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Endorsement: Anna Slotky Reitano for LA Superior Court Office No. 65



Anna Slotky Reitano is a candidate for LA Judge Office No. 65 in 2026. (Photo courtesy of Anna Slotky Reitano's campaign)



By **THE EDITORIAL BOARD** | opinion@scng.com

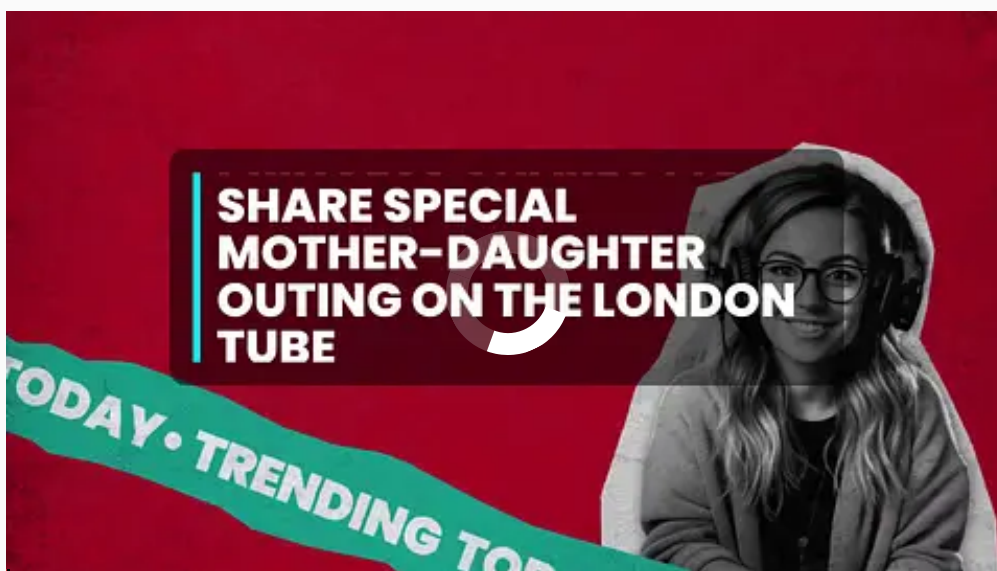
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There isn't a more important elected role in California's political system than that of judge, overseeing both criminal and civil legal cases, meting out justice in our society. And yet, for mostly good reasons, candidates for judicial offices, unlike those for governor or the Legislature, don't wage flashy, advertising-heavy — and expensive — media campaigns.

It would be somehow unseemly. And once judges do get elected to the bench, unless they are found to be corrupt, senile or morally unfit for the post, they usually stay in their roles unopposed. It's mostly when good judges retire that open seats appear on the ballot and attorneys, often current prosecutors or public defenders, vie to finish out their legal careers as judges.

One such open seat on the Nov. 3 ballot is Office No. 65 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court. Two very good candidates survived the four-person primary and made it into the general election, Justin Clayton and Anna Slotky Reitano. Both candidates are rated "Qualified" by the Los Angeles County Bar Association for this important responsibility.

To be sure, both candidates have similar views given their public defender backgrounds. And both have progressive backing that make this a less obvious call for those looking for a conservative candidate. Reitano, for example, previously ran on a pro-reform judicial slate four years ago called the "Defenders of Justice." Clayton, for his part, has the backing of the hard-left Working Families Party and La Defensa, a far-left group advocating for "abolitionist" approaches to jails and police.



That said, neither are obvious radicals or otherwise unserious people.

Clayton, who grew up in South Los Angeles and is a public defender in the legal system there, would be a credible choice for the bench. As he has noted in his campaign, “Throughout my career, I have seen firsthand how critical it is that every person who enters the courtroom feels heard, respected and treated fairly, regardless of their background.”

But we think Reitano is on the whole the best candidate and receives our endorsement.

After coming in second in a four-person primary, she brings a well-rounded legal background spanning both sides of the system. A former child actress who grew up in a working-class household, she transitioned to law after attending Occidental College and UC Davis School of Law. She spent over a decade as a public defender before taking her current role as a deputy county counsel in the Justice and Safety Division.

Reitano knows that prosecutors often gain judicial seats by touting their “tough on crime” backgrounds, and that public defenders are sometimes seen as too, well, easy on crime because their job is to act as lawyers for people accused of often serious crimes. But she notes that in her current county counsel role she often represents law enforcement officers in administrative and employment matters, which brings a different perspective than her opponent currently has.

As she told the editorial board, “Having served in criminal, administrative and governmental advice roles, I have seen legal issues from multiple perspectives and can evaluate cases with the balance, fairness and practical judgment that the public expects from a judge. I bring a system-wide perspective that few judicial candidates can offer, and that no one else is offering in my race.”

While both candidates emphasize fairness, Reitano offers a broader structural perspective from having worked in different roles. As she told us, voters are looking for experienced judges who will follow the law rather than approach cases through an ideological lens: “I understand how the system works. I’m ready to start on day one.... I don’t need to stay comfortable. I need to do what’s right.”

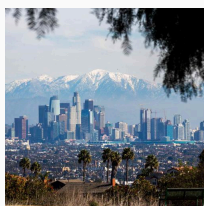
Regarding questions about her last campaign and our concerns about a politicized approach to the bench, she argued, “No endorsement, organization, or past campaign relationship would influence how I decide a case. A judge’s responsibility is to apply the law fairly and impartially, regardless of who supported their campaign.”

Reitano shared with the editorial board “something personally meaningful to me,” a redacted thank-you letter from a former client who had been trafficked as a youth and was later arrested as an adult. “It was a case that could easily have been resolved quickly through a plea agreement. Instead, I spent months working across both Los Angeles and Ventura counties to help secure a resolution focused on treatment rather than punishment,” she told us.

That’s the kind of measured experience that would be very much useful to her when making decisions from the bench.

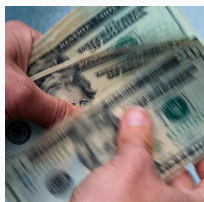
Vote for Anna Slotky Reitano Nov. 3.

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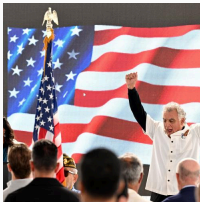
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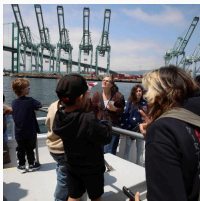
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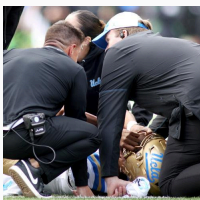
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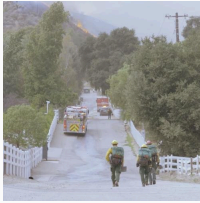
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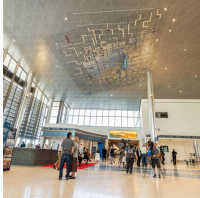
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