

Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Name: **Daniel J. Anders**

Running for: Philadelphia Common Pleas Court

Party: Democratic

daniel.j.anders@gmail.com

<http://www.judgedananders.com/>



Questions

1. ***Why are you qualified and well-suited to serve as a judge on the court for which you are running?*** Why are you qualified and well-suited to serve as a judge on the court for which you are running?

My experience as an attorney and – more recently – as an appointed judge on the Court of Common Pleas make me uniquely qualified and well-suited to serve for a full ten-year term on the Court of Common Pleas.

Prior to becoming a judge, I was an attorney at Pepper Hamilton where I focused on business litigation cases. My experience at Pepper Hamilton provided me with a common sense approach to resolving difficult issues. I also donated more than 300 hours of pro bono work each year that I was an attorney. My pro bono work concentrated on civil rights issues in the LGBT community. Representative cases include serving as pro bono counsel to the City of Allentown in successfully defending its non-discrimination ordinance.

It is important for judges to conduct their courtrooms in a manner that engenders respect for the judicial system. As a judge, my goal is to treat each person in my courtroom with the highest respect and to ensure that they have the opportunity to be heard on the issues that matter deeply to their own lives. I also recognize that parties, witnesses, and attorneys have demanding schedules. As a result, I operate an efficient courtroom and start my courtroom on time, which has reduced the waiting time significantly in my courtroom.

Since ascending to the bench in 2007, I have served in the Family Court division and have heard over 5000 cases involving Philadelphia's most at-risk children. I approach these cases from a strength-based perspective that builds on a child's strengths and interests. Many of the children that appear in my courtroom lack a positive adult role model in their lives. To address this issue, I created a partnership between Family Court and Big Brothers/Big Sisters to provide these children with an adult mentor.

Finally, it is important for judges to remain involved in our communities. One way that I have remained involved in our various communities is to serve as a volunteer nuisance court judge. The nuisance court program is a partnership between the First Judicial District, community groups, and the Philadelphia Police Department. It has helped to make our neighborhoods safer and improve the

quality of life for all Philadelphians. It also makes me a better judge because I am better informed of what is happening in each of diverse neighborhoods. Since July 2007, I have sat as nuisance court in the following police districts: 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 25 and 39.

2. ***Did you receive a rating of “recommended” or higher from the state or local bar association? If not, why not?*** Did you receive a rating of “recommended” or higher from the state or local bar association? If not, why not?

I received a rating of “recommended” by the Philadelphia Bar Association, which is the highest rating the Bar Association gives.

3. ***If you are an incumbent judge, what’s a recent instance in which you acted to preserve your judicial independence? If you are an aspiring judge, how do you plan to remain independent if elected to the bench?*** If you are an incumbent judge, what’s a recent instance in which you acted to preserve your judicial independence?

I have preserved my judicial independence by recusing myself (or offering to do so) where there was an actual (or the appearance of an actual) conflict of interest. I have also voluntarily refused to accept any campaign contributions from court appointed attorneys who appear before me.

4. ***A number of Pennsylvania judges have been sanctioned for campaign activities, ex parte dealings, and other alleged misconduct. How can the state’s judiciary prevent discipline scandals of the type seen recently?*** A number of Pennsylvania judges have been sanctioned for campaign activities, ex parte dealings, and other alleged misconduct. How can the state’s judiciary prevent discipline scandals of the type seen recently?

Training for judicial candidates and new judges is essential to making sure that they are aware of the ethical boundaries of the office and how to act in compliance with them. I believe it would be helpful for judicial candidates to participate in mandatory ethical training when they first run for office. The judicial system in State of New York offers a very comprehensive, mandatory training program, which could help prevent unethical campaign activities and other misconduct if implemented here.

5. ***If you believe that gender, racial, ethnic, class or other forms of bias can infect the justice system, how will you work to keep your courtroom as bias-free as possible?*** If you believe that gender, racial, ethnic, class or other forms of bias can infect the justice system, how will you work to keep your court room as bias-free as possible?

As an openly gay man, I am acutely aware that bias can be present in all aspects of life, including the justice system. I work to keep my court room free from bias and to treat all people equally. I also believe that as the only openly gay judge in Philadelphia, I am in a unique position to serve as a resource in the First Judicial District for other judges who encounter LGBT issues in their courtrooms.