



**WEST LA DEMOCRATIC CLUB
APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION OF ENDORSEMENT**

ANNA SLOTKY REITANO

Election Date: **6/2/2026** Complete Name of Office Sought & District/Seat Number:
Judge of the Superior Court, Office No. 65

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that I am a registered Democrat and that the statements in this document and those in any attachments are true and correct. If any part of this application or any information provided during the endorsement process is found to be false, it may be cause for an immediate revocation of any endorsement. I understand that my application is available to any WLADC member upon request.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anna Slotky Reitano', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Anna Slotky Reitano _____ 4/15/2026 _____ Signature of Candidate Print Full Name Date

West LA Democratic Club understands that, as a judge, you have to remain impartial and follow the law, regardless of your particular beliefs. Some of the questions we ask you pertain to your personal beliefs and not how you would rule as a judge who is beholden to applying the law. It is understood by everyone in this committee that sometimes your personal beliefs and the law do not coincide and your answers in this committee do not commit you if you should happen to rule otherwise in a case.

Please provide written answers to the questions below:

1. Why are you running for this office?

I am running for judge because our courts work best when the people presiding over them understand the justice system from multiple perspectives and recognize the realworld consequences of judicial decisions. I have dedicated my entire career to public service in Los Angeles County, working across several parts of the legal system.

My experience includes clerking at the District Attorney's Office during and after law school, handling labor and administrative matters for Sheriff's deputies early in my career, and serving for more than a decade as a Deputy Public Defender representing clients in misdemeanor, serious felony, and juvenile cases, and now working as Deputy County Counsel in the Justice and Safety Division advising departments on public safety policy and alternatives to incarceration.

I have also supervised highprofile civil trials on behalf of the county. Through this work, I've been on all sides of the system- working alongside law enforcement, representing individuals accused of crimes, and now advising departments on broader policy and public safety issues. That breadth of experience gives me a well-rounded perspective and helps guard against bias, because I understand how decisions impact people, families, and communities at every level.

My perspective is also shaped by my lived experience. I have a brother I love who struggles with mental illness and has been involved in the justice system, which has given me a deeply personal understanding of how these systems intersect. As a working mother of three boys, I am invested in the kind of justice system we leave to the next generation- one that is fair, accountable, and worthy of public trust.

What has stayed with me throughout my career is how much a judge matters. The tone they set, how prepared they are, and whether they truly listen shape not only case outcomes, but people's faith in the system itself. I have seen the difference a thoughtful, fair, and evenhanded judge can make, and I am committed to bringing that same approach to the bench.

2. What is your preliminary rating from the LA County Bar Association?

Qualified- meaning I possess the "professional ability, experience, competence, integrity and temperament indicative of fitness to perform the judicial function satisfactorily"

3. Briefly describe your educational and employment background.

Occidental College 2005,
UC Davis School of Law, JD 2008

In law school, I externed with Legal Services of Northern California, winning my first hearing in 2006 to get my client's Social Security benefits back after he was a victim of identity theft. I also clerked at the DA's office both during law school and while waiting for bar results.

I handled criminal defense on my own initially, and later handled labor and employment matters for a firm, Green & Shinee, that represented Los Angeles Sheriff's deputies and other public safety officers through their union (ALADS) in internal affairs investigations, homicide investigations, and administrative matters.

Approximately 5 years into my practice of law, I became a trial attorney for the Office of the Public Defender. I stayed for over 10 years. I was in court every day, handling everything from misdemeanors to murder, with 38 completed trials and adjudications. 3 years of my practice was spent solely in juvenile court. The last 5.5 years were in serious felonies at San Fernando Courthouse.

In 2024, I left the Public Defender's Office to become Deputy County Counsel for the Los Angeles Office of the County Counsel in an effort to broaden my experience and get more civil and policy experience. My current position is diverse in practice- I supervise high-profile civil suits involving the Sheriff's Department and Probation and serve as General Counsel to the Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department (JCOD), Department of Youth Development (DYD), and Community Safety Implementation team (CSIT). All of these departments are focused on community investment, treatment, public safety, and alternatives to incarceration.

When my kids asked me to explain what I am currently doing, I said that I am ensuring that the *framework* of the system is more equitable and fair, and that I am helping push services, rather than focusing on these same things one *person* at a time like I did as a public defender.

This description does clarify it for everyone else, as well, so I am throwing it in here. It is similar to what I was doing before, but it mixes the criminal work with policy, politics, and a broader foundation in the law. It provides me with a valuable and unique understanding of the current legal climate in Los Angeles, where it is going, and how we are going to get there collectively as residents. This is valuable because judges can and should be aware of evolution in the legal landscape, as well as the changing infrastructure to meet those needs. While some judges actively stay educated on these changes, many unfortunately do not.

