

## Guide to Criminal Justice Elections 2021

### What's At Stake

Many of the faith traditions operating under POWER's umbrella profess values in keeping with Isaiah 58 - to loose the bonds of injustice; to break every yoke; to let the oppressed go free. On May 18, 2021, Philadelphia voters will have the opportunity to elect a District Attorney and Judges to local and state courts. In the spirit of Isaiah, let us work to elect judges who will treat fairly those who have harmed and been harmed, and let us elect a District Attorney who will not prosecute unjustly. Let us seek to be purveyors of mercy and accountability, not injustice.

Why do these races matter? There are several answers to this question, but we'll focus on one: mass incarceration. The District Attorney's office is responsible for charging individuals, setting bail, and prosecuting cases of alleged crimes. If DAs choose to "over-charge" by adding multiple charges for a case in hopes that the defendant will settle for a plea, this contributes to more people in our prisons. If they choose to set bails that are not able to be paid by defendants who lack income, this adds more people to our jails as they await trial. Judges also wield enormous power in conducting trials and sentencing that can either secure justice or unnecessarily and inhumanely incarcerate the poor.

The Ending Mass Incarceration Team of POWER Live Free offers the Election Guide below as a tool to prepare congregations to vote in the May 18th primary.

This Voter Guide Includes (click for links to sections):

- I. [Important Dates for Voting](#)
- II. [Information about District Attorney Candidates](#)
- III. [Information about Judicial Candidates](#)
- IV. [How to Cast Your Ballot](#)

***POWER Live Free is an interfaith, social justice organization that does not endorse nor support any candidates for District Attorney or Judge for the Common Pleas, Municipal, Supreme, Superior, and Commonwealth Courts in the May 18, 2021 Primary or the November 2, 2021 General Election.***

***POWER encourages the members of its Congregations to exercise their right to vote in these elections with the use of this Guide.***

**BE AN INFORMED, CONFIDENT VOTER  
AS YOU CAST YOUR VOTE ON MAY 18TH!**

## I. Important Dates ([link to all dates](#))

- May 3 - Last day to register to vote in primary  
This is also the deadline to declare a major party affiliation in order to vote in the primary. [Update your registration here.](#)
- May 11 - Last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot
- May 18 - Primary Election for DA and Judges (mail and absentee ballots must be received by election day, unless in military or voting overseas)
- October 18 - Last day to register before the November election
- October 26 - Last day to apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot for November election
- November 2 - General Election for DA and Judges (mail and absentee ballots must be received by election day, unless in military or voting overseas)

## II. District Attorney Race

### *What is a District Attorney?*

The District Attorney is responsible for enforcement of laws created to provide for public safety. The DA has the discretion as to what charges to press, whether or not to request bail and if so, how much. The DA recommends the type and length of the sentence for someone convicted of a crime and whether to prosecute police violence and misconduct. The DA's office plays a key role in setting up alternatives to criminal prosecution such as diversionary programs focused on addressing root causes of criminal conduct. The DA's office also works with victims, but the focus of the office continues to be on prosecution of those charged with crimes.

### *Democratic Party Candidates:*

**Larry Krasner (D - incumbent)** ([Link to Campaign Site](#))

- [Complete responses of Larry Krasner to questionnaire addressed to DA Candidates](#)

**Carlos Vega (D)** ([Link to Campaign Site](#))

- [Complete responses of Carlos Vega to questionnaire addressed to DA Candidates](#)

### **Select Responses to Questionnaire**

- Under what circumstances should a person be detained or incarcerated, if any? Does the current system meet this criterion? What does safety mean to you and what policies or programs

would you pursue to achieve your vision? [Democratic Candidates position on incarceration-detention and public safety](#)

- How would you use diversionary programs to keep people out of the prison system? Would you propose any new diversionary programs, and how would they work? [Democratic Candidates positions on use of Diversionary Programs](#)

**Republican Party Candidate:**

**Chuck Peruto (R) ([Link to Campaign site](#))**

- Peruto chose not to participate in the survey; therefore, we are not able to articulate his positions as clearly. He has stated [that there would be no more plea bargains if an individual is charged with a gun crime, and that he would put up ads around the city advertising harsher consequences for having a gun without a permit.](#)
- He is a lifelong Democrat who switched to Republican to challenge Krasner. He has stated publicly that he will [only run for District Attorney if Larry Krasner wins the Democratic primary.](#) He referred to himself as [“Philadelphia’s insurance policy in case Carlos \[Vega\] can’t beat Larry Krasner.”](#)

**III. Judicial Races**

***Municipal Court***

**The Municipal Court** decides whether there is evidence to support serious criminal charges in the Court of Common Pleas, sets bail, deals with landlord-tenant issues, and enforces city codes governing building standards and land use. Judges are elected to six-year terms.

