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**Judicial Performance Commission of Cook County
Releases Its 2010 Judicial Election Evaluations Report**

The Judicial Performance Commission of Cook County, a Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice pilot project, today, released its evaluations and recommendations for the sixty-nine retention seeking Cook County judges. To view the full report, please visit: www.VoteForJudges.org.

Chicago, IL (September 15, 2010) – The Judicial Performance Commission of Cook County (JPC) today released its recommendations to voters on 69 Cook County judicial candidates standing for retention in the upcoming 2010 general election. In order to remain on the bench for another term, these judges must receive at least 60% voter approval.

Over the past seven months, the JPC has completed over 2600 surveys and interviews of attorneys regarding their experience practicing before the retention candidates. Members of the committee reviewed the appellate records and examined various databases for media mentions of the judges. In some cases, court watching was employed. From the data collected, the Commission has determined whether or not it “**Recommends**” or “**Does Not Recommend**” each of the judges on the ballot.

The JPC “**Recommends**” that voters retain 66 of the 69 judges standing for retention. The Commission “**Does Not Recommend**” voter’s re-elect 3 of the judges. In addition, the Commission has issued a “Judicial Performance Improvement Commentary” for 19 of the recommended judges that were found to have areas upon which to improve. Voters may view the full report at www.VoteForJudges.org under the “Evaluations and Recommendations” page.

The JPC has two purposes. The first is to educate Cook County voters about which judges they should not retain. The second is to identify judicial performance issues which, while not disqualifying, are things that the JPC believes can and should be remedied. These issues include temperament and courtroom management and the remedies can be such things as peer mentoring, continuing education, and court watching. Judicial evaluations can lead to a higher quality judiciary and the JPC is committed to working toward making this happen. More information about the JPC can be found by visiting: www.ChicagoAppleseed.org.

“This was an extensive evaluation process for the Commission – and historic based on the fact that the committee is made up of both lawyers and non-lawyers,” said Malcolm Rich, Executive Director, Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice. “Since there is often very little information publicly available about judicial candidates, the Commission considers this report to be a very important public service.”

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The Commission evaluated each of the judges based on the candidates' present qualifications for the judicial office he or she is seeking. Upon completion of its thorough evaluation process, the Commission reached a consensus on each candidate's rating. The purpose of the JPC and its evaluation report is to encourage a better informed electorate and to improve the health of the Cook County judicial system.

The seventeen-member Commission is made up of about forty-percent non-lawyers and approximately forty-percent are minorities based on race or sexual orientation. Commission members are **Leonard Schrager**, professor emeritus and former dean of the John Marshall Law School (Chairperson); **Enrique Abraham**, Cook County State's Attorney's Office; **Fay Lomax Cook**, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University; **Jan Czarnik**, League of Women Voters of Illinois; **Stephen Daniels**, American Bar Foundation; **Susana Darwin**, American Bar Association; **Vivien C. Gross**, a clinical professor at Chicago-Kent College of Law; **Roy E. Hofer**, Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione; **Jonathan D. King**, a partner with DLA Piper; **Michelle K. Jordan**, League of Women Voters; **Edward O. Laumann**, The University of Chicago, Department of Sociology; **James H. Lewis**, Chicago Community Trust; **Virginia Martinez**, legislative staff attorney for the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund; **Travis Richardson**, Richardson & Mackoff; **Wesley G. Skogan**, Professor, Northwestern University, Department of Political Science; **Ada Skyles**, Chapin Hall Research Center for Children at the University of Chicago; and **Randolph N. Stone**, a clinical professor at the University of Chicago Law School.

Malcolm Rich is available for an interview. To coordinate, please contact: Shelly Cellak: shelly@burgeonagency.com / 773.398.6154

About Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice:

Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice promotes social justice and government effectiveness by identifying injustice in our community, investigating its causes and finding effective solutions. Chicago Appleseed is part of a national network of public interest law centers working through and with Appleseed in Washington, D.C. We focus on issues ranging from fair criminal justice systems to equal access in financial institutions. For more information, please visit: www.chicagoappleseed.org or call: 312.988.6552 / Fan us at: [www.Facebook.com/ChicagoAppleseed](https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoAppleseed)

About Chicago Council of Lawyers:

The Chicago Council of Lawyers is a non-partisan public interest bar association that is dedicated to improving the quality of justice in the legal system by advocating for fair and efficient administration of justice. The Chicago Council of Lawyers works for effectiveness, accountability and equity in the law so that everyone has an equal chance for justice. For more information, please visit: <http://www.chicagocouncil.org/>

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