

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

JUDICIAL CANDIDATE PLEDGE

I, CRAIG C. STEPHENS, a candidate for judicial office, have familiarized myself with the Code of Judicial Conduct and the Code of Civility, as promulgated by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. I have directed special attention to Canon 4 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, including Rules 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4. I agree to conduct my judicial campaign consistent therewith and further consistent with *Republican Party v. White*, 536 U.S. 765 (2002). I further pledge that all campaign advertising will be done fairly, accurately, truthfully, and will maintain the dignity appropriate to the judicial office which I am seeking.



Signature of Candidate

12/23/2024

Date

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AUTHORIZATION

As a candidate or potential candidate for Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas the Pennsylvania Appellate or Federal Courts, I hereby acknowledge and authorize the procedures of the Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee, including the following:

1. If I become a candidate, the Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee will make available to the public the Questionnaire, and my responses, except for the questions and responses which are acknowledged to be confidential, which information shall remain available only to the Committee.
2. My responses are provided without breaching client confidentiality as embodied in Rule 1.6 of the Rules of Professional Conduct.
3. If I become a candidate, the rating assigned to me by the Committee will be publicly announced. Ratings remain valid for 2 years but are subject to reevaluation upon request.
4. Should I receive a *Not Recommended* rating the Committee will endeavor to notify me prior to a public announcement. If I withdraw from the race, the rating will not be announced, and the questionnaires will not be published.
5. I hereby authorize the Pennsylvania Judicial Conduct Board, the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners to transmit my entire file and record, including confidential information contained therein, to the Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee. I hereby specifically waive any confidentiality rights I may have in those records.
6. I hereby authorize the Judicial Conduct Board, the Disciplinary Board, and the Board of Law Examiners, or the equivalent, in any jurisdiction where I have practiced, been admitted to practice or have applied to either take a bar examination or for admission to the bar to transmit my entire file and record, including confidential information contained therein, to the Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee. I hereby specifically waive any confidentiality rights I may have in those records.
7. The Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee may change, during the course of my campaign for office, the original rating assigned to me for cause.

CRAIG C. STEPHENS

Type or print name

12/23/2024

Date

Signature



ACBA JUDICIARY COMMITTEE QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR APPLICANTS CURRENTLY ON THE BENCH

I am seeking a rating for the following court:

- Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas
- Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court
- Pennsylvania Superior Court
- Pennsylvania Supreme Court

1. State your full name and list any other name by which you have ever been known.

Craig Cryan Stephens

2. Date and place of birth.

February 2, 1967 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

3. Are you a naturalized citizen? If so, give date and place of naturalization.

N/A

4. Family status:

- a) Are you married? If so, state the date of marriage and your spouse's full name, including maiden name, if applicable;

Yes. Married November 5, 2004 to Stacie Lynn (Lyman) Stephens

- b) Have you been divorced? If so, state the date, the number of the case and the court.

NO

5. Have you served in the military? If so, **NO**

- a) Give dates, branch of service, rank of rate and present status;

N/A

- b) Have you ever been rejected or released from the armed services for reasons other than honorable? If so, give details.

N/A

6. List each college and law school you attended, including dates of attendance, any scholastic honors and the degrees awarded. If you left any institution without receiving a degree, state the reason for leaving.

Duquesne University, 1985-1989, Bachelor of Science In Business Administration

Duquesne University Thomas Kline School of Law, 1989-1993, Juris Doctor.

7. List all jurisdictions in which you have applied to take a bar examination, have applied for admission or have been admitted to practice. Include dates of admissions and if not admitted, give application dates and explain the outcome.

Commonwealth Of Pennsylvania, Admitted November 1994

United States District Court for The Western District of Pennsylvania, Admitted December 1994

State of New York, Admitted April 2002.

8. List your professional mailing address and telephone number. Please also list any personal and professional social media usernames and/or handles and any websites you maintain or to which you know that your profile is shared.

