



# The Honorable Ronald L. Read

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## About the report

In making its recommendation to voters about whether a judge should be retained, JPEC considers the judge's legal ability, integrity and judicial temperament, administrative skills, procedural fairness, public comment, and judicial discipline records as well as compliance with judicial education, fitness for office, and case-under-advisement time standards. If a judge meets minimum standards, there is a legal presumption that commissioners will vote to recommend the judge be retained. If a judge fails to meet minimum standards, there is a legal presumption that commissioners will vote not to recommend the judge for retention. Included below are the Survey and Courtroom Observation Reports. The Survey Report summarizes information collected from attorneys, court employees, jurors (district and some justice court judges only) and juvenile court professionals (juvenile court judges only). Surveys are anonymous and inclusion in the survey is based on court-appearance records. The Courtroom Observation Report summarizes information reported by at least four trained, volunteer court observers per judge.

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## Survey Report

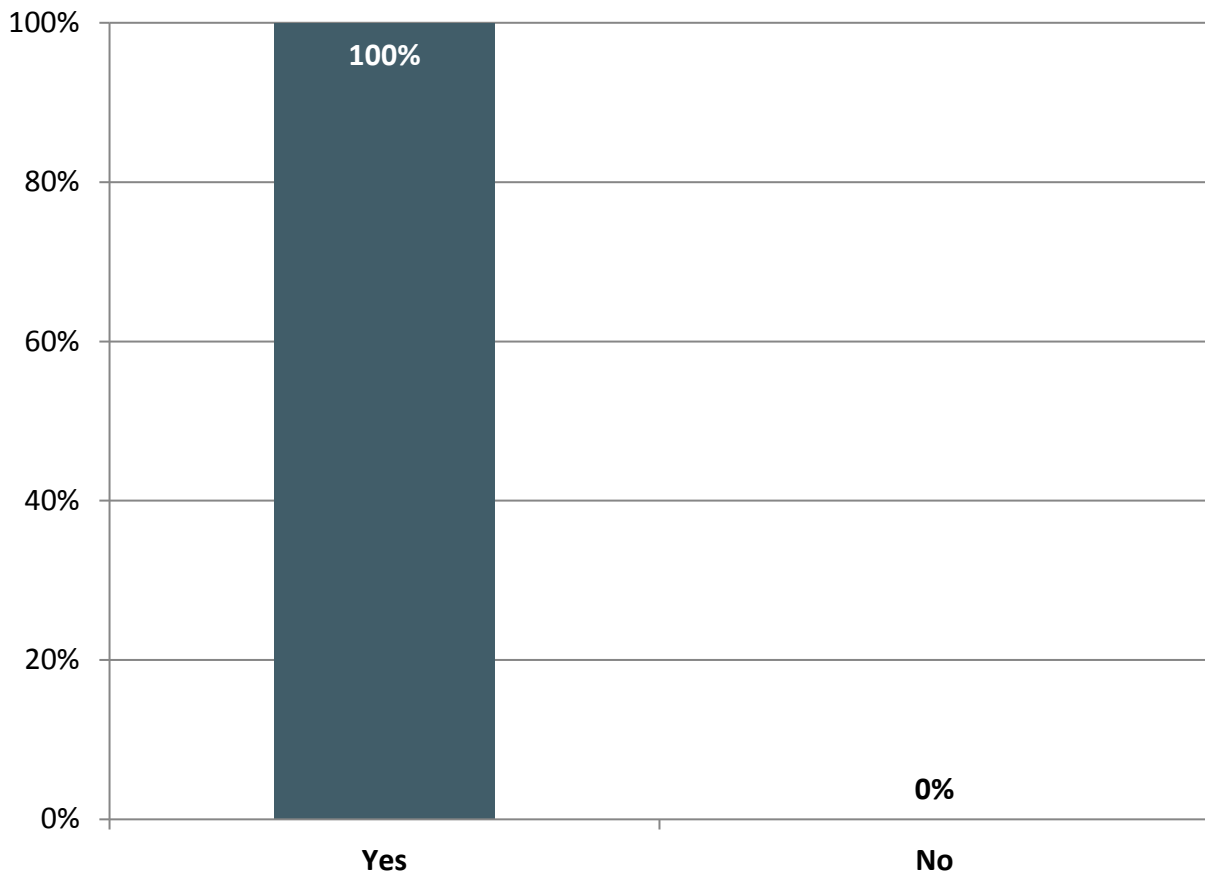
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### Survey Results

