About the Informed Voters, Fair Judges Project

A project of the National Association of Women Judges
NAWJ Mission

• Since its formation in 1979, NAWJ has inspired and led the American judiciary in achieving fairness and equality for vulnerable populations.

• NAWJ’s mission is to promote the judicial role of protecting the rights of individuals under the rule of law through strong, committed, diverse judicial leadership; fairness and equality in the courts; and equal access to justice.
Purpose of the NAWJ Informed Voters Project

• Increase public awareness of the role of judges, the judicial branch, and judicial selection processes.

• Identify the characteristics of a fair and impartial judiciary.

• Analyze issues which impact fair and impartial courts.

• Personalize why the public should care about fair and impartial courts.
Meet the Leadership

Hon. Tani Cantil-Sakauye
Chief Justice, California Supreme Court
Co-Chair, NAWJ Informed Voters Project

Justice Barbara Pariente
Florida Supreme Court
Co-Chair, NAWJ Judicial Independence Committee

Justice Robin Hudson
North Carolina Supreme Court
Co-Chair, NAWJ Judicial Independence Committee

Linda Leali, Esq.
National Co-Chair, NAWJ Informed Voters, Fair Judges Project

Annette Boyd Pitts
National Education Chair, NAWJ Informed Voters, Fair Judges Project
NAWJ Informed Voters
Project Founders

Associate Justice Joan Irion
California Fourth District Court of Appeal

Administrative Presiding Justice
Judith McConnell
California Court of Appeal, 4th Appellate District
The Challenges:

• Civic Illiteracy

• Attempts by special interests to weaken power of the judicial branch

• Politicization of judicial decisions and judicial selection processes

• Voters leaving the ballot blank for judges

• Limited awareness of unique role of judicial branch in our constitutional design
Only 32% of respondents could name all three branches of the U.S. government; 33% could not name a single one.
Who Needs Civics?

Schools

The public
What we know...

• There is a “direct relationship between a basic knowledge of the three branches of government and wanting to protect the independence of the courts.” APPC research fellow Bruce Hardy

• Knowledge of the courts drives support for a strong judiciary. As found in prior research on the courts, building long-term public support for a strong judiciary will require the public to become better informed about the courts.

• Judges are the most trusted messengers.
Program Components

• Engaging presentations with judges, justices, and attorneys
• Free online presentation materials for public presentations
• Printable education resources including handouts, palm cards, and fliers
• Displays at conventions and conferences to connect with program attendees
• All materials can be customized for individual states
What IVP Provides

- IVP provides resources for educating the public about the role of the judicial branch including:
  - Educational non-partisan materials for use with community presentations
  - Jury assembly educational resources including an Emmy Award-winning video
  - Services for customizing materials and presentations on the judicial branch and judicial selection for your state
  - Training for judges and attorneys
Messaging and What We Do

- Educational nonpartisan materials for use with community presentations
- Jury assembly educational resources included an Emmy Award-Winning video
- Services for customizing materials and presentations on the judicial branch and judicial selection for your state

Message Wheel

- Our courts should be celebrated as the one branch apart from politics.
- Voters must be educated about special interest efforts to politicize the courts.
- The courts must be protected from those who would politicize them.
- Judges should be judged on their character and integrity.
Engaging and Interactive Sessions for Informing the Public
Voter information sessions held during 2018 General Elections about judicial selection
University and Law School Presentations

IVP develops interactive presentations for annual events including:

• Law Day
• Constitution Day
Panel Presentations and Judicial Roundtables at Conferences

Justice Barbara Pariente, Justice Robin Hudson, and Annette Boyd Pitts present at the National Association of Women Judges 40th Annual Convention
Training For Judges and Lawyers
Reporters Workshops

“Citizens are guaranteed freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, demonstration and association.”
Professional development for teachers
Webinars

• IVP can customize webinar presentations to reach large numbers of participants both state-wide and nationally
Informative Handouts for Community Outreach

What We Do

IVP provides resources for educating the community and juries about the role of the judicial branch including:

- Educational nonpartisan materials for use with community presentations
- Jury assembly educational resources included an Emmy Award-Winning video
- Services for customizing materials and presentations on the judicial branch and judicial selection for your state

www.ivp.nawj.org
Educational Handouts

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Informative Handouts for Community Outreach

- Courts are not for sale!
- Politics & Special Interests
- Defending Justice, Protecting Citizens
- Fair and Impartial Courts – Whose Business is it Anyway?
- Evaluation Tips: How should I judge a judicial candidate?
- Palm Card
- Bookmark
- Judicial Bingo Q’s & A’s
- Evaluating Judicial Candidates: Trial Judges
- Evaluating Judicial Candidates: Appellate Judges
Election Day is November 6th!

Over 1.7 million Florida voters left the ballot blank when it came to voting for judges in the last election.

Don’t leave the ballot blank for judges – your vote matters!
Displays at Conferences and Conventions
Presentations for Community Outreach and Education

Law Day 2018
Separation of Powers: The Essential Ingredient in Our Democracy

Constitution Day 2018
More Than Words
Engaging Presentation Methods

Write down three positive and three negative labels you have heard used to describe judges or judicial decisions.
Engaging Presentation Methods

Labeling of Judges: the Dangers of Labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judicial decision making</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>Judicial Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair and impartial</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Conservative/Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting the law (determining what a statute means or says)</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Legislating from the Bench/Judge – made law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking for Labels
Engaging Presentation Methods

What Labels Did You Hear in the Ads?

- Activist Judge
- Become Political
- Ignoring will of the voters
- Imposing (same sex marriage on Iowa/their own values)
- Liberal

- Out of Control
- Legislating from the bench
- Usurping will of the voters
- Redefining marriage
- Unelected
- Unrepentant
“Judges are not politicians, even when they come to the bench by way of the ballot. And a State’s decision to elect its judiciary does not compel it to treat judicial candidates like campaigns for political office. A State may assure its people that judges will apply the law without fear or favor.”

May be influenced by:
- Public Opinion or Pressures
- Political Parties
- Lobbyists
- Constituents
- Special interest groups
- Personal opinion
- Other
“I am anxious about the state of the judiciary in America. What worries me is the manner in which politically motivated interest groups are attempting to interfere with justice.”

-- Justice Sandra Day O’Connor
IVP Fair and Free Emmy Award-Winning Video For Use in Jury Assembly Rooms and Community Outreach
What can you do?

- Come out from behind the bench and engage with the public
- Contact the Informed Voters, Fair Judges Project for resources (ivp.nawj@gmail.com)
- Contact local court administration to encourage use of captioned jury room resources and video
- Reach out to local non-partisan community organizations and schedule public education programs
- Establish and maintain court social media platforms
- Court tour and education programs
Coming soon!
What to expect from IVP

- Animations about the judicial branch
- New IVP Fair and Free Jury Assembly video
- New Law Day lesson