

Journal of the Joint Assembly

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY, MARCH 25, 2026

10:30 A.M.

The Senate and House of Representatives met in the Hall of the House of Representatives pursuant to a Joint Resolution which was read by the Clerk and is as follows:

J.R.S. 43 Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of six Superior Court Judges.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon to vote on the retention of six Superior Court Judges. In case the vote to retain said Judges shall not be made on that day, the two Houses shall meet in Joint Assembly at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, on each succeeding day, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, and proceed until the above is completed.

Presiding Officer

Honorable John S. Rodgers, President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

John H. Bloomer, Jr., Secretary of the Senate, Clerk.

Statement of Presiding Officer

Pursuant to our Constitution and statutes we are assembled here today in Joint Assembly to cast our votes on the retention of six Superior Judges.

This year we are again operating under the Judicial Retention Act passed in 1976, as amended in subsequent sessions of the General Assembly, which establishes the procedure for retention of incumbent Superior Judges. The date for holding joint assemblies for the retention of judges is set by statute to be the eleventh Thursday of the session. This year the date for holding the Joint Assembly was extended to March 25, 2026.

The procedure to be followed requires that the vote be by written ballot.

Retention of Superior Judges

We shall now proceed to the matter of retention of the incumbent Superior Judges. As stated previously, we are operating under the Judicial Retention Act passed in 1976, which establishes the procedure for the retention of Superior Judges. Nominations may not be received from the floor; rather, each judge seeking retention must file a declaration of intention to seek retention with the Secretary of State. The name of each judge seeking retention is automatically voted on pursuant to the terms of the Judicial Retention Act.

In addition, the Judicial Retention Act provides that when a candidate does so declare for retention, the question to be decided is:

"Shall the following Superior Judges be retained in office?"

The statute provides that the vote on this question shall be by one written ballot containing the names of all of the candidates for retention as Superior Judges.

Tellers Appointed

Accordingly, we will need tellers, and the Chair will now appoint as tellers:

Senator Tanya Vyhovsky, of Chittenden-Central District, as Chief Teller.
 Senator Anne Watson, of Washington District
 Senator John Morley, of Orleans District
 Representative Lucy Boyden, of Cambridge
 Representative Joseph Parsons, of Newbury
 Representative Valorie Taylor, of Mendon
 Representative Bram Kleppner, of Burlington

We shall now proceed to the matter of retention of the incumbent Superior Judges. For these positions we have received declarations of intention to seek retention to the office of Superior Judge from the following:

David Barra
 Benjamin Battles
 Michael Harris
 Rachel Malone
 John Valente
 Thomas Walsh

The question to be decided in each of these cases shall be as follows:

"Shall Superior Judge David Barra be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Superior Judge Benjamin Battles be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Superior Judge Michael Harris be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Superior Judge Rachel Malone be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Superior Judge John Valente be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Superior Judge Thomas Walsh be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

The ballot which you will receive will contain these questions in printed form on one single ballot. The term of these Superior Judges are for six years, from and including the first day of April, 2026, and until their successors are elected and qualified.

To facilitate the procedure for this morning, the Chair will rule, unless there is objection, that debate on these six Judges will be received separately. At the end of the debates for the six Judges, any general debate on the entire question shall be in order.

Prior to any debate, we will receive the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention. The Chair now recognizes the Chair of this Committee, the Member from Williston, Representative Angela Arsenault, for the purpose of receiving her report.

Committee Reports

Representative Angela Arsenault, then delivered a general report for the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of all the Judges.

The Chair then recognized the Member from Pittsford, Representative Alicia Malay, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge David Barra.

The Chair then recognized the Member from Montpelier, Representative Conor Casey, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Benjamin Battles.

The Chair then recognized the Member from Williston, Representative Angela Arsenault, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Michael Harris

The Chair then recognized Senator Ruth Hardy, of Addison District, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Rachel Malone.

The Chair then recognized Senator Brian Collamore, of Rutland District, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge John Valente.

The Chair then recognized Senator Terry Williams, of Rutland District, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Thomas Walsh.

House Tellers Adjusted

Before distribution of the ballots, the House tellers were changed:

Representative Lucy Boyden, of Cambridge
 Representative Kenneth Wells, of Brownington
 Representative Valorie Taylor, of Mendon
 Representative Leslie Goldman, of Rockingham

Results of Balloting

Balloting then proceeded for the office of Superior Judges, with the following results:

For Superior Judge David Barra

Total votes cast.....	167
Necessary for a majority.....	84
For retention.....	167
Against retention.....	0

Whereupon the Chair declared that

DAVID BARRA

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2026, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Benjamin Battles

Total votes cast.....	167
Necessary for a majority.....	84
For retention.....	167
Against retention.....	0

Whereupon the Chair declared that

BENJAMIN BATTLES

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2026, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Michael Harris

Total votes cast.....165
Necessary for a majority..... 83
For retention..... 165
Against retention..... 0

Whereupon the Chair declared that

MICHAEL HARRIS

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2026, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Rachel Malone

Total votes cast.....168
Necessary for a majority..... 85
For retention..... 139
Against retention.....29

Whereupon the Chair declared that

RACHEL MALONE

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2026, and until her successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge John Valente

Total votes cast.....168
Necessary for a majority..... 85
For retention..... 166
Against retention..... 2

Whereupon the Chair declared that

JOHN VALENTE

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2026, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Thomas Walsh

Total votes cast..... 167
Necessary for a majority..... 84
For retention..... 167
Against retention..... 0

Whereupon the Chair declared that

THOMAS WALSH

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2026, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

Dissolution

The purposes for which the Joint Assembly was convened having been accomplished, the Chair then declared the Joint Assembly dissolved.

JOHN H. BLOOMER, JR.
Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the Joint Assembly