**Candidates ( 6 candidates, all Democrats, for 3 vacancies)**

<a href="#">Michael Lambert</a>	<a href="#">Rania Major</a>	<a href="#">Gregory Yorgey-Girdy</a>
<a href="#">Sherrie Cohen</a>	<a href="#">George Twardy</a>	<a href="#">Barbara Thompson</a>

- [Full List of Candidates and Responses to Questionnaire](#)
- [Select Responses to Questionnaire:](#) Do you think our criminal justice system works? Why, or why not? If you think there is something wrong with how it operates, name three ways you would work to change it as a judge.

***Court of Common Pleas***

**The Court of Common Pleas** is the trial court for serious civil and criminal cases. Judges are elected to ten-year terms.

**Candidates (19 candidates, all Democrats, for 8 vacancies - some also running for Municipal Court)**

<a href="#">Wendy Barish</a>	<a href="#">Terri Michelle Booker</a>	<a href="#">John Padova</a>	<a href="#">Mark Moore</a>	<a href="#">Sherrie Cohen</a>
<a href="#">Caroline Turner</a>	<a href="#">Lopez Thompson</a>	<a href="#">Patrick Moran</a>	<a href="#">Richard Cataldi</a>	<a href="#">Michele Hangley</a>
<a href="#">Cateria McCabe</a>	<a href="#">Nick Kamau</a>	<a href="#">Betsy Wahl</a>	<a href="#">Christopher Hall</a>	<a href="#">Maurice Houston</a>
<a href="#">Peter Bryant</a>	<a href="#">Craig Levin</a>	<a href="#">Dan Sulman</a>	<a href="#">Tamika Washington</a>	

- [Full List of Candidates and Responses to Questionnaire](#)
- [Select Responses to Questionnaire](#): Do you think our criminal justice system works? Why, or why not? If you think there is something wrong with how it operates, name three ways you would work to change it as a judge

***Supreme Court***

**The Supreme Court** can choose to review appeals to decisions from the intermediate appellate courts, as well as from lower courts in cases of “immediate public importance.” Justices serve ten-year terms.

**Candidates (4 candidates for 1 vacancy)**

<a href="#">Kevin Brobson (Republican)</a>	<a href="#">Paula A. Patrick (Republican)</a>
<a href="#">Patricia McCullough (Republican)</a>	<a href="#">Maria McLaughlin (Democrat)</a>

**Superior Court**

The **Superior Court** is the court of appeals to cases involving children and families first heard in the Courts of Common Pleas as well as most other criminal and civil appeals. Justices serve ten-year terms.

**Candidates (4 candidates for 1 vacancy)**

<a href="#">Megan Sullivan Kampf</a> (Republican)	<a href="#">Timika Lane</a> (Democrat)
<a href="#">Jill Beck</a> (Democrat)	<a href="#">Bryan Neft</a> (Democrat)

**Commonwealth Court**

The **Commonwealth Court** handles litigation dealing with state and local governments and regulatory agencies. It is also the first court for cases against the state. Justices serve ten-year terms.

**Candidates (6 candidates for 2 vacancies)**

<a href="#">Lori A. Dumas</a> (Democrat)	<a href="#">David Spurgeon</a> (Democrat)	<a href="#">Andrew Crompton</a> (Republican)
<a href="#">Amanda Green-Hawkins</a> (Democrat)	<a href="#">Sierra Thomas Street</a> (Democrat)	<a href="#">Stacy Wallace</a> (Republican)

**IV. How to Vote**

[Votespa.com](http://Votespa.com) has all the information you need to vote in the May 18 primary and the November 2 election. You can also call 1-877-VOTES-PA (1.877.868.3772).

**Not yet registered to vote?**

- You must register 15 days before the election. Check to see if you are registered to vote [here](#).
- You can register to vote [online](#) or by mail using a copy of [this form](#).

- You can also register to vote in person at your [county election office](#) and some [PennDOT sites](#).

### **Voting Early – By Mail or In Person**

- [You can vote early for any reason](#), but you'll need to request a mail-ballot, even if you did so for the general election in November 2020. [Request your mail-in ballot](#).
- Once you've voted, you can mail it according to the instructions on the envelope or [drop your ballot](#) at your election office or a satellite site.
- Early voters, don't forget the secrecy envelope inside. Your signature and voter declaration go on the outside of the return envelope.
- Ballots must be received (not just postmarked) by 8 pm Election Day.
- You will be able to [track your ballot](#) here (not yet live).

### **In-Person Voting on Election Day - [Find Your Polling Place](#)**

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