

STATE COURTS

**Table 5.1
STATE COURTS OF LAST RESORT**

State or other jurisdiction	Justices chosen (a)			Term (in years) (c)	Chief justice	
	Name of court	At large	By district		Method of selection	Term of office for chief justice
Alabama.....	S.C.	★		6	Non-partisan popular election	6 years
Alaska.....	S.C.	★		10	By court	3 years
Arizona.....	S.C.	★		6	By court	5 years
Arkansas.....	S.C.	★		7	Non-partisan popular election	8 years
California.....	S.C.	★		12	Appointed by governor	12 years
Colorado.....	S.C.	★		10	By court	Indefinite
Connecticut.....	S.C.	★		8	Gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with consent of legislature	8 years
Delaware.....	S.C.	★		12	Appointed by governor	12 years
Florida.....	S.C.	(d)		6	By court	2 years
Georgia.....	S.C.	★		6	By court	2 years
Hawaii.....	S.C.	★		10	Gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with consent of legislature	10 years
Idaho.....	S.C.	★		6	By court	4 years
Illinois.....	S.C.	★	★	10	By court	3 years
Indiana.....	S.C.	★		10 (e)	Judicial nominating commission appointment	5 years
Iowa.....	S.C.	★		8	By court	8 years
Kansas.....	S.C.	★		6	Rotation by seniority	Indefinite
Kentucky.....	S.C.	★	★	8	By court	4 years
Louisiana.....	S.C.	★	★	10	By seniority of service	Duration of service
Maine.....	S.J.C.	★		7	Appointed by governor	7 years
Maryland.....	C.A.	★	★	10	Appointed by governor	Indefinite
Massachusetts.....	S.J.C.	★		To age 70	Appointed by governor (f)	To age 70
Michigan.....	S.C.	★		8	By court	2 years
Minnesota.....	S.C.	★		6	Gubernatorial appointment	6 years
Mississippi.....	S.C.	★	★	8	By seniority of service	Duration of service
Missouri.....	S.C.	★		12	By court	2 years
Montana.....	S.C.	★		8	Non-partisan popular election	8 years
Nebraska.....	S.C.	★(g)	★(g)	6 (h)	Appointed by governor from Judicial Nominating Commission	Duration of service
Nevada.....	S.C.	★		6	Rotation	2 years (i)
New Hampshire.....	S.C.	★		5	Seniority	5 years
New Jersey.....	S.C.	★		7 (j)	Gubernatorial appointment with consent of legislature	Duration of service
New Mexico.....	S.C.	★		8	By court	2 years
New York.....	C.A.	★		14	Appointed by governor from Judicial Nomination Commission	14 years
North Carolina.....	S.C.	★		8	Non-partisan popular election	8 years
North Dakota.....	S.C.	★		10	By Supreme and district court judges	5 years (k)
Ohio.....	S.C.	★		6	Popular election (l)	6 years
Oklahoma.....	S.C.	★	★	6	By court	Duration of service
Oregon.....	C.C.A.	★	★	6	By court	5 years
Pennsylvania.....	S.C.	★		7	By court	6 years
Rhode Island.....	S.C.	★		10	Seniority	Duration of term
South Carolina.....	S.C.	★		Life	Appointed by governor from Judicial Nominating Commission	Life
South Carolina.....	S.C.	★		10	Legislative appointment	10 years

See footnotes at end of table.

STATE COURTS OF LAST RESORT — Continued

State or other jurisdiction	Justices chosen (a)				Term (in years) (c)	Method of selection	Term of office for chief justice
	Name of court	At large	By district	No. of judges (b)			
South Dakota	S.C.	★ (m)	★ (m)	5	8	By court	4 years
Tennessee	S.C.	★	★	5	8	By court	4 years
Texas	S.C.	★	★	9	6	Partisan election	6 years
	C.C.A.	★	★	9	6	Partisan election	6 years (n)
Utah	S.C.	★	★	5	10 (o)	By court	4 years
Vermont	S.C.	★	★	5	6	Appointed by governor from Judicial Nomination Commission, with consent of the legislature	6 years
Virginia	S.C.	★	★	7	12	Seniority	4 years
Washington	S.C.	★	★	9	6	By court	4 years
West Virginia	S.C.A.	★	★	5	12	Seniority	1 year
Wisconsin	S.C.	★	★	7	10	Seniority	Until declined
Wyoming	S.C.	★	★	5	8	By court	4 years
Dist. of Columbia	C.A.	★	★	9	15	Judicial Nominating Commission appointment	4 years
Puerto Rico	S.C.	★	★	7	To age 70	Gubernatorial appointment with consent of the legislature	To age 70

Sources: *State Court Organization, 2004*, U.S. Department of Justice Statistics, National Center for State Courts, March 2011.

Key:

- S.C. — Supreme Court
- S.C.A. — Supreme Court of Appeals
- S.J.C. — Supreme Judicial Court
- C.A. — Court of Appeals
- C.C.A. — Court of Criminal Appeals
- H.C. — High Court
- ★ — Yes

- (a) See Chapter 5 table entitled, "Selection and Retention of Appellate Court Judges," for details.
- (b) Number includes chief justice.
- (c) The initial term may be shorter. See Chapter 5 table entitled, "Selection and Retention of Appellate Court Judges," for details.
- (d) Regional (5), Statewide (2), Regional based on District of Appeal.
- (e) Initial term is two years; retention 10 years.

- (f) Chief Justice, in the appellate courts, is a separate judicial office from that of an Associate Justice. Chief Justices are appointed, until age 70, by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Executive (Governor's) Council.
- (g) Chief justice chosen statewide; associate judges chosen by district.
- (h) More than three years for first election and every six years thereafter.
- (i) The term may be split between eligible justices.
- (j) Followed by tenure. All judges are subject to gubernatorial reappointment and consent by the Senate after an initial seven-year term; thereafter, they may serve until mandatory retirement at age 70.
- (k) Or expiration of term, whichever is first.
- (l) Party affiliation is not included on the ballot in the general election, but candidates are chosen through partisan primary nominations.
- (m) Initially chosen by district; retention determined statewide.
- (n) Presiding judge of Court of Criminal Appeals.
- (o) The initial term of appointment is until the next general election immediately following the third year from the time of the initial appointment.