Scott Township Municipal Building 301 Lindsay Road, Carnegie PA 15106 (412) 276-7887

Facebook (Personal): Craig Stephens

Facebook (Campaign): Elect Judge Craig Stephens for Court of Common Pleas

Instagram: Username - @craig.stephens2

Website: craigstephensforjudge.com

9. Describe chronologically your law practice and experience after your graduation from law school and until you became a member of the judiciary, including:

Practice of law began in July 1996 when hired as legal counsel to the Allegheny County Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review. Responsibilities included advising the assessment board on assessment law and procedure matters under the general county assessment law and the second-class county assessment law. I participated in assessment appeal and tax exemption hearings, attendance at weekly board meetings, representation of the assessment board in litigation matters which included drafting and answering pleadings, including response to written interrogatories, and request for production of documents and filing of motions. I appeared before Judge Stanton Wettick on a regular

basis during the ongoing property assessment litigation that began in the 1990s.

I was hired by the Allegheny County Law Department in January of 2001 as an Assistant County Solicitor. Responsibilities included representing Allegheny County as a taxing body in real estate tax, appeal and property tax exemption hearings before the board of property assessment and special masters from the Board of Viewers in the civil division. I was a solicitor for the mental health unit and acted as the county prosecutor for mental health commitment hearings under the Mental Health Procedures Act through Orphan's court. Mental health commitment hearings involved the county solicitor, the public defender and a mental health hearing officer.

I was assigned solicitor to the Title IV-D unit which included regular appearances before judges, domestic relations officers and hearing officers regarding child support, paternity and child support contempt hearings. In addition, I was assigned as a solicitor to children, youth and families ("CYF") pertaining to child abuse and dependency matters in the family division. CYF representation included emergency shelter hearings, petitions for dependency and dependency review hearings before judges and hearing officers. My role also included representation of CYF in child abuse expungement hearings before Administrative Law Judges through the Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Hearings and Appeals (Department of Human Services).

I was also solicitor to the Allegheny County Ethics Commission (ACE Commission). Duties included advising the ACE Commission on ethics complaints brought before them for "covered" individuals, required attendance at ACE Commission meetings and drafting of the meeting minutes. I was also assigned as an Assistant Solicitor to handle unemployment compensation hearings before referees and to county election court. Additionally, assigned to civil litigation matters involving Allegheny County named as a defendant. Responsibilities involved filing answers and new matter, depositions, and responses to pleadings. For instance, I was assigned to handle a landslide case that resulted in a non-jury trial.

From May 2016 to present, I am of counsel to Bootay, Bevington & Nichols. Duties with Bootay Bevington involve advisement on procedural and legal issues involving tax assessment and property tax exemption matters, tax lien issues and referrals for legal services.

- a) Whether you served as clerk to a judge and, if so, the name of the judge, the court and the dates of the period you were a clerk;

NO

- b) Whether you practiced alone and, if so, the addresses and the dates;

N/A

- c) The dates, names and addresses of law firms or offices, companies or governmental agencies with which you have been connected and the nature of your connection with each;

Beaver County District Attorney's Office, 3rd Street, Beaver PA 15009 - Victim/Witness Advocate, October 1994-August 1995

Allegheny County Bar Association, Lawyer Referral service, 400 Koopers Building (436 Seventh Ave #3) - August 1995-July 1996

Commissioner with the Township of Scott, 301 Lindsay Road, Carnegie PA 15106 - October 1995-December 2015

Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review, 542 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15219 - Legal Counsel from July 1996-December 2000

Allegheny County Law Department, 445 Fort Pitt Blvd. Suite 300, Pittsburgh PA 15219 - Assistant County Solicitor, January 2001-December 2015

Bootay Bevington & Nichols, 310 Grant Street, Pittsburgh PA 15219 - of Counsel from May 2016-Present.

Magisterial District Judge, 301 Lindsay Road, Carnegie PA 15106, through Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, January 2016-present.

- d) Any other relevant particulars.

10. Regarding your practice:

- a) What was the general character of your practice, dividing it into periods with dates if its character changed over the years?

