



Voters in Four Jurisdictions Opt for Merit Selection on November 4

On Election Day 2008, voters in four counties cast ballots in favor of judicial merit selection.

In two **Alabama** counties—**Lauderdale County** and **Shelby County**—voters approved by wide margins the establishment of judicial nominating commissions to submit potential candidates for interim trial court vacancies to the governor. Similar commissions already operate in Baldwin, Jefferson, Madison, Mobile, Talladega, and Tuscaloosa Counties.

In **Johnson County, Kansas** (the Kansas City area), 59% of voters rejected a return to partisan judicial elections. AJS was pleased to have assisted the Johnson County effort. Working with [Johnson Countians for Justice](#), a broad-based coalition of local chambers of commerce, bar associations, and citizens groups, AJS and two other national organizations hosted an educational forum on merit selection in Overland Park on October 10. More than one hundred local and state officials, state party leaders, union representatives, clergy members, attorneys, businesspersons, citizen activists, and members of the media attended the forum. This [article](#) from the Kansas City Star provides additional details on the ballot initiative.

Approximately fifty-two percent of voters in **Greene County, Missouri** (the Springfield area) cast ballots in favor of adopting judicial merit selection. Greene County is Missouri's third largest metropolitan area and the fifth Missouri county to move to merit selection since 1940. This [article](#) from KY3 News gives further information on the ballot question.

The Greene County move from partisan elections to merit selection is particularly noteworthy, as it marks the first time since 1985 that a jurisdiction has moved from contestable elections to merit selection. For a chronology of successful and unsuccessful statewide merit selection ballot initiatives, click [here](#).

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