4. Have you previously run for or held any elective or appointive public offices? If so, which and when? Have you run for a judicial seat before? If so, please state when, the result, and any ratings you received from any bar associations.

In 2022, I ran for judge as part of the original Defenders of Justice effort, which sought to help the public better understand judicial elections and encourage greater professional diversity on the bench. I received a Qualified rating.

Historically, many judicial candidates have come from prosecution backgrounds, and my message, as well as the Defenders of Justice effort, was aimed at encouraging candidates with a broader range of experience to serve as judges. I advanced to the general election and came very close to winning, earning endorsements from numerous clubs and organizations. That campaign built a strong foundation of community support and demonstrated that voters respond to candidates with broad experience and a commitment to fairness. It also changed the narrative- prior to 2022, people running for judge talked mostly about how many people they convicted.

Now, candidates discuss their experience with more than just convictions, and tend to focus on their experience with mental health treatment, diversion, and giving people the chance to get back on their feet. This was, in part, because I was consciously pushing the conversation further- introducing different perspectives and backgrounds to run for judge really did foster a more thoughtful campaign process amongst judges.

In 2024, I chose not to run while bonding with my third son, who was born shortly after the 2022 election. Instead, I shared the lessons I learned from my campaign with other candidates considering judicial office, several of whom went on to run and win their races.

I am running again with more experience and an evolved philosophy, but my values and goals of balancing the bench with diverse perspectives remains. I believe I have much more to offer this time around personally and professionally.

5. **Are you a bench officer? If yes, please identify the position you currently hold.** No
6. **Have you ever been disciplined for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct including sanctions required to be reported to the California State Bar by any court, administrative agency, bar association, disciplinary committee, or another professional group? If so, please give particulars.**

No. Additionally, performance reviews were all above par, and I had no complaints. I am happy to share my performance evaluations upon request.

7. **List the five most significant cases in which you have been involved during your legal career and the nature of your involvement. Alternatively, if your practice does not involve litigation, describe the five most significant matters in which you have been involved during your legal career and the nature of your involvement. If currently a judge, list the five most significant matters with which you were involved prior to your appointment.**

1) Federal Civil Rights/Wrongful death

- a) This case is still in the process of having the settlement approved, so I am not at liberty to discuss in full yet.
- b) I supervised this federal civil rights/wrongful death case for the County (see the second link above) and facilitated a proposed settlement amount of \$2,500,000 with a mediator and trial counsel after a young person died in custody. I am currently in the process of having the settlement approved, which involves claims board memos, appearances in front of the claims board, public safety cluster, and potentially the board of supervisors.
- c) I am including this because it was a big settlement amount, but I think it is a great example of how I was able to save the County and, thus, County residents' money, while also helping to reach as fair and just an agreement as possible given the circumstances.

2) PJ52244- Minor P.B.

a) Juvenile Adjudication- Attempted murder and assault (707(b) offense)

- i) I was the trial attorney and handled it from start to finish. Client was 17 at the time of the incident, he turned 18 shortly after. Since client was a juvenile he did not have the right to a jury, only an adjudication in front of a judge. The adjudication lasted almost two weeks. I filed multiple motions to create a solid record. The petition was sustained (essentially- the judge found my client found guilty). However, my initial legal arguments were ultimately successful when the attempted murder charge was overturned on appeal in the Second Appellate District, case B298954 (unpublished). This means that not only did I do my job, but the court's decision was overturned in my client's favor.
- ii) Our defense was self defense, and at the very least imperfect self defense. which would negate the mens rea required for attempted murder (intent to kill). Court claimed it found him guilty of "2nd degree attempted murder" which does not legally exist, but also illustrates that I did a great job of

proving mitigation. It was overturned because of the legal impossibility of 2nd degree murder.

3) PA092914- Antonio P.

- a) Trial attorney for this PC 266i(a)(1) where the best offer before trial was 12 years. Client was facing 25-life at trial because of a prior conviction rendering this a superstrike, risking 25life. Client refused to plead to any deal, because he insisted he did not do what he was accused of.
- b) This was also a twodefendant trial, so I had to work with an alternate public defender on the case. I did the heavy lifting on the case because my client ended up testifying.
- c) This was one of several cases where LAPD targeted black men specifically for pandering charges, and the circumstances surrounding the charges were heavily manipulated. I was able to obtain an entrapment instruction and a 55 minute deliberation resulting in a Not Guilty verdict.
 - i) This was a significant case because it also led to me working alongside Public Defenders in Van Nuys who were also receiving these cases from similar operations with the same officers. We coordinated efforts to fight all of the cases.
 - ii) I also had another case from the same operation that I ended up getting dismissed after filing a Racial Justice Act (RJA) Motion when it was first an option back in 2021 for PA092970- David Jackson, illustrating my ability to adapt to new law and my willingness to explore its' applications. I did not see these operations again in the three years I remained at the public defender's office since this was dismissed, and I do believe it is because we made them realize it was severely flawed and unjust.

