

## **Report to the Vermont Legislature on the Retention of Superior Court Judge Robert Mello**

Submitted by Senator Dick McCormack

March 24, 2022

Superior Court Judge Robert Mello was appointed to the bench by Governor Douglas in 2010 and retained in 2016. His current term is scheduled to expire at the end of this month. He is an especially experienced judge. In over a decade of service he has heard cases involving the civil, criminal, family, and juvenile dockets including misdemeanors, felonies, abused and neglected children and adults, delinquency, mental health, divorce, parentage, probate appeals, tax appeals, personal injury, commercial disputes, employment, and rental disputes. A virtual grand tour.

Judge Mello lives in Hinesburg. He was born in 1946. He earned his BA in 1968 from St. John's Seminary, and his JD from Boston College Law School in 1971. Prior to becoming a judge, he practiced law in various capacities including years with Downs Rachlin & Martin as well as his own firm. As an attorney and judge he has had a fifty year long legal career. His professional honors include listing in "Best Lawyers in America", and the highest possible rating for ability and ethics from Martindale-Hubbell's PeerReview Rating.

The Judicial Retention Committee reviewed surveys of lawyers and non-lawyers, read numerous comments, considered Judge Mello's submitted materials, read his own legal writings and interviewed him directly. We find him intelligent, articulate, ethical, competent and, as one commenter said, a good human being.

In the interest of full disclosure, there were a very few negative comments, most notably that Judge Mello speaks too quietly, a problem he acknowledges and is addressing. His detractors are Vermonters, and we asked them their opinions. So, we take them seriously. But the scales tip profoundly in Judge Mello's favor. Indeed, his very few detractors are outliers. Judge Mello received close to perfect ratings from lawyers and non-lawyers alike on all criteria; like competence, fairness, management. Most notable, 98% of lawyers say he should be retained. 100% of non-lawyers say he should be retained. Comments were extravagantly

favorable. Your Judicial Retention Committee voted unanimously to retain Judge Robert Mello and we urge the Legislature to do the same.

Senator Dick McCormack