

Pauline's Notes on the May 2017 Democratic Primary

Below, in the order listed on the ballot, is how I plan to vote. This year, both [Philly.com](#) and the [Philadelphia Citizen](#) published helpful voter guides with links to the candidates' websites and the Bar ratings for the judicial candidates. You can find your polling location [here](#). Polls are open from 7am-8pm.

Supreme Court: *Dwayne Woodruff* (unopposed)

Allegheny County Common Pleas Court Judge Woodruff was "recommended" by the [Bar](#).

Superior Court: *Carolyn Nichols, Geoffrey Moulton, Maria McLaughlin, Debra Kunselman*

These four candidates were either "recommended" or "highly recommended" by the [Bar](#). (You can read [here](#) why William Caye, the fifth candidate, was "not recommended.")

Commonwealth Court: *Joe Cosgrove, Ellen Ceisler*

Both Cosgrove and Ceisler were [endorsed](#) by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Judge Cosgrove is "highly recommended" by the [Bar](#). Rendell appointed him to the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas to help restore integrity to the court in the wake of the infamous "Kids for Cash" scandal, and he even worked with Mother Teresa (now St. Teresa). Philadelphia Commons Pleas Court Judge [Ellen Ceisler](#) was "recommended" by the [Bar](#), and previously served as an assistant district attorney, director of the Philadelphia Police Department's Integrity and Accountability Office, and director of special investigations in the fraud unit of the Philadelphia controller's office.

Court of Common Pleas: *Stella Tsai, Vikki Kristiansson, John Macoretta, Henry McGregor Sias, Deborah Canty, Wendi Barish, Jennifer Schultz, Marc Moore, Lucretia Clemons*

These nine were recommended by the Bar. I feel the most confident in recommending Tsai, Kristiansson, Sias, and Clemons. I served on the City's independent Ethics Board with [Stella Tsai](#). [Vikki Kristiansson](#) is a former prosecutor and an expert on domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and human trafficking. [Henry McGregor Sias](#) is a Yale Law grad and would be the first male trans judge in the country. [Lucretia Clemons](#) also has an impressive background. Nine other candidates were "not recommended" by the [Bar](#), including Marc Cohen. If you're like me, you've received tons of flyers from Cohen's campaign, none of which mention that the former State Rep lost his seat last year and is known as a "[master of milking the system](#)."

Municipal Court: [Matt Wolf](#), [Marissa Brumbach](#)

Both were recommended by the Bar and seem clearly stronger than the others.

District Attorney: *Rich Negrin*

While there are several highly qualified candidates running, I strongly endorse [Rich Negrin](#). I got to know and greatly admire Rich when we served on the Ethics Board together, and we have been friends ever since. He has been endorsed by the [Inky](#) and [Philadelphia Public Record](#). Rich literally watched his father get gunned down when he was a teenager and is devoted to ending gun violence. The candidates largely agree on the issues, including bail reform, the death penalty, civil-asset forfeiture, and re-entry programs, but as the *Public Record* noted, Rich is the only candidate with experience as a prosecutor *and* as a successful manager of multiple city agencies, with a reputation in crisis management and as a turnaround specialist. Ernest Owners of [Philly Mag](#) wrote about each of the candidates and why he too supports Rich for DA.

City Controller: *Rebecca Rhynhart*

The city controller is the city's independent budget watchdog with the power to audit, review spending and management of city departments, and stop payments on questionable contracts. Incumbent Alan Butkovitz is all about politics—he's a ward leader and part of the city's political machine. [Rhynhart](#) is the opposite: she left her job on Wall Street to serve as City Treasurer and Budget Director for Mayor Nutter and most recently was Chief Administrative Officer for Mayor Kenny. She describes herself as a passionate progressive who believes that modernizing government frees up money to invest in upgrading services. Rhynhart has been endorsed by the [Inky](#) and [Black Clergy](#), among many others.

Ballot Questions:

Q1: Best Value Procurement: YES

This would amend the City Charter to allow contracts to be awarded based on "best value to the City," and not just the lowest price. "Best value procurement" is used by the federal government, the state, and 18 of the 20 largest U.S. cities in order to attain higher quality goods and services. Both the [Committee of Seventy](#) and the [Daily News](#) endorsed this ballot measure.

Q2: Community Reinvestment Commission: YES

This would amend the Charter to create a Philadelphia Community Reinvestment Commission to recommend coordinated community reinvestment strategies and identify opportunities for public, private, and philanthropic entities to collaborate. Council Chair Darrell Clarke sponsored it. I'm not certain it will succeed or needs to be in the City Charter, but it [could be helpful](#). The [Committee of Seventy](#) did not take a position on it, but the [Daily News](#) endorsed it.