

Ohio Supreme Court

CANDIDATES

**DAN
HAWKINS**

REPUBLICAN · INCUMBENT

**MARILYN
ZAYAS**

DEMOCRAT

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Why your November 3 vote matters

The election on November 3 will decide a seat on the Ohio Supreme Court. Republican Dan Hawkins and Democrat Marilyn Zayas are running for a six-year term. Hawkins is the incumbent candidate, while Zayas most recently served as an appellate judge for the Ohio First District Court of Appeals. Republican justices currently have a 6-1 majority on the Court.

The Ohio Supreme Court decides important questions of state law

In recent years, the Court [allowed](#) Ohio judges to publicly make political endorsements, [allowed](#) prosecutors to appeal when a judge sets aside a jury's guilty verdict in a criminal case, and [held](#) the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which legalized same-sex marriage, could not be applied retroactively to determine child custody cases.

Matters that may come before the Court in the near future include one that could [clarify](#) requirements for renewable energy development in the state.

To give you an introduction

This guide provides an introduction to each candidate, with statements, relevant rulings, experience, and publicized endorsements. The topics listed below are not comprehensive, but represent what's available for each candidate through research into news accounts, judicial records, speeches, and other sources. Given that the candidates may have widely different backgrounds, the available topics may not match completely across all candidates. This guide is not intended to predict how a candidate will rule as a justice.

DAN HAWKINShawkinsforohio.com

- **On criminal justice**, Hawkins [disagreed](#) with an Ohio Supreme Court decision that stopped judges from considering public safety when setting bail. He [supported](#) Issue 1 (an Ohio constitutional amendment that later passed), which allowed judges to consider public safety along with flight risk when setting bail. Hawkins [joined](#) an Ohio Supreme Court decision allowing prosecutors to appeal a trial judge's post-verdict judgment acquitting a criminal defendant.
- **On the environment**, in an Ohio Supreme Court ruling on an application to build an [agrivoltaic](#) solar farm, Hawkins [wrote](#) that the Ohio Power Siting Board approved the farm without requiring baseline studies related to water quality and wildlife. These studies, he wrote, were necessary to assess the impact of the farm's construction. He was [appointed](#) to the Environmental Division of the Franklin County Municipal Court in 2013 and created a neighborhood clean-up program.

MARILYN ZAYASjudgemarilynzayas.com

- **On criminal justice**, as an attorney in immigration practice she [partnered](#) with several law enforcement agencies on victims' advocacy issues, developing practices so that immigrants would "overcome their fears, report crimes," and cooperate with law enforcement. About posting bond, she [said](#), "When someone poses a substantial and proven risk of harm to our community, they should not have the opportunity to harm anyone else. No bond, no exceptions, no matter the amount."
- **On the environment**, no position found.
- **On gun laws**, Zayas [dissented](#) from an appellate decision that held that the U.S. Constitution prohibits the state from disarming an individual based solely on an indictment for a felony offense.

DAN HAWKINS

- **On gun laws**, he [joined](#) an Ohio Supreme Court decision that allowed a man with a criminal history of domestic violence to petition to restore his gun rights.
- **On immigration**, Hawkins said that during his time on the bench, he “[cracked](#) down on...illegal immigration.”
- **On LGBTQ rights**, he [joined](#) an opinion that allowed the state to enforce its ban on gender-affirming care for minors while an appeal was pending.
- **On his judicial philosophy**, Hawkins [said](#) “It’s not a judge’s job to legislate or to provide guidance—rather, their job is to call balls and strikes and simply decide the case before the court.”

Dan Hawkins is [currently](#) a justice on the Ohio Supreme Court, and has served in this role since his election in November 2024. Before this, Hawkins served on the bench at the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas. He started his career in the Franklin County Prosecutor’s Office, holding roles including assistant prosecuting attorney and director of the office’s Special Victims Unit. He earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Bowling Green State University, and his J.D. from Ohio State University Moritz College of Law.

Hawkins’ endorsements include: The [Ohio Republican Party](#), the [Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio](#), [Ohio CPA PAC](#), [Ohio Right to Life PAC](#), and the [Ohio Manufacturers’ Association PAC](#), among others.

MARILYN ZAYAS

- **On immigration**, her time in private practice [focused](#) on immigration law. “I advocated for clients from all over the world and from all walks of life. Some were millionaires, some were impoverished. Most spoke English, some did not.” Navigated “complex and extremely intricate cases.”
- **On LGBTQ rights**, Zayas has [celebrated](#) Pride Month and highlighted LGBTQ community leaders.
- **On her judicial philosophy**, she [says](#) that the “Ohio Supreme Court should be a beacon of integrity and accountability, free from outside influence.”

Marilyn Zayas is [currently](#) a judge on the Ohio First District Court of Appeals, and has served in this role since 2016. She was also selected by the Chief Justice to serve on the Ohio Supreme Court by special assignment for several cases when a justice recused. Before joining the bench, Zayas began her legal career as an intellectual property litigator, worked for the Hamilton County Public Defender’s Office, and founded her own immigration law firm. She [earned](#) a bachelor’s degree in computer science from the City College of New York, and her J.D. from the University of Cincinnati College of Law.

Zayas’ endorsements include: The [Ohio Democratic Party](#), the [Ohio Education Association](#), [EMILYs List](#), [Ohio Citizen Action](#), and the [Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters](#), among others.

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