

I reviewed the *Celluci* decision cited in your email to me. I was struck by the language near the end (pages 66-67 of the slip opinion), in the last full paragraph of the Opinion

The court would be remiss, however, if it did not add a few words about the effect of this decision on judicial elections in Pennsylvania. The court has narrowly construed Canon 7B(1)(c) of the Pennsylvania Code of Judicial Conduct to keep it from being held unconstitutional under the First Amendment. But the court has said nothing about the wisdom or propriety of the campaign speech that the PFI and ACTION Questionnaires sought to elicit from judicial candidates. Many candidates refused to answer those questionnaires, because they feared their answers would force them to recuse themselves from future cases, and more importantly, cast doubt on the impartiality and integrity of Pennsylvania's courts. The court wholeheartedly agrees with these sentiments. It is the court's hope that this decision, Pennsylvania's recusal Canon, and judicial candidates' dedication to public service will adequately safeguard the impartiality and integrity of Pennsylvania's elected judiciary for years to come.

I see no useful purpose in my responding to questions asking me to compare my political philosophy to those of various presidents you list, not including Ford, Nixon, Lyndon Johnson, and Eisenhower. I am running for judicial office, not political office. As a trial judge, any political philosophy I may have will be secondary to my duty to make decisions according to the established law as applied to the particular evidence presented in that case. I expect it to be a rare occasion when I am asked to decide an issue that has not previously been decided, either by legislation or by prior appellate decisions.

Your questions regarding *Roe v Wade* and the Ten Commandments are particularly troubling. You are asking my opinion on a United States Supreme Court decision I would as a state court trial judge be bound to follow, whether or not I personally agreed with it. You are also asking about the posting of a document that, if I recall correctly, has long been on the wall of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court courtroom in Harrisburg, but has also been removed from other locations. Should I answer these questions I would need to recuse myself in the event that either of these questions ever came before me.

My judicial philosophy is that everyone deserves a full and fair hearing on the issues that are properly presented to the court. Cases should be judged based on the admissible evidence presented and the applicable law. Cases should not

be decided based upon whether or not a litigant is represented, or by whom; nor should they be decided by who knows whom.

As an experienced family litigator, my philosophy is further that every effort should be made to encourage the parties to resolve disputes amicably. I am not at all reluctant or unwilling to make decisions when necessary. My philosophy, however, is that some judicial guidance is an important step in reaching an amicable resolution. In most cases, a negotiated resolution will achieve a better solution than one I, or any other judge (who has only limited knowledge of the parties) would impose. This is particularly true in family situations, especially those involving child custody.

Please post this response
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