



2026 FLORIDA JUDICIAL RETENTION REFERENCE GUIDE

Florida Supreme Court & Fourth District Court of Appeal

November 3, 2026 General Election

A factual reference guide featuring judicial background, appointment information, prior retention results, education, Party Affiliation, ideological leaning categorization and professional experience.

Judges included: Carlos G. Muñiz • Alan O. Forst • Mark W. Klingensmith • Johnathan D. Lott • Shannon K. Shaw • Caroline Cahill Shepherd

Justice Carlos G. Muñiz

Florida Supreme Court



Office: Justice

Assumed Office: January 22, 2019

Appointed By: Governor Ron DeSantis

Prior Retention: 2022 — 65.7%

Age: 58

Prior Experience

- General Counsel, Florida Department of Education (2018–2019)
- Deputy Attorney General, Florida (2010–2014)

Education

- University of Virginia
- Yale University

Place of Birth: Chicago Illinois

Party Affiliation: Republican

Ideological Leaning: Conservative Leaning

Official Biography / Photo Source

<https://www.floridabar.org/public/faircts/votes010/merit-retention-biographies/>

Ballotpedia

https://ballotpedia.org/Carlos_Mu%C3%B1iz

Website

<https://supremecourt.flcourts.gov/>

Party Recommendation: Retain

Judge Alan O. Forst

Fourth District Court of Appeal



Office: Judge

Assumed Office: March 7, 2013

Appointed By: Governor Rick Scott

Prior Retention: 2020 — 64.3%

Age: 67

Prior Experience

- Chair, Florida Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission
- Counsel to Clarence Thomas, EEOC
- Attorney, Crary Buchanan Law Firm

Education

- Georgetown University
- Catholic University of America

Place of Birth: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Party Affiliation: Republican

Ideological Leaning: Strong Conservative Leaning

Official Biography / Photo Source

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/judges/Judge-Alan-O.-Forst>

Ballotpedia

https://ballotpedia.org/Alan_O._Forst

Website

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/judges>

Party Recommendation: Retain

Judge Mark W. Klingensmith

Fourth District Court of Appeal



Office: Judge

Assumed Office: June 27, 2013

Appointed By: Governor Rick Scott

Prior Retention: 2020 — 63.0%

Age: 65

Prior Experience

- Judge, Nineteenth Judicial Circuit
- Mayor, Vice Mayor & Commissioner, Sewall's Point
- Attorney, Sonneborn, Rutter, Cooney & Klingensmith

Education

- University of Florida
- University of Florida College of Law
- Duke University, LL.M.

Place of Birth: Unavailable

Party Affiliation: NPA

Prior Party Affiliation: Republican

Ideological Leaning: Strong Conservative Leaning

Official Biography / Photo Source

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/Judges/Judge-Mark-W.-Klingensmith>

Ballotpedia

https://ballotpedia.org/Alan_O._Forst

Website

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/judges>

Party Recommendation: Retain

Judge Johnathan D. Lott

Fourth District Court of Appeal



Office: Judge

Assumed Office: November 12, 2025

Appointed By: Governor Ron DeSantis

Prior Retention: N/A — first retention cycle

Age: 36

Prior Experience

- Judge, Seventeenth Judicial Circuit
- Assistant U.S. Attorney, Southern District of Florida
- Associate, Boies Schiller Flexner LLP

Education

- University of Florida, B.A.
- University of Chicago Law School, J.D.

Place of Birth: Pensacola, Florida

Party Affiliation: Not listed

Prior Party Affiliation: Republican

Ideological Leaning: Strong Conservative Leaning

Official Biography / Photo Source

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/judges/judge-johnathan-d.-lott>

Ballotpedia

[https://ballotpedia.org/Jonathan_D._Lott_\(Florida\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Jonathan_D._Lott_(Florida))

Website

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/judges>

Party Recommendation: Retain

Judge Shannon K. Shaw

Fourth District Court of Appeal



Office: Judge

Assumed Office: October 1, 2025

Appointed By: Governor Ron DeSantis

Prior Retention: N/A — first retention cycle

Age: 40

Prior Experience

- Assistant U.S. Attorney, Southern District of Florida
- Associate, Hunton & Williams LLP
- Judicial law clerk

Education

- Duke University, B.A.
- Vanderbilt Law School, J.D.

Place of Birth: Not listed

Party Affiliation: Not listed

Prior Party Affiliation: Republican

Ideological Leaning: Likely Conservative

Official Biography / Photo Source

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/judges/judge-shannon-k.-shaw>

Ballotpedia

https://ballotpedia.org/Shannon_K._Shaw

Website

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/judges>

Party Recommendation: Retain

Judge Caroline Cahill Shepherd

Fourth District Court of Appeal



Office: Judge

Assumed Office: October 1, 2025

Appointed By: Governor Ron DeSantis

Prior Retention: N/A — first retention cycle

Age: 60

Prior Experience

- Multiple positions within the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, Palm Beach County
- Congressional and House Leadership Offices on Capitol Hill

Education

- University of Southern California, B.A.
- New England School of Law

Place of Birth: Pasadena, California

Party Affiliation: NPA

Prior Party Affiliation: Republican

Ideological Leaning: Strong Conservative Leaning

Official Biography / Photo Source

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/Judges>

Ballotpedia

https://ballotpedia.org/Caroline_Shepherd

Website

<https://4dca.flcourts.gov/judges>

Party Recommendation: Retain

QUICK REFERENCE TABLE						
Judge	Court	Assumed Office	Appointed By	Prior Retention	Confidence Score	Party Affiliation
Carlos G. Muñiz	Florida Supreme Court	Jan. 22, 2019	Ron DeSantis	2022 — 65.7%	Strong Republican	Republican
Alan O. Forst	Fourth DCA	Mar. 7, 2013	Rick Scott	2020 — 64.3%*	Strong Republican	Republican
Mark W. Klingensmith	Fourth DCA	Jun. 27, 2013	Rick Scott	2020 — 63.0%*	Strong Republican	NPA
Johnathan D. Lott	Fourth DCA	Nov. 12, 2025	Ron DeSantis	N/A	Strong Republican	Republican
Shannon K. Shaw	Fourth DCA	Oct. 1, 2025	Ron DeSantis	N/A	Likely Conservative	Republican
Caroline Cahill Shepherd	Fourth DCA	Oct. 1, 2025	Ron DeSantis	N/A	Strong Republican	NPA

2026 Ballot Reference: Florida Bar merit-retention materials list Justice Carlos G. Muñiz and the five Fourth District Court of Appeal judges included in this guide for the November 2026 merit-retention election.

The honorable Mark W. Klingensmith and Caroline Cahill Shepherd recently changed parties from Republican to NPA.

Source note: Biographical details are based on Ballotpedia and reference material from the official court/Florida Bar resources.