

# **JUSTICE IS BLIND,**

***But do I have to vote that way?  
Voting for judges in Texas***

## **Presenters**

**Dr. Anthony Champagne**

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## **Moderator**

**Jeff Wittington**

*Senior Producer, KERA's "Think" Series  
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# Judicial Selection in the States

## *Appellate and General Jurisdiction Courts*

### “Summary of Initial Selection Methods”

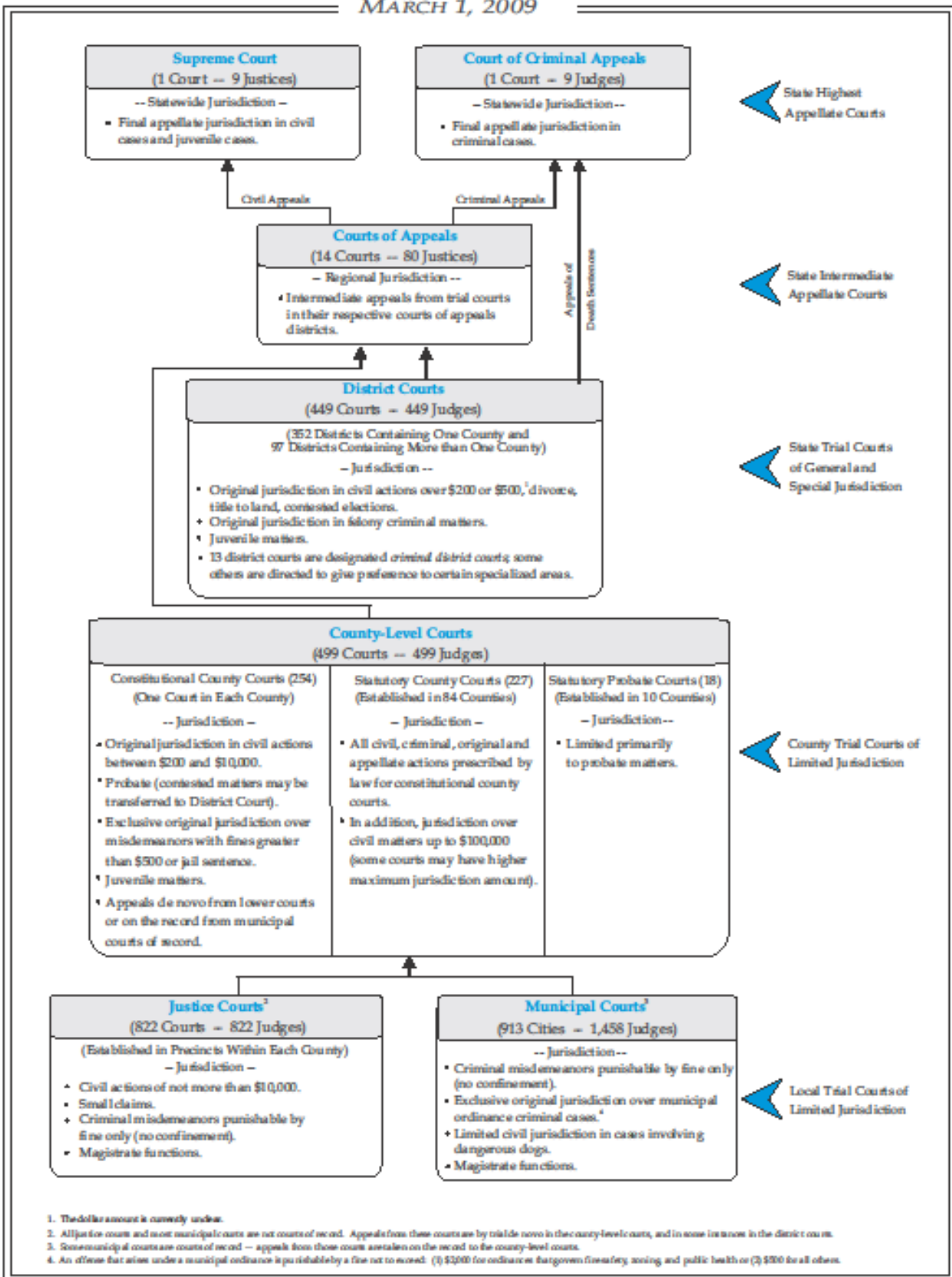
Merit Selection <sup>1</sup>	Gubernatorial (G) or Legislative (L) Appointment	Partisan Election	Non-Partisan Election	Combined Merit Selection and Other Methods <sup>2</sup>
Alaska	California (G)	Alabama	Arkansas	Arizona
Colorado	Maine (G)	Illinois	Georgia	Florida
Connecticut	New Jersey (G) <sup>2</sup>	Louisiana	Idaho	Indiana
Delaware	Virginia (L)	Ohio <sup>2</sup>	Kentucky	Kansas
District of Columbia	South Carolina (L) <sup>2</sup>	Pennsylvania	Michigan <sup>2</sup>	Missouri
Hawaii		Texas	Minnesota	New York
Iowa		West Virginia	Mississippi	Oklahoma
Maryland			Montana	South Dakota
Massachusetts			Nevada	Tennessee
Nebraska			North Carolina	
New Hampshire			North Dakota	
New Mexico			Oregon	
Rhode Island			Washington	
Utah			Wisconsin	
Vermont				
Wyoming				

1. The following eight states use merit plans only to fill midterm vacancies on some or all levels of court: Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, and North Dakota.

2. See attached chart for details.

# COURT STRUCTURE OF TEXAS

MARCH 1, 2009



## **Texas**

### **1845**

All judges appointed by governor with senate consent to six-year terms.

### **1866**

All judges elected by the people. Tenure of supreme court justices changed to ten years, district court judges to eight years, and county court judges to four years.

### **1869**

Supreme court justices appointed by the governor with senate consent to nine-year terms. District court judges appointed by the governor with senate consent to eight-year terms. County court judges elected by the people to four-year terms.

### **1876**

Supreme court justices elected by the people to six-year terms. Court of civil appeals created, with justices elected to six-year terms. District court judges elected by the people to four-year terms. County court judges elected by the people to two-year terms.

### **1891**

Court of criminal appeals created, with justices elected to six-year terms.

### **1965**

Amendment to the constitution provided for automatic retirement of district and appellate judges for old age, and created the state judicial qualifications commission to remove judges for misconduct and disability.

## **CONTRIBUTION LIMITS**

A judicial candidate may not accept political contributions from a person that exceed certain limits in connection with an election. The contribution limits are:

- \* \$5,000 for candidates for statewide judicial offices;
- \* \$5,000 for candidates for courts of appeals, district courts, statutory county courts, or statutory probate courts if the population of the judicial district is more than one million;
- \* \$2,500 for candidates for courts of appeals, district courts, statutory county courts, or statutory probate courts if the population of the judicial district is from 250,000 to one million; and
- \* \$1,000 for candidates for courts of appeals, district courts, statutory county courts, or statutory probate courts if the population of the judicial district is less than 250,000.

These limits apply to total contributions, both monetary and in-kind, from an individual or from an entity in connection with an election.

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