General nature of practice involved representation of governmental bodies and county agencies from 1996 to December 2015.

- b) During your time in practice, describe your typical clients and mention the areas in which you concentrated your practice.

Clients were governmental bodies and agencies including Child Protective Services (CYF).

11. For the last ten years or portions thereof during which you have held judicial office, indicate,

a) The nature of typical matters which came before you;
Criminal cases and complaints, traffic and non-traffic violations, landlord/tenant actions, civil disputes, school truancy cases, code enforcement violations and emergency protection from abuse hearings.

b) The percentage of your time devoted to: **All cases involve Magisterial District Judge cases assigned to Magisterial District 05-2-22, Pittsburgh Municipal Court and various Magisterial Districts throughout Allegheny County**

1. Civil: ~30%
Criminal: ~40%
2. Family: ~10% (Protection-from-abuse hearings)
3. Orphans' Court: N/A

***Remaining 20% devoted to other judicial cases**

c) The percentage of your time devoted to:

1. Jury: N/A
2. Non-jury: N/A
3. Appellate argument: N/A
4. Other: **I preside over approximately 5,000 cases per year as a Magisterial District Judge. I have presided over 40,000 cases since January 2016.**

d) Five of the more significant opinions you have rendered and citations thereto if the cases were reported or dockets if the cases were not reported.

Magisterial District Courts are not courts of record. Written opinions are not rendered. Decisions and rulings are typically made at the conclusion of a hearing. Decisions are noted on the case file or a docket worksheet. The court staff issues an order of the decision for civil and landlord/tenant cases. Court decisions and dispositions are also noted in the docket

transcript.

12. If a substantial period of your practice was before administrative boards, commissions or agencies during the ten years before you became a member of the judiciary, identify the boards, commissions or agencies before which you have practiced and estimate percentages of practice time devoted thereto.

Allegheny County Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review ~20%

Allegheny County Board of Viewers ~30%

Allegheny County Ethics Commission (ACE) ~10%

Child Protective Services (CYF) and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

(Department of Human Services) Bureau of Hearings and Appeals ~40%

13. If a substantial portion of your practice was before Appellate courts during the ten years before you became a member of the judiciary, identify the Appellate Courts before which you have practiced and estimate percentages of practice time devoted thereto.

Sports and exhibition authority case argued before the Commonwealth Court 789 A.2D 316 (PA Commonwealth Ct. 2001). I was counsel of record for the Appellee Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review.

14. For every judicial office you hold or have held, give details of your position, including the court involved with a description of your jurisdiction; whether elected or appointed; periods of services; and, identify any limitations upon your position including if any, when you were the subject of a Motion or Petition for Recusal.

Magisterial District Judge is an elected six-year term. I was elected in 2015 and re-elected in 2021 to Magisterial District Court 05-2-22 comprised of the boroughs of Greentree, Heidelberg and the Township of Scott. Duties include:

- **Presiding over criminal cases which involve the approval and signing of criminal complaints and search warrants, as well as preliminary arraignments, which include setting bond/bail, and preliminary hearings. I have also presided over numerous homicide preliminary hearings**
- **Civil complaints involving civil disputes and breach of contracts, jurisdictional limit up to \$12,000**
- **Landlord and tenant complaints typically involving non-payment of rent or other breach of lease conditions, jurisdictional limit up to \$12,000**
- **Summary trials for summary traffic violations and summary non-traffic violations**
- **Hearings for school truancy cases, code enforcement violations and emergency protection from abuse hearings**
- **Administering the oath of office to elected or appointed officials serving in local government or other official capacities**

As to recusals, there have been approximately ten over my tenure. In one case, a motion for recusal was made by a party in a civil matter involving a fitness center (no longer in operation). I was a member of the fitness center, thus I granted the motion and recused myself. In the other recusals, I recused myself prior to the hearing, either due to a family member (cousin) being a party to an action or the fact that one party was represented by an attorney with Bootay Bevington & Nichols (where I am of counsel). One other recusal involved a neighbor dispute in which I had witnessed the interaction between the parties.

15. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? If so, give details, including the office, whether elected or appointed, and the length of your service, giving details.

Scott Township Commissioner 1995-2015 - I was elected to five 4-year terms. Duties included

adopting resolutions, ordinances and administrative codes, establishing an annual budget, setting tax rates and levying taxes, hiring and staffing township employees and Department Directors and appointment of members to various boards and commissions. I was tasked with ensuring the safety and welfare of the community.

16. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial or other public office?
If so, give details, including dates.

Yes. United States Congress, Primary, May 1998

United States Congress General Election, November 2000

Scott Township Treasurer, General Election, November 2005.

17. Have you ever been engaged in any occupation, business or profession other than the practice of law or the holding of judicial or other public office? If so, give details, including dates.

NO

18. Are you now an officer or director or otherwise engaged in the management of any business enterprise?

NO

- a) If so, give details, including the name of your enterprise, the nature of the business, the title or other description of your position, the nature of your duties and the term of your service. **N/A**

- b) Is it your intention to resign such positions and withdraw from any participation in the management of any such enterprises if you are elected and confirmed? If not, give reasons. **N/A**

19. Are you under any ongoing federal, state or local investigation or indictment for possible violation of a criminal statute? If so, give details.

NO

20. Have you ever been charged or convicted of any violation of a local, state or federal law, any misdemeanor or felony, court martial, been granted immunity from prosecution, been held in contempt of court or been the subject of a final protection from abuse order? If so, give details. Do not include summary traffic offenses.

NO

21. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure been instituted against you by federal, state or local authorities? If so, give details.

NO

22. Prior to taking the bench, were you ever sued by a client? If so, give details.

NO

23. Have you ever been a party to or otherwise involved in any other legal proceedings? If so, give the particulars. Do not list proceedings in which you were merely a guardian *ad litem* or stakeholder. Include all legal proceedings in which you were a party in interest, a material witness, were named as co-conspirator or a co-respondent and any grand jury investigation in which you figured as a subject or in which you appeared as a witness.

One civil matter involving Bankers Healthcare Group, LLC. The issue involved a loan agreement with Pinnacle Bank. There was a discrepancy in payments being made and applied to the account. The issue was resolved and counsel for Bankers Healthcare Group filed a praecipe to discontinue the matter.

24. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, bar association, disciplinary committee, court of judicial discipline or other professional group? If so, give the details.

I have never been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct. A complaint was filed with the Disciplinary Board in 2013 after a mental health commitment hearing in my capacity as a county solicitor. The complaint was dismissed with no further action taken. A complaint was filed with the Judicial Conduct Board (The Board) in 2023 following a preliminary hearing which I presided over. The board deemed it unnecessary to contact me personally by telephone, in writing, through an interview, or via deposition to respond to the allegations. The complaint was dismissed following the Board's preliminary inquiry.

25. Currently or within the past five (5) years have you suffered from any medical or other condition which could affect or impair your judgment, reliability or ability to perform the essential functions of the judicial position you are seeking? If so, describe.

NO

26. Do any circumstances exist that would affect your ability to perform the function of the position you seek or fulfill the term of office? If so, please explain.

NONE

27. Furnish one (1) writing sample that reflects your analysis of a legal problem or issue.

A case scenario occurred in which X was stabbed. At the scene, an officer arrived and found X bleeding. X was taken to the hospital where X was treated and survived. While at the hospital, the officer interviewed X, who identified Y as the person who stabbed them and that they were fearful of Y. X also gave a written statement with additional details of the alleged stabbing. An arrest warrant was issued for Y, charging Y with felony aggravated assault. Y was subsequently arrested and arraigned by a judge and released on bond with conditions. Y now awaits a preliminary hearing date. At a preliminary hearing, the attorney for the Commonwealth must present evidence for the court to determine whether there is a prima facie case that an offense has been committed and the defendant committed it. The evidence presented must be viewed in light most favorable to the Commonwealth.

