

**NEW MEXICO HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION  
JUDICIAL ELECTION ENDORSEMENT  
PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

The New Mexico Hispanic Bar Association (hereinafter “NMHBA”) serves the interests of Hispanic judges, lawyers and law students throughout New Mexico. One of the goals of the NMHBA is to increase the representation of Hispanics in judicial office; and thus increase the diversity of leadership in the legal community. While the NMHBA’s principal goal in endorsing judicial candidates is to promote the selection of qualified Hispanic candidates across New Mexico, it will also consider endorsement requests from qualified non-Hispanic candidates.

The NMHBA shall endorse qualified candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to the advancement of the Hispanic community, equal treatment of all litigants, the fair administration of justice, and the rule of law. The NMHBA focuses on supporting those candidates who have been involved in, supportive of, and responsive to the issues, needs and concerns of the Hispanic community.

To ensure confidentiality and consistency when evaluating applications, the NMHBA shall adhere to these evaluation procedures and guidelines. The NMHBA Advocacy Committee shall form a Judicial Candidacy Evaluation Subcommittee (hereinafter “JCE”), which shall include board members and members of the general NMHBA membership.

Upon completion of the evaluation process, the JCE shall submit a recommendation to the NMHBA Board. The following procedures and guidelines shall be adhered to in making a determination to endorse a judicial candidate.

**I. GENERAL GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES**

**A. Criteria for Judicial Endorsement**

1. Qualifications: The JCE, in its evaluation and recommendation, and the NMHBA Board, in its final decision making process, shall consider the candidate’s:
  - a. Integrity, character and professional reputation, including any past disciplinary action;
  - b. Professional background and experience, including years of litigation, appellate, adjudicative, or administrative practice;

- c. Prior judicial or quasi-judicial experience;
- d. Scholarship;
- e. Oral and written communication skills;
- f. Demeanor and judicial temperament;
- g. Demonstrated commitment to the concept of equal opportunity and equal justice under the law;
- h. Involvement in, support of and responsiveness to the needs and concerns of the Hispanic community or other minority groups; and
- i. Membership in the NMHBA, or other bar associations or community service organizations serving the needs of the Hispanic community.

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NOTE: The order of the above factors does not indicate their priority. Moreover, the JCE and NMHBA may consider any additional information that is brought to the attention of the JCE during the evaluation process. In weighing these factors, a decision or recommendation shall be made based on the totality of these factors.

- 2. Statutory Qualification: The NMHBA shall endorse only those candidates who demonstrate that they satisfy the statutory requirements for the position they seek.

B. Judicial Candidacy Evaluation Subcommittee:

- 1. The JCE shall conduct its activities pursuant to the procedures and guidelines herein.
- 2. To the extent possible, the membership of the JCE shall represent geographical and political balance.
- 3. No member of the JCE who has a potential or actual conflict shall be appointed to investigate a potential candidate.
- 4. All requests by candidates seeking endorsement of their candidacy for judgeships shall first be reviewed by the JCE.
- 5. The JCE shall examine a candidate's qualifications, conduct necessary due diligence, and make recommendations to the NMHBA Board concerning

whether or not to endorse the candidate.

6. The JCE shall submit its recommendations to the NMHBA Board for a vote on all endorsements.

C. Judicial Election Endorsements:

1. Endorsements shall be determined on a case by case basis. The NMHBA shall only endorse one candidate in each race.
2. The NMHBA may endorse a candidate in a primary election; however, endorsement in a contested primary with two or more qualified candidates is discouraged.
3. Endorsement in primary elections shall extend to the general election.
4. In the event a candidate who received endorsement is defeated in the primary election, prior to the general election, the NMHBA may endorse a new candidate for the general election.

D. Confidentiality:

1. The application materials of all candidates seeking endorsement shall be kept confidential. The candidate may redact personal information contained in the submitted materials, such as social security number, personal financial information and medical information.
2. The information collected by or brought to the attention of the JCE from the general membership of the NMHBA or the community at large shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed to anyone, other than the members of the JCE and the NMHBA Board.
3. All internal deliberations, including documents generated during the course of the review of a candidate's materials, shall remain confidential and not be disclosed to anyone, other than the members of the JCE and the NMHBA Board.

## **II. PROCEDURES FOR JUDICIAL ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS**

A. Persons Seeking Endorsement

1. Candidates must initiate the endorsement process by submitting a written request to the Chair of the NMHBA Advocacy Committee, with a copy to the

NMHBA President.

2. The written request must be received no later than sixty (60) calendar days before the election for which the endorsement is sought. Any requests for endorsement mailed after this deadline might not be considered due to time constraints or because the NMHBA has already endorsed another candidate who timely submitted a request.
3. The candidate may request a copy of these guidelines and, upon request, shall be provided with a copy.
4. The candidate shall provide the following information to the JCE, with a copy to the NMHBA President:
  - a. A formal request for NMHBA endorsement, stating the title of the judicial position being sought and the court or administrative tribunal;
  - b. The statutory requirements for the judgeship being sought, and, if applicable other materials reflecting the responsibilities, authority and requirements of the position;
  - c. Name, title and address of the person to whom the endorsement letter should be sent;
  - d. The candidate's resume, references, and other materials relevant to the candidate's qualification; and
  - e. The completed NMHBA Selection and Endorsement Questionnaire.

**B. JCE Procedures and Protocol:**

1. Upon receiving a request for NMHBA endorsement, the JCE shall inform the general membership of the request and solicit input from the membership regarding the candidate.
2. After the general membership had an opportunity to provide input and the candidate has submitted all requested information the JCE shall schedule and conduct a face to face interview with the candidate.
3. Once the candidate is evaluated, the JCE shall formulate a recommendation which will be provided to the NMHBA Board for a final decision. The NMHBA President shall schedule a vote by the NMHBA Board on the JCE's

recommendation as soon as practical, but no later than the next regularly scheduled NMHBA Board meeting. The decision of whether to endorse a candidate shall be made during the meeting scheduled by the NMHBA President.

### **III. DUE DILIGENCE ON JUDICIAL CANDIDATES**

After receipt of the information specified in Section II(4) above and prior to the face to face interview, the JCE shall conduct a due diligence investigation upon the candidate. Once completed, the JCE shall report the candidate's qualifications and the recommendation to the NMHBA Board. A due diligence investigation shall include an interview with the candidate and may include:

- A. A review of the candidate's professional background;
- B. A review of the candidate's significant legal cases (if applicable);
- C. Contacting those who know the candidate, including former employers, co-counsel, and opposing counsel;
- D. A review of the candidate's writings; or
- E. A media and internet search of the candidate.