

August 18, 2026



JUDGE4YOURSELF STATEMENT

During the 2024 general election, all the Democratic candidates running in contested races for our Court of Common Pleas decided not to participate in the Judge4Yourself(J4Y) candidate review process. At the time, several candidates, opposed and unopposed alike, had genuine reservations about the fairness, objectivity, and end goals of J4Y.

As long as our state requires the election of judges, the positions will be inherently political and involve more than just legal acumen as defined by a changing group of lawyers who may one day have business before the very people they're ranking.

This Spring, two of the leaders of Judge4Yourself came to CCDP headquarters to meet with candidates and sitting judges. Though the meeting was not necessarily contentious, it was also not entirely fruitful. We believe the stated objectives of J4Y are still noble. However, prioritizing the ranking of Democratic candidates when our entire court system is under attack and the rule of law is being undermined by Donald Trump and Republicans, seems like a missed opportunity.

The biggest takeaways from this meeting, from our standpoint and that of many of the Democratic candidates in attendance, were as follows:

- a genuine belief that there are not enough guardrails in place to ensure a fair process that limits subjectivity and maltreatment of a candidate or candidates that a member of J4Y may not be supporting
- Seemingly little was changed to ensure greater objectivity or objective standards
- J4Y's insistence on ranking candidates who choose not to participate is disingenuous to the stated goals of the organization
- A lack of objective criteria like the number of felony, misdemeanor, or civil cases in which a candidate has participated; length of time as a lawyer; diversity of legal experiences
- The need for candidates' questionnaires to be notarized was befuddling to our candidates as though they could be brought up on perjury charges for a mistake on a questionnaire
- People who follow J4Y's rankings are already highly engaged and highly motivated
- voters, so it doesn't add to this county's turnout problems
- An overriding sense that Judge4Yourself is an attempt to control electoral results
- through a process that highly favors the nature and quality of personal interactions
- between lawyers and judges or judicial candidates

As a result, four candidates in contested races will not participate in this Fall's process, and we fully support their right to make that decision. Incumbent Judge Anita Laster Mays, of the Eighth District Court of Appeals, will participate in part to determine if significant changes have been implemented since she last participated and was treated in her own words "very poorly."

The CCDP is presently creating its own process for evaluating and screening judicial candidates that will feature both lawyers and non-lawyers alike including a cross section, legally and geographically, of our county. This body will seek not simply to rank candidates, but to establish criteria Democrats can use to evaluate candidates.

David Brock
Chair

Juanita O. Brent
Executive Vice-Chair

[###](#)

[Website](#)

[Donate](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Volunteer](#)

[Email](#)

STAY CONNECTED

