates may have widely different backgrounds, the available topics may not match completely across all candidates. This guide is not intended to predict how a candidate will rule as a justice.

JENNIFER BRUNNER justicebrunner.com

- **On criminal justice**, Brunner [criticized](#) a 2022 Ohio state ballot issue that would require judges to consider public safety as a factor in setting bail for criminal defendants. "I don't know that it's going to make the community actually safer," she said. As a trial judge in Franklin County, Brunner [founded](#) the county's adult felony drug court.
- **On the environment**, during her campaign for Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court, Brunner [called for](#) the establishment of a "task force on environmental justice" within the court as "the dimensional costs of climate change are becoming alarmingly clearer every day." She [wrote](#) the majority opinion in a case that allowed a Lake Erie wind energy project to move forward.

COLLEEN O'DONNELL odonnellforohio.com

- **On crime**, O'Donnell [served](#) as a judge on the Franklin County Common Pleas Court and "protected the public by sentencing violent and repeat offenders to prison, demonstrating a steady, disciplined approach grounded in accountability and respect for the law." O'Donnell [said](#), "I've seen firsthand the kind of damage lawlessness can do. But thanks to President Trump, there's a new energy coming out of Washington, D.C. Law and order are back in style."
- **On the environment**, no position found.
- **On gun laws**, [based](#) primarily on O'Donnell's answers to their candidate survey, the Buckeye Firearms Association PAC gave her an "A" rating. No other position found.

JENNIFER BRUNNER

- **On gun laws**, Brunner [dissented](#) in an Ohio Supreme Court decision that allowed a man with a criminal history of domestic violence to petition to restore his gun rights. She [said](#) that the decision "undermines the public trust...and sets the stage for more serious repeat crimes to occur."
- **On immigration**, no position found.
- **On voting**, Brunner [joined](#) the court majority to strike down Ohio congressional district maps as unconstitutional gerrymanders. Brunner [stated](#) that she did not support voter ID legislation, and that additional regulation creates barriers to voter participation.
- **On her judicial philosophy**, she [is](#) "committed to providing fairness, equality and respect for all Ohioans and persons who come before the state's highest court."

Jennifer Brunner is [currently](#) a justice on the Ohio Supreme Court, and has served in this role since 2021. She [previously served](#) as an appellate judge for the Tenth District Court of Appeals from 2014 to 2020, and served on the Franklin County Common Pleas Court from 2000-2005. She was elected Ohio's Secretary of State in 2006, holding the office for four years. She earned a bachelor's degree in sociology-gerontology from Miami University, and her J.D. degree from Capital University Law School in Columbus.

Brunner's endorsements include: [EMILYs List](#), the [National Democratic Redistricting Committee](#), and the [Ohio Democratic Party](#), among others.

COLLEEN O'DONNE

- **On immigration**, O'Donnell [said](#), "I was the judge who went to the southern border and sent illegal immigrants back where they came from. Drug traffickers, human smugglers and MS-13 gang members—these are dangerous people... As a result of my experiences on the bench, I never granted asylum a single time."
- **On voting**, no position found.
- **On her judicial philosophy**, O'Donnell [said](#) that she is running for the seat to "uphold the rule of law, protect public safety, and preserve a conservative majority on the Court." She [supports](#) judicial originalism and will "give [laws] the meaning that they had at the time they were enacted."

Colleen O'Donnell [most recently](#) served as a federal immigration judge in Laredo, Texas. Before that, [she served](#) as a judge for the Franklin County Common Pleas Court for nearly ten years. O'Donnell also served at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and was an assistant Ohio Attorney General. She [earned](#) a bachelor's degree in [political science](#) from Miami University (OH) and her J.D. from Case Western Reserve University School of Law.

O'Donnell's endorsements include: Butler County Sheriff Richard K. Jones, Ohio Value Voters, Ohio Right to Life PAC, Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association, Buckeye Firearms Association PAC, Ohio Manufacturers' Association, among others.

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