

# **U.S. Sens. Baldwin, Johnson: Wisconsin senators renew agreement on Wisconsin Judicial Commission and call for applications for U.S. attorney vacancies**

Posted on Monday, Feb 13, 2017

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**WASHINGTON** — U.S. Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin renewed their agreement establishing the Wisconsin Federal Nominating Commission to advance federal nominations, including vacant federal judgeships and U.S. Attorney positions in Wisconsin. This process has already led to the confirmation of James Peterson in the Western District of Wisconsin and Pamela Pepper in the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

The Commission shall consist of six Wisconsinites who are members of the Wisconsin State Bar. Three members will be appointed by each Senator, who will each have a Co-Chair on the Commission. Johnson appointed William Curran, Richard Esenberg, and Paul Swanson as commissioners. Baldwin appointed Michelle Behnke, Barbara Quindel, and Jeremy Levinson to the commission.

Today the State Bar of Wisconsin [made available applications to fill Wisconsin's U.S. Attorney vacancies](#). Applications will be due on March 15 and a recommendation to the Senators will be made on or before May 29, 2017. The Senators agreed to the following timeline: Applications for Wisconsin's Seventh Circuit vacancy will be

available on March 15, with applications due on April 29 and a recommendation to the Senators provided by July 13, 2017. Applications for the Eastern District Court vacancy will be available on April 29, with applications due on May 29, and a recommendation to the Senators provided on or before August 12, 2017. Any changes to these dates, based on the request of the Commission and the agreement of the Senators, will be announced by the State Bar.

“This is the first step in filling important law enforcement and judicial vacancies in our state,” **Senator Johnson said.** “Wisconsinites deserve high quality legal minds to administer the law, and I encourage candidates who value fidelity to our Constitution and the rule of law to apply for these positions. This nomination process has worked well in the past, resulting in the confirmation of James Peterson and Pamela Pepper to the federal bench. I am confident it will work again in the future.”

“I am pleased to join Senator Johnson in moving forward in a bipartisan manner to advance the process of filling Wisconsin’s legal and judicial vacancies in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress,” **Senator Baldwin said.** “I am confident that the commission will identify for our consideration highly qualified individuals who would serve the people of Wisconsin with fairness and impartiality.”

### **Wisconsin Federal Nominating Commission Members**

**Michelle A. Behnke** (Co-Chair) is a 1988 graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School. She established her own firm in 1998 and currently works as a business practitioner. Behnke previously practiced as in-house counsel with CUNA Mutual Insurance Society and at a Madison law firm. Behnke is a past president of the State Bar of Wisconsin and currently serves on the ABA Board of Governors. She has served on a number of boards including the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, Madison Development Corporation and SSM Healthcare of Wisconsin. Michelle is married and has two adult children.

**William T. Curran** is with Curran, Hollenbeck & Orton, SC, in Mauston and Wisconsin Dells. He is AV rated (highest) by Martindale-Hubbell. He was admitted as a fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers in 2001. He is a repeat selection in “Super Lawyers” in commercial litigation. He served on the Governor’s Judicial Nominating Council 1987-2001 and 2010 – present and on the Federal Judicial Nominating Commission (2001-2008). He was elected to the Board of Governors of the State Bar Association for the nine-county 7th District.

**Richard Esenberg** is the founder, President and General Counsel of the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, a public interest law firm and legal think tank based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In addition, he is currently an adjunct Professor of Law at Marquette University Law School where he formerly served in the full time faculty. He holds a J.D., magna cum laude, from Harvard Law School, where he was an editor of the Harvard Law Review, and a B.A., summa cum laude, in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

**Jeremy P. Levinson** is a shareholder at Halling & Cayo, S.C. focusing on civil, white collar and administrative litigation, as well as legal ethics. He was named one of the “Top 50 Attorneys” in Wisconsin by Wisconsin Super Lawyers in 2011 and 2013. He currently serves as a fellow of the American Bar Foundation and on the board of directors of the Wisconsin Equal Justice Fund. He is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the University of Wisconsin Law School. He lives in Milwaukee’s Brewers Hill neighborhood.

**Barbara Zack Quindel** practices labor and employment law and is a shareholder in Hawks Quindel S.C. She has been listed consistently in the Best Lawyers in America which named her Milwaukee’s 2012 “Lawyer of the Year” in Employment Law-Individuals. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Barbara holds a Masters degree from Harvard University and received her law degree from Northeastern University. Barbara lives in Milwaukee with her husband, Roger.

**Paul Swanson** (Co-Chair) is a partner at the Oshkosh, WI law firm of Steinhilber, Swanson, LLP with offices in Madison and Oshkosh. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh and a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School. He is currently the President- Elect of the State Bar of Wisconsin having served in the past as the Treasurer, Chair of the Board of Governors, Chair of the Continuing Legal Education Committee, President of the Young Lawyers Division and on its Board of Governors for many years. He is also the Past President of the National Association of Bankruptcy Trustees.