4) PA094123- Seymour W.

- a) I was the trial attorney- directed the investigation and handled the litigation. Charged with 2 counts of PC 211/ robbery, gun allegations, ammo possession, and a 3rd strike, so it was a 25-life case. Client claimed innocence from the beginning. b) Held a daylong 1538.5 with three witnesses for the defense that was denied by the court.
- c) Appointed and had a DNA expert on call to testify (DNA on gun and bullets recovered did not match client)
- d) After months of declaring ready and unilateral delays by the court, we were finally able to declare ready. Court granted the defense's request to dismiss the case for undue delay. Pandemic delayed the case for 1.5 years. The client declared his innocence the entire time and turned down multiple settlement offers requesting a trial, insisting he was not the perpetrator.

5) PA095051- Dean G.

- a) On 11/1/23, I obtained a PC 459, 2nd degree (non strike) plea with time served. This was 25-life case because the DA would not strike the prior strike, and a previous attempt at Mental Health Diversion (MHD) failed because the judge and DA made it clear they did not believe in MHD.
- b) Judge denied collaborative court, even though the client qualified.
- c) Client ended up in Mental Health court because he continued to decompensate in custody, and he was ultimately found incompetent. He was brought back

downtown due to needing a wheelchair (as his health was declining in custody mentally and physically. San Fernando is unable to accommodate wheelchairs). He was ultimately found competent again.

- d) I was able to show the DA downtown the absurdity of the case and how overcharged it was. DA agreed, recognized that the prior strikes were old, and gave my client a time served offer on a 2nd degree burglary instead of a 1st degree (so it became a non strike instead of a strike). Client was able to go home that day.
- e) This case is a great example of the work that goes into cases that might not be good for trial but still demands a closer look. It also illustrates the inconsistency of results depending on the courthouse. At San Fernando Court, it was notoriously more punitive than it was downtown.

8. If elected, people from disparate educational and socioeconomic backgrounds are likely to appear before your court.

a. How important is it to you that any of these members of the public have a basic understanding of the proceedings in your court?

It is fundamental. A courtroom should not feel like a place where only lawyers understand what's happening. If people leave confused about what occurred, the system has not fully done its job.

My perspective comes directly from my work with the public. I am informed by my experience at Legal Services, clerking at the District Attorney's Office and working with witnesses, and especially my time as a public defender, where I presented people from every kind of background - different education levels, languages, life experiences, and familiarity with the legal system. Many were encountering the courts for the first time. I saw how intimidating and opaque the process can be, and how that confusion can affect someone's ability to participate meaningfully in a case that directly impacts their life.

In my current role with the County, working alongside communitybased organizations and departments collaborating with them, I continue to engage with mindsets that often feel disconnected from institutions, including the courts. That has reinforced for me that access to justice is not just about being present, it is about being able to understand, engage, and be heard.

If elected, I would prioritize ensuring that everyone in my courtroom has a clear, basic understanding of the proceedings by using plain language, explaining rulings and rights, and being attentive to whether someone appears confused or overwhelmed. Ultimately, fairness depends on understanding. People are more likely to trust the process and comply with court orders when they feel respected and understand what is happening.

b. Practically speaking, why do you think this is or is not important?

It is important for three reasons: fairness, efficiency, and trust.

People cannot meaningfully exercise their rights or make informed decisions if they do not understand the proceedings. When individuals understand what is expected of them, they are more likely to comply with court orders and avoid unnecessary delays. And when people understand the process, even if they disagree with the outcome, they are more likely to view the system as legitimate.

c. What steps would you take to make sure that lay- people who appear before your court fully understand the proceedings?

I would make it a priority to ensure that everyone in my courtroom has a clear, basic understanding of the proceedings. That includes using plain language instead of legal jargon, explaining rulings and rights on the record, and being attentive to whether someone appears confused or overwhelmed.

I would also ensure meaningful language access when needed and remain mindful of cultural and educational differences that may affect how information is understood.