For Judge Ronald L. Read, 33% of qualified survey respondents submitted surveys. Of those who responded, 24 agreed they had worked with Judge Ronald L. Read enough to evaluate the judge's performance. This report reflects these 24 responses. For more information on the survey, please see Survey Information. For more information about the evaluation process, please see How to Read the Results.

### Retention Question

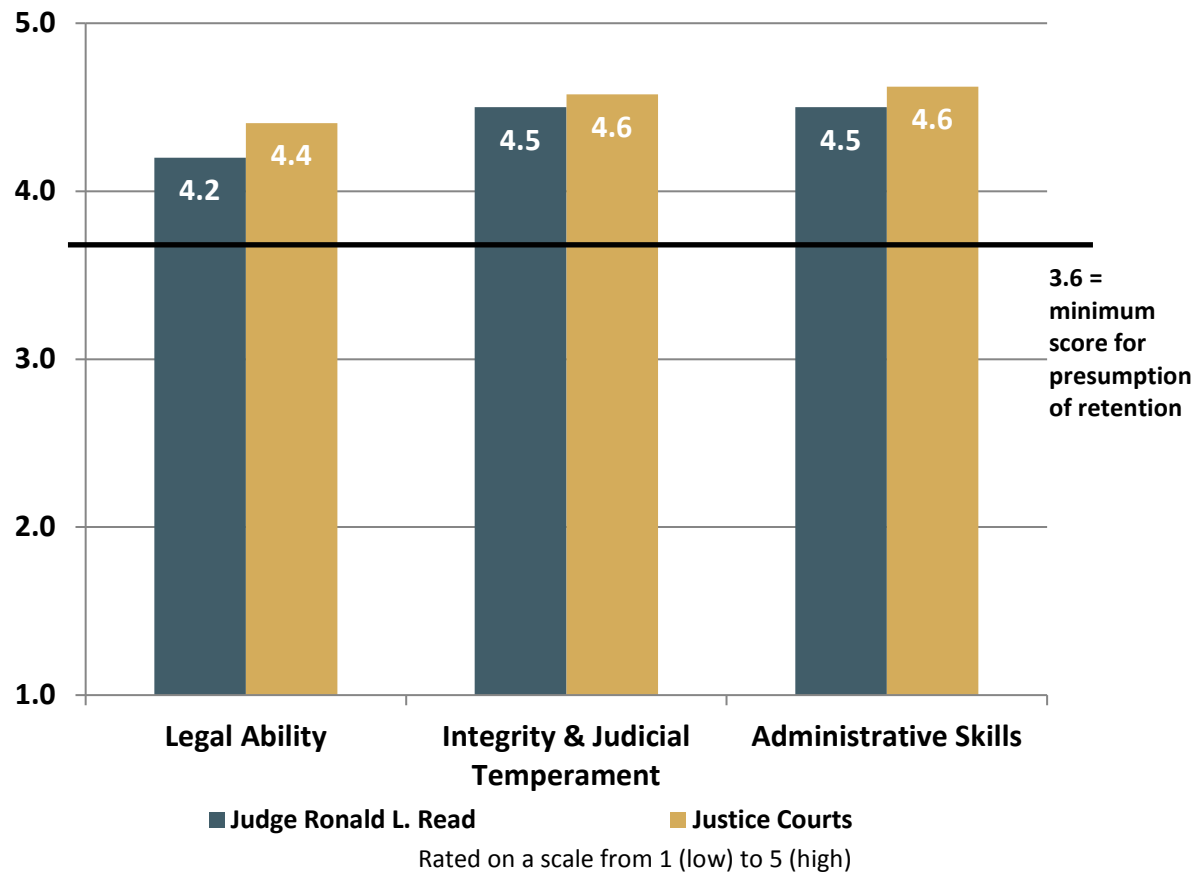
**Survey Question: Would you recommend that Judge Ronald L. Read be retained?**



