

News Release



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Judicial Conference Assembles Supreme Court Justices, Experts, and Key Stakeholders to Improve Jury Selection Process

Supreme Court chief justices from three states will join Chief Justice Stuart Rabner in one of a series of panels during the Judicial Conference on Jury Selection next week.

The conference, to be held Nov. 10 and 12 virtually and with limited in-person attendance at the New Jersey Law Center in New Brunswick, will provide the New Jersey Supreme Court with recommendations to improve the process of jury selection.

Eddie S. Glaude Jr., chair of the Department of African American Studies at Princeton University and a Time Magazine columnist and frequent MSNBC contributor, will deliver the opening keynote.

Among the panel sessions:

- Chief Justice Rabner will moderate a conversation with Supreme Court chief justices from Arizona, Washington, and Connecticut to discuss approaches their jurisdictions have taken to guard against bias in jury selection.
- Justice Lee A. Solomon will moderate a panel focusing on transparency in the jury selection process and the Judiciary's plan to collect juror demographic data. New Jersey Acting Attorney General Andrew Bruck, Acting Administrative Director of the Courts Judge Glenn A. Grant, and Alexander Shalom of the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey will serve as the panelists.

- Nina W. Chernoff, professor of law at City University of New York School of Law will highlight points in the jury selection process where diversity can often be lost; and Mary R. Rose, professor and acting chair of Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin, will discuss a study that analyzed jury selections from 95 trials across New Jersey.
- The Juror Project Founder William Snowden and New Jersey NAACP President Richard Smith will address how jury selection shapes public perceptions of the justice system and discuss the experiences of qualified jurors, including those who are excluded from jury service through the use of peremptory challenges.
- Judge Joseph Lisa, who chaired the 2005 Supreme Court Special Committee on Peremptory Challenges and Voir Dire, will join Monmouth Assignment Judge Lisa P. Thornton for a discussion of the history and status of jury selection in New Jersey. State Public Defender Joseph Krakora will speak about more attorney involvement in the questioning of potential jurors, known as voir dire.

Representatives from the executive and legislative branches will also be in attendance.

The County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey, the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers of New Jersey, the New Jersey State Bar Association, the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey, the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, the NAACP, The League of Women Voters, and various groups are scheduled to give public testimony.

A unanimous New Jersey Supreme Court called for the judicial conference in its July 13 opinion *State v. Andujar* that found implicit or unconscious bias “can violate a defendant’s right to a fair trial in the same way that purposeful discrimination can.”

“The purpose of the Conference is straightforward: to enhance public respect for our criminal justice system and the rule of law by ensuring that no citizen is disqualified from jury service because of . . . race or other impermissible considerations,” Chief Justice Rabner wrote.

To receive updates about the conference, go to <https://judicialeducation.wufoo.com/forms/mvhfej20dcatm8/> or visit njcourts.gov for more information.

While seating for the Judicial Conference on Jury Selection is limited, a registration link to view the conference will be made available.

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