

LAW OFFICES
GORMLEY JARASHOW BOWMAN, LLC
162 WEST STREET
ANNAPOLIS MARYLAND 21401
Telephone 410-268-2255
Facsimile 1-443-782-0241

RONALD H. JARASHOW
ADMITTED MARYLAND AND D.C. BARS

EMAIL: RJARASHOW@GJBLAWFIRM.COM
WWW.GJBLAWFIRM.COM

WRITTEN COMMENTS SUPPORTING RETENTION ELECTION FOR JUDGES
Former Judge Position in Support of SB295 Circuit Court Judges – Election
and HB35 Judges – Selection and Retention

FROM: Ronald H. Jarashow, Former Anne Arundel County Circuit Court Judge

Background. I am a former Anne Arundel County Circuit Court Judge that lost my judicial appointment in the November 2010 election after being appointed by Gov. Martin O’Malley. I am personally familiar with the judicial election process, its burdens, difficulties, and ethical considerations as detailed below. I support changing the current contested election which is a **partisan** election by law – see the discussion below.

Candidate Forums. Organizers give politicians speaking time (e.g., General Assembly, Governor, County Executive, etc.). Judge candidates seldom are permitted to speak to attendees.

Judges Not Like Other Politicians. Circuit Court Judges are elected for 15 years and not a 4-year term like other offices. Every 4 years, voters evaluate whether to keep other elected officials in office. Seldom do judges appear on the ballot again.

County-Wide Election. Judge candidates run county-wide. It is hard to raise sufficient money to inform all citizens about the judge’s selection process and qualifications versus a challenger.

Voters Do Not Know Judicial Candidates. In my 2010 election, Governor 202,000 votes were cast and only about 100,000 votes were cast for Judge. I lost my appointment by about 7% to a candidate who supported by a political party and whom, reportedly, never tried a court case before.

Voter Confusion. Judges are designated “Judicial” party. The public often asks if the judge-candidate is a Democrat or Republican. As a sitting judge, I thought it questionable to answer. Non-judge judicial candidates are not restricted in declaring a party affiliation. And no distinction is made with Orphans Court Judges who have party affiliation and are elected for 4-years terms.

Lawsuits by Judicial Candidates. Some judicial candidates file lawsuits. *See, e.g., Rickey Nelson Jones v. Mary E. Barbera, Jones v. Barbera, 2020 Md. App. LEXIS 65, 2020 WL 405452 (Md. Ct. Spec. App., Jan. 24, 2020, cert. denied 2019) (unreported) (the unsuccessful judicial candidate sued the Court of Appeals Chief Judge).* Lawsuit threats were made during my 2010 election.

Candidate Misconduct Has No Penalty. Judicial elections are overseen by a volunteer committee known as the Maryland Judicial Campaign Conduct Committee (MJCCC). This group has no authority to punish misconduct by a judicial candidate. They regularly analyze misconduct complaints and issue “sanction” reports. In 2010, the Anne Arundel County challenger was found to have violated judicial campaign rules by distributing misleading campaign literature on election day that mischaracterized her as being an appointed judge along with my co-appointee to the bench. That literature used our black and yellow campaign colors (instead of her blue and white campaign colors) with her photograph and my running mate that made it appear as if they were the two appointed judges. The law imposes no penalties for misleading judicial campaign conduct. Attached is part of the 75-page MJCCC finding that the 2010 A.A. County challenger violated campaign standards.

I request a **FAVORABLE** Committee Report.

Ron
Jarashow & Laura
Kiessling


CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES

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POLICE • FIREFIGHTERS • DEPUTY SHERIFFS • TEACHERS
 MARYLAND STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
 MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSIONS OF BOTH GOVERNORS
 EHRlich AND O'MALLEY
 ADVOCATES FOR VICTIMS RIGHTS • CITIZENS FOR JESSICA'S LAW

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Alison Asti for Circuit Court Judge




The Maryland Constitution provides that our judges should be lawyers who are "most distinguished for integrity, wisdom and sound legal knowledge." I believe that I am the candidate who best meets those requirements.

I am a lifelong resident of the County, a former President of the Maryland State Bar Association, a board member of the Maryland School of Law, and the past General Counsel of the Maryland Stadium Authority. I am most proud of my role in relocating the NFL Ravens to Baltimore and building Camden Yards and Ravens Stadium.

I have been recognized by Leadership in Law, Maryland Super Lawyers and Maryland's Top 100 Women. I have also been President of many state, local and national legal organizations.

I believe that the citizens of Anne Arundel County deserve to have judges they select – not judges who were selected by Martin O'Malley as a result of a compromised partisan process.

— Alison Asti



Independent • Qualified • Experienced

Ron Jarashow



- 35 year career attorney with real courtroom experience
- In 2009, selected as one of the best courtroom and business lawyers in Anne Arundel County
- Represented police, victims, community groups, individuals and small businesses
- Volunteered for children through coaching and the Optimist Club, which supports a home that protects battered women and children, and other youth programs
- Wife, Nani, and he raised three sons in Anne Arundel County

Laura Kiessling



- Two decades as a tough prosecutor in our County
- Promoted to become first female Deputy State Attorney in Anne Arundel County
- Prosecuted child predators, rapists, and murderers
- Volunteered for children through organizations such as Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Boys and Girls Club and Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation
- Husband, Trevor, and she are raising their two children in Anne Arundel County

OUR JUDGES • HONEST • FAIR • IMPARTIAL

The Most Qualified Judge Candidates




SAMPLE BALLOT
 NOVEMBER 2, 2010
 STATE OF MARYLAND, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT JUDICIAL CIRCUIT 5	
Vote for No More Than Two	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alison Asti	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laura S. Kiessling	