



Questions for Candidates for Court of Appeals Conservative Coalition of Harris County

This questionnaire will be posted onto the Conservative Coalition of Harris County website for public voter viewing.

Candidate Name	Position for which Candidate is Running
Levi J. Benton	Justice, First Court of Appeals, Place 5

Please give your answer to each of the following questions and please include your rationale with each answer. Please be concise and clear.

1. Please describe the qualifications and experience that make you the best candidate for the office for which you are running.

Answer: I'm the best candidate for this position because I have demonstrated through almost 10 years of service as a trial court judge that I am faithful to the rule of law. I have demonstrated that I am faithful to precedent of the Texas and U.S. Supreme Courts and that I don't go off the reservation in judicial decision making. This same devotion to the law has carried over to my service as a commercial, construction and employment dispute arbitrator.

2. Please describe what you believe are the most significant issues in this race and why.

Answer: The most significant issues in this race include determining who the most qualified candidate is and determining who is most capable of winning in November in a district where 10 Republican seats were lost in 2018.

3. Which Supreme Court Justice most closely represents your judicial philosophy? Please explain why.

Answer: There are several justices that I have respect for. Not one of them alone is perfect. But I admire that in every case they each have the conviction to try to get to the right result under law as they understand it knowing that 50% of the parties before them and perhaps 50% of society in general will disagree with the opinion they have expressed.

4. List the state(s) in which you are or have been licensed to practice law, and the date(s) you received such licenses.

Answer: Texas - 1992

5. List the state or federal court(s) in which you are or have been licensed to practice, and the date(s) you received such licenses.
Answer: Texas 1992 and Southern and Eastern District of Texas
6. Are your licenses in “good standing” in each state and federal jurisdiction in which you have been licensed; why or why not?
Answer: Yes, except for maybe Eastern District of Texas because I have not appeared there in over 20 years and may have to pay a new fee for readmission.
7. Please list the undergraduate colleges or universities, law schools and any other graduate schools that you attended, the years you attended, the degrees you received and the years of any and all graduations.
Answer: Texas A&M University at Kingsville, Texas. BBA – Accounting with Honors, 1980.
 South Texas College of Law. J.D., 1992.
8. What carries the greatest influence in your rulings: civil and criminal case law, the Constitution, state statutes, or other?
Answer: This just depends on the case and what the issue is. Obviously, the U.S. and State Constitution trump statutes and anything else.
9. Please identify what changes can be made to the court of appeals system to make it more efficient from your point of view.
Answer: Blank
10. What has been your greatest accomplishment in your legal career? In your personal life?
Answer: Blank
11. Please explain why you do, or do not, support applying term limits to Court of Appeals Justices.
Answer: Blank
12. Do you believe that voluntary professional and community service is a necessary commitment for persons holding public office? What forms of voluntary professional and community service have you been involved with in the past? Currently?
Answer: I currently serve as an unpaid (i.e., voluntary) member of the Board of Trustees of Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital. Until last year end, I was a volunteer member of the Clear Creek Education Foundation. There have been many other volunteer engagements over the years.
13. What do you think are the most important aspects of the Court of Appeals that voters should be aware of?
Answer: The voters should be aware that the COA is most often the court of last resort as most cases will have no opportunity to be considered by either of our high courts.

14. Do you have judicial experience? To what extent have you practiced in the area of Civil or Criminal law?

Answer: Yes, I was a civil court judge for about 10 years and have served as an arbitrator in commercial, construction, energy and employment cases for about 10 years. I have very limited experience in the area of criminal law, but I do have some.

15. What ideas do you have to improve the efficiency of the appeals court to reduce case backlog?

Answer: Blank

BY RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, THE CANDIDATE ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THE ANSWERS ON THE FOREGOING REFLECT THE CANDIDATE'S BEST EFFORTS TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HONESTLY AND DIRECTLY.

PLEASE SAVE YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO YOUR LOCAL MACHINE IN THE EVENT THAT THERE ARE ANY TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WHEN YOU ATTEMPT TO EMAIL IT BACK.

Once this questionnaire has been completed, please email it to:

alex@cchc-pac.org

* **Please note:** You **must** return your questionnaire from the email address to which it was sent. Questionnaires returned from any other email address will be considered fraudulent and will **not** be recorded and no answers will be published in the voter's guide. CCHC-PAC deems a return from the proper email address as authentication of the correct respondent.

About Levi J. Benton

Levi J. Benton is a former Harris County Civil District Court Judge. He was appointed to serve on the 215th District Court by former Governor George W. Bush in 1999 and served in that position through December 2008. Known for his fairness to all parties and for not legislating from the bench, Benton was named best Trial Court Judge in Harris County in 2004 and in 2005.

Currently a member in the firm Levi Benton & Associates PLLC where his practice primarily includes arbitrations, mediations and complex commercial litigation, Benton began his legal career with Phillips & Akers P.C. Later, Benton was a partner with Strasburger & Price LLP (now known as Clark Hill PLC). Raised in Harlingen, Texas, Benton earned a BBA in Accounting with honors from Texas A&M - Kingsville and earned his law degree from South Texas College of Law . Levi is also a licensed Certified Public Accountant.

