



NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

NYSBA News Release

Release: Immediate

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STATE BAR RATES CANDIDATES FOR COURT OF APPEALS VACANCY

ALBANY – The state’s largest lawyer’s group has sent Gov. George Pataki its ratings of the seven candidates under consideration for associate judge of the New York Court of Appeals, the state’s highest tribunal.

The New York State Bar Association’s (NYSBA) Committee on Judicial Selection, chaired by John Horan of New York, reviewed the qualifications of the candidates nominated by the governor’s Commission on Judicial Nomination and made the following ratings:

Candidate	Rating
Hon. Richard T. Andrias, Appellate Division, 1 st Department	Well-Qualified
Hon. Stephen G. Crane, Supreme Court, 1 st District	Well-Qualified
Hon. Stephen W. Fisher, Supreme Court, 11 th District	Well-Qualified
Hon. Victoria A. Graffeo Appellate Division, 3 rd Department	Well-Qualified
James C. Moore, Esq. Rochester	Well-Qualified
Hon. Juanita Bing Newton, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, Unified Court System	Well-Qualified
Hon. Susan P. Read, Presiding Judge, Court of Claims	Well-Qualified

The state bar’s 16-member committee weighed professional ability, experience, character, temperament, background and other qualities in rating each candidate. Each candidate was thoroughly examined by a subcommittee, followed by a personal interview with the entire statewide committee. Options for ratings are “well-qualified,” “qualified” and “not qualified.”

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According to NYSBA guidelines, "qualified" applies to a candidate who, in the committee's view, has demonstrated the necessary qualifications for the office, while "well-qualified," is reserved for those who possess preeminent qualifications, in the committee's judgement.

The NYSBA has been evaluating Court of Appeals candidates since 1967. Its recommendations have closely guided the state's chief executive since New York moved from electing Court of Appeals judges to the current appointive system, more than 30 years ago.

The governor must make his appointment, from the commission's list, by November 3, 2000. The governor's nominee, subject to confirmation by the state Senate will fill the vacancy created when senior Associate Judge Joseph W. Bellacosa term expired on September 1. Court of Appeals judges serve 14-year terms, with a mandatory retirement age of 70.

The 67,000-member New York State Bar Association is the official organization of lawyers in New York and the largest voluntary state bar association in the nation.

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Note: A copy of NYSBA President Paul Michael Hassett's letter to Gov. Pataki is available from the NYSBA Department of Media Services and Public Affairs.

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