

# Yes Vote to Keep Justices is Critical to Preserve Democracy.

On November 6, 2012, Floridians will make a choice that charts the future course of democracy and constitutional government in the state. Voters must decide whether to retain three Supreme Court Justices with a record of impartial decisions based on the law . . . or to open the door to a power grab by politicians who want the Court to reflect their own ideological agenda.

Yet, because this issue is overshadowed by the Presidential and Congressional races, and the question is buried deep in the general election ballot, many Floridians may not understand what is at stake. Worse, millions may not even vote.

What is at stake is what is called "merit retention" of Supreme Court Justices, a system approved by Florida voters in 1976. After a rigorous vetting process, the names of potential Justices are submitted to the Governor by a nonpartisan Judicial Nominating Commission. Once appointed, Justices stand for merit retention on the state-wide ballot, in rotation, in general election years. Voters are asked to vote "yes" or "no" on whether each Justice on the ballot should remain on the bench.

## Three Justices on Ballot for Retention

Justices Fred Lewis, Barbara Pariente, and Peggy Quince are up for merit retention on the November 6 ballot. All three have been retained several times before by a majority of voters who understand their unbiased role in protecting the rights of individual Floridians against power hungry politicians and special interests.



**R. FRED LEWIS** was appointed by Governor Lawton Chiles in December, 1998. While serving as Chief Justice, he formed Justice Teaching, which recruits volunteer lawyers and judges to provide civics and law-related education in Florida public schools.



**BARBARA J. PARIENTE**, who was appointed in December, 1997, has served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and previously was a judge on the Fourth District Court of Appeal. In 2008, she was inducted into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame.



**PEGGY A. QUINCE** was appointed jointly by Governors Chiles and Bush in December, 1998. She was the first African American woman to serve on a District Court of Appeal, appointed to a judgeship on the Second District Court of Appeal in 1994.

For more information about these three Justices, go to [www.floridasupremecourt.org](http://www.floridasupremecourt.org)

## Why Voters Should Vote Yes

Here are just some of the compelling reasons why Floridians should vote "yes" to retain all three of these Justices on the Supreme Court:

- ◆ Justices Lewis, Pariente, and Quince are a diverse group of Justices who have interpreted the Florida State Constitution in an unbiased and non-political manner. Examination of their record demonstrates that they are not influenced by ideology or popular opinion.
- ◆ Floridians have demonstrated overwhelmingly that they want to protect their rights under a judicial system that is fair and impartial. Merit retention was approved by voters, and Justices Lewis, Pariente, and Quince all have been retained in previous retention elections.
- ◆ Knocking out three Justices would give the Governor three new appointments to the Supreme Court, injecting partisan politics and destroying the balance of government power that was initiated by our Founding Fathers.
- ◆ The campaign for a "no" vote is orchestrated and funded by political extremists, including out-of-state groups, who see this as an opportunity to stack the Florida Supreme Court with Justices who will rule their way.
- ◆ A takeover by politically-driven special interests – no matter what their ideology or party affiliation – would mean judicial decisions based on popular trends and personal opinions instead of our Constitution and the rule of law.

**Why we must retain fairness and impartiality on Florida Supreme Court.**

## What Fair-Minded Floridians Can Do

Under the rules for judicial campaigns, Florida Supreme Court Justices are limited in what they can do to campaign for their retention. So, much of the burden for educating voters and getting out the "yes" vote falls on community leaders and grassroots efforts by Floridians who understand the urgency of retaining a fair and impartial Court.

Here are some things that fair-minded citizens can do in the next few months before the November 6 election:

- ◆ **Get informed.** Educate yourself on the question of merit retention.
- ◆ **Reach out.** Tell your friends, neighbors, and colleagues how critical it is to keep Justices Lewis, Pariente, and Quince on the Florida Supreme Court.
- ◆ **Speak up.** Write Letters to the Editor of your local newspaper in support of a "yes" vote to retain Justices Lewis, Pariente, and Quince.
- ◆ **Get out the vote.** Urge merit retention supporters to be sure to scroll down the ballot and vote "yes" for EACH of the Justices.