Benton currently serves as a trustee of the Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital and has previously served as a board member of the Clear Creek Education Foundation, a board member of the Houston Technology Center, an advisory board member of the Tri-Cities Chapter of the National Association of Corporate Directors and as board chair of the William A. Lawson Institute of Peace and Prosperity.

Levi and his wife Janis reside in the Clear Lake area.

Benton Endorsements

1. Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson (ret.)
2. Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Tom Phillips (ret.)
3. Texas Supreme Court Justice Scott Brister (ret.)
4. Texas Supreme Court Justice Craig Enoch (ret.)
5. Texas Supreme Court Justice Phil Johnson (ret.)
6. Texas Supreme Court Justice Harriet O'Neill (ret.)
7. Texas Supreme Court Justice David Medina (ret.)
8. Texas Supreme Court Justice J. Dale Wainwright (ret.)
- 9.
- 10.
11. Senator Joan Huffman
- 12.
13. Galveston County Commissioner Ken Clark
14. City of Houston Councilmember Michael Kubosh
- 15.
16. Tom A. Cunningham
17. Brock C. Akers
18. Paul Kubosh
- 19.
20. Eugene P. Pack
21. Bill Calhoun
22. Mona Lisa Chambers

ELECT

**LEVI J.
BENTON**

**JUSTICE, FIRST COURT OF APPEALS,
PLACE 5**

FORMER TEXAS DISTRICT JUDGE



POLITICAL AD PAID FOR BY THE LEVI BENTON CAMPAIGN

ABOUT LEVI J. BENTON

LEVI J. BENTON IS A FORMER HARRIS COUNTY CIVIL DISTRICT COURT JUDGE. HE WAS APPOINTED TO SERVE ON THE 215TH DISTRICT COURT BY FORMER GOVERNOR GEORGE W. BUSH IN 1999 AND SERVED IN THAT POSITION THROUGH DECEMBER 2008. KNOWN FOR HIS FAIRNESS TO ALL PARTIES AND FOR NOT LEGISLATING FROM THE BENCH, BENTON WAS NAMED BEST TRIAL COURT JUDGE IN HARRIS COUNTY IN 2004 AND IN 2005. CURRENTLY A MEMBER IN THE FIRM LEVI BENTON & ASSOCIATES PLLC WHERE HIS PRACTICE PRIMARILY INCLUDES ARBITRATIONS, MEDIATIONS AND COMPLEX COMMERCIAL LITIGATION, BENTON BEGAN HIS LEGAL CAREER WITH PHILLIPS & AKERS P.C. LATER, BENTON WAS A PARTNER WITH STRASBURGER & PRICE LLP (NOW KNOWN AS CLARK HILL PLC).

RAISED IN HARLINGEN, TEXAS, BENTON EARNED A BBA IN ACCOUNTING WITH HONORS FROM TEXAS A&M - KINGSVILLE AND EARNED HIS LAW DEGREE FROM SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE OF LAW . LEVI IS ALSO A LICENSED CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT. BENTON CURRENTLY SERVES AS A TRUSTEE OF THE HOUSTON METHODIST CLEAR LAKE HOSPITAL AND HAS PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS A BOARD MEMBER OF THE CLEAR CREEK EDUCATION FOUNDATION, A BOARD MEMBER OF THE HOUSTON TECHNOLOGY CENTER, AN ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER OF THE TRI-CITIES CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CORPORATE DIRECTORS AND AS BOARD CHAIR OF THE WILLIAM A. LAWSON INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY. LEVI AND HIS WIFE JANIS RESIDE IN THE CLEAR LAKE AREA.

ABOUT THE FIRST COURT OF APPEALS

THE FIRST COURT OF APPEALS IS COMPOSED OF 9 JUSTICES—A CHIEF JUSTICE AND 8 JUSTICES. I AM RUNNING FOR ELECTION TO THE POSITION OF JUSTICE, PLACE 5. THE POSITION IS CURRENTLY VACANT BECAUSE JUSTICE LAURA HIGLEY RESIGNED IN NOVEMBER 2019 DUE TO HEALTH REASONS. THE COURT HAS INTERMEDIATE APPELLATE JURISDICTION OF BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES APPEALED FROM THE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COURTS IN THE 10 TEXAS COUNTIES LISTED BELOW. AFTER A CASE IN ONE OF THESE 10 COUNTIES IS TRIED, THE PARTIES HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL THEIR CASE TO THE COURT OF APPEALS. THE COURT DECIDES WHETHER ANY ERRORS WERE MADE DURING THE TRIAL AND ISSUES A WRITTEN OPINION ABOUT THE CASE.

THE COURT'S DECISION IS THE FINAL DECISION FOR 90% OF ALL CASES COMING BEFORE IT BECAUSE THE HIGHER COURTS ONLY CONSIDER ABOUT 10% OF THE CASES FROM THE COURT. I WILL STRIVE TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE STATE OF TEXAS AND WRITE OPINIONS THAT ARE CLEAR AND CONCISE.

COUNTIES SERVED BY THE FIRST COURT OF APPEALS:

COUNTIES SERVED BY THE FIRST COURT OF APPEALS:

AUSTIN
BRAZORIA
CHAMBERS
COLORADO
FORT BEND
GALVESTON
GRIMES
HARRIS
WALLER
WASHINGTON