At the preliminary hearing for Y, the Commonwealth presented the officer to testify to describe the scene and introduce X's statements along with X's medical records. X did not appear to testify at the preliminary hearing. The Commonwealth argued various exceptions (excited utterance, statement of identification, statement for medical treatment) to hearsay under Rule 542(E) of the PA Rules of Criminal Procedure which is intended to allow some otherwise inadmissible hearsay to establish a prima facie case. Y's defense counsel objected to the officer's testimony. Upon ruling on the defense attorney's objection, the court should sustain the objection and rule that inadmissible hearsay alone may not be used to establish a prima facie case as to a defendant's identity. The court's reliance should be on the recent decision in the *Harris* case, where the Pennsylvania Supreme Court clarified that the Commonwealth must produce some non-hearsay or admissible hearsay evidence to sustain its prima facie burden as to the defendant's identity. Commonwealth v. Harris, 315 A.3D 26 (2024)

***Please also see attached a writing sample brief.**

28. List all bar associations and professional societies of which you are a member and give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such groups. Please also identify any leadership role you have held in such groups.

Allegheny County Bar Association (ACBA) - Current Member

Past Member of the Association of Municipal and School Solicitors Committee

Past Member of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA)

29. List your experiences in teaching and lecturing, including law school, continuing legal education and to non-legal audiences.

Pa Modern Courts (PMC Shares) Protection From Abuse (PFA) and Landlord-Tenant Disputes Workshops

Landlord Tenant Workshops in partnership with a local State Representative

Guest to speaker at the Acre Real Estate Club

Past presenter for the Association of Municipal and School Solicitors section involving the Allegheny County Reassessment.

30. List all organizations other than bar associations, professional associations or societies of which you are or have been a member, including civic, charitable, religious, educational, social and fraternal organizations.

The Bob Prince Tent Foundation, 501(c)(3)

The Knights of Columbus

The Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 32 (AOH)

31. List any honors, prizes, awards or other forms of recognition which you have received (including any indication of academic distinction in college or law school) other than those mentioned in answers to the foregoing questions.

Recognized by the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners for outstanding service and leadership as a Commissioner.

32. State any other information which may reflect positively or adversely on you or which you believe should be disclosed.

Past participant in pro bono services with the Indigent Divorce Program.

33. Why do you wish to become a Justice or Judge in a different jurisdiction? What strengths do you feel you possess that would particularly well qualify you for such a position in a different jurisdiction?

I believe my long-time commitment to public service has encouraged and motivated me to seek a different position in the judiciary. I believe my past experience as a solicitor for nearly twenty years and a District Judge for nine years has provided me with the

knowledge and skillset to be an asset to the Court of Common Pleas. My commitment to public service and experience coupled with my judicial temperament and fairness humbly qualify me for this position.

34. What do you consider a significant achievement in your life outside your profession?

Marriage and raising two children who are now adults. Both children currently attend college.

Additionally, I find purpose in being able to serve my community and help individuals who are in need. I continue to actively work with various nonprofit and charitable organizations, including volunteering on a weekly basis helping the underprivileged and the unhoused by distributing food, clothing and other personal effects.

35. Please identify specific efforts you have made, or been involved with, to support equality and inclusion in the legal profession, including but not limited to the judiciary.

I have performed numerous same sex marriage ceremonies as a District Judge.

Over the years, my court has worked in collaboration with the Persad Center by making referrals for domestic violence cases. The Persad Center is a human service organization whose mission is to improve the well-being of the LGBTQ communities.

I have worked with the Pennsylvania Modern Courts in my tenure as a district judge. Pennsylvania Modern Courts serves as an advocate and proponent for fair courts and equal access to justice.

The undersigned certifies that the statements made in this questionnaire are true,
complete and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief and are made in good faith.

Craig C. Stephens

Type or print name



Signature

12/23/2024

Date

4883-7966-2852, v. I