

What Is Judicial Independence? Handout 4

Teresa Wants to be a Judge

Teresa Rodriguez has just graduated from law school in California, where she has lived for the past three years. She has done very well in law school, has been recognized by a number of law professors as a good student, has a number of law student friends who come from California, and has been actively working in opposition to Proposition 26, a statewide referendum to end affirmative action. Teresa has been offered a job as a public defender in California.

Teresa comes from Texas, where her family has lived for 30 years and where her father is an official in the local Democratic Party. She has worked on campaigns for family friends and others who have been elected to county offices such as county sheriff, judge and county commissioner. Teresa has been offered a job in the States Attorney's Office prosecuting crime in her hometown in Texas.

Teresa has been offered a job with a law firm in Washington, D.C. This law firm is very well respected, and in the past many of its lawyers have been appointed judges in the local District of Columbia courts.

Looking at the handout entitled [“Judicial Selection Methods—An Overview,”](#) answer the following:

1. Assume that Teresa wants someday to become a judge. What are the arguments for her choosing each of the three places to move to after law school? What are the reasons against moving to each?
2. If you were Teresa, where would you move and why? Consider the job offers, personal reasons, and the likelihood that she can become a judge in each place, taking into consideration its system of selecting judges.
3. One of Teresa's law school professors asks for her recommendation on the method of judicial selection that would insure judicial independence and select the best judges. If you were Teresa, which method would you recommend and why?