Having spent nearly 20 years working directly with the public in the legal field including my early work as an extern at Legal Services in 2006, I have developed the ability to communicate complex legal concepts clearly, respectfully, and in a way that allows people to meaningfully engage in their cases.

d. Do you believe the answers to these previous questions vary at all depending on if you're dealing with criminal defendants versus civil litigants versus jurors and other non-party members of the public?

The core principle remains the same. Everyone should understand what is happening, but the approach may vary depending on the person's role.

For criminal defendants, the stakes are immediate and significant, so it is critical they understand their rights and the consequences of decisions. For civil litigants, especially those who are self-represented, clarity around procedures and expectations is essential. For jurors, clear instructions are necessary so they can properly fulfill their role. In all cases, the goal is the same: a process that is understandable, fair, and accessible to everyone involved.

9. Please list your top five (5) individual and organizational endorsements.

Orgs:

Citizens for Accountable Leadership
Northeast Democratic Club
Alhambra Democratic Club
Democrats for Neighborhood Action
East Area Progressive Democrats
Canada Crescenta Democratic Club

Individuals:

Hon. Valerie Salkin
Hon. Holly Hancock
Hon. Joel Lofton
Hon. Patrick Hare
Hon. Leslie Gutierrez
Nick Schultz, 44th Dist. Assemblymember

10. How long have you been a registered Democrat? Have you been registered as a member of another political party? If so, which party and why?

I have been a democrat since 1999. I was never a member of another political party.

11. Please list any organizations you are a member of, including the length of your membership and any leadership positions you have held in each organization.

Women Lawyer's Association of Los Angeles, 2026

County Counsel Association (Los Angeles)	2024- Present
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2024- Present

County Counsel Association, California

Parent Teacher's Association,

Fremont Elementary School-
Rosemont Jr. High-

2016- Present

2024-Present

2022- Present

Sisterhood Women's Org., Temple Sinai, Glendale

Public Defender's Association (PDA)

Elected Representative

2015-2022

Treasurer

2018-2022

Los Angeles County Public Defender Union Steward

2020-2022

California State Bar

2009-Present

12. Please feel free to include any other information you would like us to know about you.

My current role at County Counsel involves a significant amount of privileged work, so I'm limited in what I can share in detail. That said, it has meaningfully expanded my skillset and strengthened what I bring to the bench. It has given me substantial civil experience and, just as importantly, a deeper understanding of how county departments operate, how their goals align or sometimes compete, and the infrastructure they provide that allows courts to function effectively. I've gained insight into the broader systems that intersect with the judiciary, and that perspective is critical in making informed, practical decisions.

While I have strong courtroom experience, I recognize that every case is unique and often requires a specific approach. That perspective has only deepened through my work across different areas of law and with a wide range of stakeholders.

I also want to highlight something less technical but equally important. On my first day back from maternity leave, I received a thank you letter (attached) from a former client who was a victim of human trafficking as a youth and ended up in the criminal system as an adult because of the trauma. It was meaningful not just because of the timing, but because it reflected the trust we had built. It reminded me that one of my strengths has been my ability to connect with people, to ensure they feel heard and respected, even in difficult circumstances. Many of the individuals I represented stayed in touch or wanted to update me on their lives, which I believe speaks to the relationships I built.

Even if I am not assigned to a criminal courtroom, that experience with people and problemsolving matters. It reflects my commitment to treating people with dignity and to fostering trust in the legal process, qualities that are essential in any courtroom.

Anna Reitano

From: K [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, May 20, 2023 7:20 PM
To: Anna Reitano
Subject: Thank you

CAUTION: External Email. Proceed Responsibly.

Hi Anna,

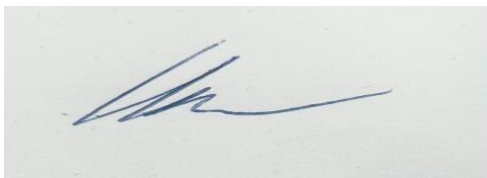
Ventura and LA modified the CPOs. And last week the DA agreed to delete the court order on supervision.

I took [REDACTED] to the Bug Fair at the Natural History Museum today, it was our first time alone in 20 months. Im picking him up to visit my home tomorrow. DCFS says he is on track to be returned to me within a few months. He's coming home Anna.

Absolutely none of this would have been possible if you didn't fight for me to get Re-Entry. I can't even write this to you without tearing up. That arrest, my time in jail, Prototypes, therapy, probation, AA and God have changed my life for forever. You changed my life. Thank you for fighting so hard to get me the help that I needed.



Candidate's Signature _____

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial 'L' or 'M' followed by a series of connected loops and a long, horizontal tail stroke extending to the right.