

2008 Judicial Election Questionnaire

Minnesota Lawyer
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Full Name and E-mail address: Timothy Loyal Tingelstad
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Born: December 26, 1959

Education: Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, BA Degree (1982) Business Administration,
William Mitchell College of Law and University of North Dakota Law School, JD (1985)

Employment: Law Clerk for the 9th Judicial District (1987)
Assistant Beltrami County Attorney, (1988-1997)
Private Practice in Bemidji, MN (1988-1997)
Administrative Law Judge (1997-1999)
Child Support Magistrate, 9th Judicial District (1999-Present)

Professional Associations: State Bar Association Member since 1985
Past Beltrami County Bar Association President

Community Activities: Past President of the Evangelical Covenant Church in Bemidji
Past President of Board of Directors for Shine the Light Inc., a non profit
corp. supporting Christian Radio in NW Minnesota
Past President of Heartland Christian Academy
Past President of Community Support Services of Bemidji

Hobbies: I enjoy golf and all family activities.

Family: Married to Annette Tingelstad since 1985, with two daughters, ages 16 and 17

Why do you want to be a judge?

I greatly enjoy my position as a Child Support Magistrate for the Ninth Judicial District. I am not seeking to become a Minnesota Supreme Court Justice as a career advancement. I desire to serve the people of the State of Minnesota by making decisions that are consistent with the original intent of our Constitution and to create and preserve the people's right to meaningful, contested, non-partisan judicial elections.

Why should voters select you rather than your opponent in the upcoming election?

I am running for one of the seven seats on the Minnesota Supreme Court, and I will not focus this campaign on my opponents. The seats on the Supreme Court belong to the people of Minnesota, not to an individual, not to the Governor, and not to committees. Our Courts must be accountable to the people.

What experience do you have with the court on which you wish to sit?

I have over nine years of experience serving as an Administrative Law Judge and Magistrate for the Ninth Judicial District. I have successfully argued cases before the Minnesota Court of Appeals, but have not appeared before the Minnesota Supreme Court.

What are the major issues facing that court?

The major issue that I am addressing in this campaign is the future of judicial elections. The original intent of the Minnesota Constitution was for the people to elect our judges, and for the Governor to appoint judges only when vacancies arise between elections. But over time, without amending the Constitution, the Minnesota Supreme Court created a meaningless judicial election process. Minnesotans now have an opportunity to become informed about their judicial elections, but our current Supreme Court is now in favor of taking away the people's constitutional right to elect our judges.

How can those issues realistically be addressed?

The Merit Selection with Retention Elections proposal, (hereinafter MSRE) is not the answer. Meaningful, contested, non-partisan judicial elections keep our courts accountable to the people. MSRE would make the judicial branch accountable to itself, to the executive branch, and ultimately to a committee of 20 unelected and unaccountable committee members. Under MSRE the people will never elect a judge. An "election" is the act of selecting one or more from others. A "retention election" does not include a second candidate, so it is not an "election."

What role, if any, should politics play in judicial campaigns?

MSRE would not remove politics from the judicial selection process, it would simply hide the politics from the people. The politics would be condensed into small, unelected and unaccountable committees. MSRE would not eliminate special interests groups from impacting judicial selection, it would create two new powerful special interest groups, the Selection Committee and the Retention Committee. Giving control of our courts to 20 unelected, unaccountable people is foolish.

What else would you like voters to know about your candidacy?

Justice is served when judges fear God, and love the people. When a judge fears God more than man, he will not be subject to political partisanship pressures or give in to special interest groups. When a judge loves others more than himself, he can be the true public servant that justice requires. As a Minnesota Supreme Court Justice I will be impartial to the parties, while partial to the original intent of the Constitution.