

# Philadelphia Inquirer Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Name: **Wendy Demchick-Alloy**

Judicial post for which I am running: Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas

Political Party: Republican

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## Question

1. ***Why are you qualified and well-suited to serve as a judge on the court for which you are running?*** Based on my experience and credentials as an attorney for over twenty-eight years, I am qualified and well-suited to serve as a judge on the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas.

For over eighteen years of my career, as an accomplished and highly respected prosecutor in two counties (Philadelphia and Montgomery County) under four administrations of District Attorneys, I tried hundreds of cases, judge and jury trials, many involving murder, rape, and child abuse. As a result, I have lived my professional life in the courtroom, accumulating a tremendous amount of experience in that arena, where I have earned a reputation across the legal system of toughness on crime, integrity, honesty and fairness.

For the past five years, as Project Director of Montgomery Child Advocacy Project (MCAP), I co-founded and successfully established, with District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman, a non-profit agency relied upon throughout the Montgomery County legal system in providing pro-bono legal representation to the county's abused and neglected children. In ten years, MCAP has grown from a handful of lawyers to over a hundred lawyers, representing over 1,000 children of abuse and neglect. As MCAP's Project Director, I have gained exposure to other divisions of the court in Montgomery County, including the Family Division and Juvenile (Dependency) Division. Experience in these different divisions of the court provided me with insight and perspective in handling cases involving children throughout the court system which I otherwise would not have had as a prosecutor.

Additionally, for the past several years, I have served on the Montgomery County Correctional Facility Prison Board, first as a board member and now as solicitor. As such, I attend monthly Prison Board meetings at the jail, working along with the warden, his administration and the Prison Board members. We confront difficult issues of prison over-crowding, maintenance of the safety and security of the institution while at the same time, ensuring the protection of the public.

My twenty-eight year career of protecting the community also includes my long and dedicated history of commitments to serving in various capacities for many different community agencies. The nature of my commitments demonstrates my devotion to keeping the public safe, particularly the most vulnerable among us, our children.

Presently, I serve on the following boards: The Academy In Manayunk, a school for children with learning disabilities, Montgomery Child Advocacy Project; Security On Campus, a non-profit agency which assures safety on our nation's college campuses; Montgomery County Prison Board (solicitor)



and Greater Norristown Police Athletic League. I am immediate past president of the board at Victim Services Center of Montgomery County. Additionally, I am a member of the Management Team of Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center, developing protocol for the multi-disciplinary center for child abuse investigations in Montgomery County. I also serve as a member of the Office of Children and Youth Childrens Roundtable of Montgomery County, working monthly with members of the Montgomery County bench and other professionals, improving and expediting services to children who are in the Montgomery County court system.

As set out above, based on my wealth of experience and credentials, in and out of the courtroom, I have a unique and powerful combination of legal experience, background and reputation which I will bring with me if I am given the opportunity and honor to serve our community as a judge of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas.

**2. Did you receive a rating of “recommended” or higher from the state or local bar association? If not, why not?** I received a Recommended rating from the Montgomery Bar Association Judiciary Committee.

**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?** As an aspiring judge, I am confident in my ability, based on my experience, to remain independent, in exercising judgement and deciding cases based strictly on the facts, not allowing other factors to enter in to my decision. I enjoy a reputation of a twenty-eight year career of fairness, integrity and honesty which I will bring with me, if I am honored to serve as a judge. I have established myself, throughout my career and in the legal system, to be evenhanded, reasonable and open-minded in my handling of cases, as a prosecutor, in my position at MCAP as well as other leadership roles in which I have served.

In the event that there is a litigant or party who is or may be related to me in any way in a proceeding, leading to an appearance that I may not be able to be fair as a result of that relationship, I will, on my own, recuse myself from that proceeding. It will be of critical importance to me to earn the public’s confidence, faith and trust in me to be a judge on whose decision-making ability they can rely.

**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?** In order to prevent the type of judicial misconduct scandals seen recently, it is imperative that the ethics rules and regulations, as they relate to judges, are properly and strictly enforced and clearly understood by those who aspire to be or are incumbent judges. It is not sufficient to have ethics rules in place if they are neither understood by those who are supposed to follow them or are not strictly enforced, with swift and sure disciplinary consequences.

Judicial oversight of members of the bench should be done frequently and consistently. Such oversight should be conducted by an administrative arm of the court, acting much like a watchdog agency. Additionally, it is critical for the public to have access to information regarding the reporting of possible judicial misconduct. Increased public awareness and scrutiny ensures that reports of possible ex parte dealings or other alleged misconduct can be promptly reported, investigated and dealt with effectively. Public confidence in the judicial system can only be secured if there are safeguards within the system on which the public can rely.

**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?** In order to be a fair and evenhanded judge, one must have the experience and an established reputation in handling many different types of

cases, involving people of varied backgrounds. That experience will serve as the basis for keeping the courtroom fair and bias-free. As a result of my background and vast experience of twenty-eight years as an attorney, I have dealt with thousands of cases and people from different and varied backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, class and gender. I enjoy an excellent, well-established reputation for fairness, honesty and being unbiased in my handling of cases throughout my entire career, no matter what the context and the parties involved. As a judge, I will bring my experience and reputation for fairness and evenhandedness with me, ensuring that those who appear before me will know they are in an impartial and unbiased courtroom, in front of a person who will remain objective and fair.