



October 2012

# YOU SHOULD KNOW

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2012 Voter Guide  
Accident Wallet Card



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### Dear Subscriber,

Fair and impartial justice is a bedrock principle in America. Yet, narrow interest groups are spending millions on state judicial contests to stack the courts with judges that see things their way. Take a closer look with our 2012 voter's guide.



## THE DOCKET /

> PAUL F. OLIVERI, ESQ. IS ON  
AVENUE MAGAZINE'S  
PERSONAL INJURY LEGAL

## 2012 Voter's Guide to State Judicial Elections

# Flood of Money, Negative Ads Threaten Right to Fair Trial

Three darkly silhouetted "murderers" describe their gruesome crimes, and then tell viewers that "Judge Thomas Kilbride sided with us over law enforcement or victims." Except that these were actors, not real criminals. And the groups funding these outrageous television attack ads – aired during a [2010 retention vote](#) for the Illinois Supreme Court – opposed Kilbride's record on protecting injured people, not his rulings on criminal cases.



Actors posed as killers in what many called the worst judicial attack ad in the 2010 elections. [View ad here.](#)

State judicial races have become the new battleground in the ongoing assault against your right to a fair trial. Big business and other narrow special interest groups are spending millions to pack the courts with judges who see things their way. Lost in the fray is the constitutional guarantee of a fair and impartial judiciary along with protections against medical malpractice, defective products, unsafe working conditions, unfair arbitration clauses and other malfeasance. While the presidential elections take center stage this November, **You Should Know** more about what's at stake in state judicial elections. [Uncover more.](#) >>>

## BY THE NUMBERS /

**\$83 vs.**  
**\$206**  
**Million**

Spending on state Supreme Court elections more than doubled from \$83.3 million (1990 to 1999) to \$206.9 million (2000 to 2009). The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business interests dominated the top 10 list of "super spenders."

Source: *The New Politics of Judicial Elections, 2000-2009*, Brennan Center for Justice

**89%**  
**Worried**

Eighty-nine percent of Americans surveyed in 2009 said they were worried that campaign contributions influence a judge's rulings, with 52 percent calling it

ELITE LIST

> \$ 2.5 MILLION SETTLEMENT;  
CAR VS. TRUCK COLLISION  
ON L.I.E. (QUEENS)

> \$ 450,000 SETTLEMENT;  
FALL ON DEFECTIVE  
APARTMENT STAIRWAY  
(BROOKLYN)

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you.

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reading.](#)

a “major problem.”

Source: *USA Today/Gallup Poll, Supreme Court Case  
with the Feel of a Best Seller, USA Today*

## 7 of 10 Rulings

Rulings in six states with the most money in judicial  
elections – Alabama, Texas, Ohio, Pennsylvania,  
Illinois and Michigan – reversed from favoring  
consumers (1992 to 1998) to favoring corporations  
71 percent of the time (1999 to 2010).

Source: *Big Business Taking Over State Supreme  
Courts, Center for American Progress*

## BOOKMARK FAVORITES /

### Nonpartisan Group Focuses on Keeping Courts Fair

[Justice at Stake](#) leads a nonpartisan group of more than 50 organizations  
dedicated to keeping the courts fair and impartial through education,  
litigation and reform. Visit “[Your State](#)” [National Map](#) for detailed  
information on state campaigns, or view the latest [television ads](#).

### Follow the Money with Sophisticated National Database

The [National Institute on Money in State Politics](#) manages a massive  
database to track the influence of money on state politics and judicial  
elections. Start with campaign finance in [your district](#), track the [influence  
of industry](#), or slice and dice the numbers on a [national scale](#).

### Brennan Center Uncovers Influence of “Super Spenders”

The [Brennan Center for Justice](#) uncovered the explosion in judicial  
campaign spending during the past decade, much of it poured in by  
“super spender” organizations seeking to sway the courts. Download the  
landmark study [Decade of Change, 2000-2009](#) and the recent update  
[2009-2010](#).



## Popular Road Accident Wallet Card Still Available

Just in case you missed it, here's another chance to order our free *First 10* wallet card on what to do after a road accident. Get copies for all the drivers in your family.

[Click to view and order](#)

## Former Judge Warns of Threat to the Integrity of Our Judiciary

A 1996 retention vote put former Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Penny J. White right in the middle of the debate about the impact of special interests and politics on the judiciary.

[Listen now](#)

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