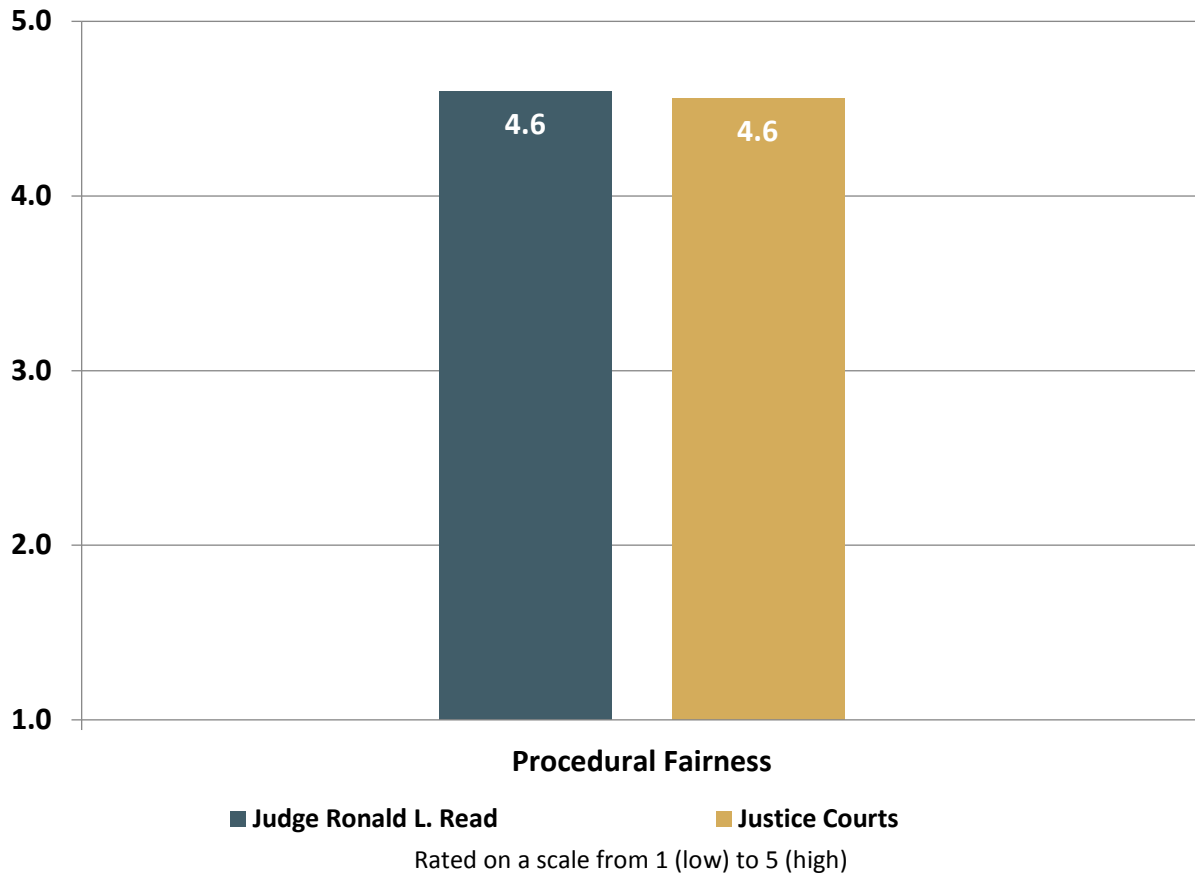
## Survey Report

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### Statutory Category Scores



### Procedural Fairness Score



For procedural fairness, the judge must demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence that the judge’s conduct in court promotes procedural fairness for court participants.

**Table A. Overall Procedural Fairness Determination (for Retention Only)**

Category	Judge Ronald L. Read
Procedural Fairness	Pass



## Survey Report

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### Responses to Survey Questions

Category	Question	Judge Ronald L. Read	Justice Courts
Legal Ability	The judge followed the legal rules (e.g. civil procedure, criminal procedure, evidence, juvenile, appellate) that applied to the case at issue.	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Legal Ability	The judge made adequate findings of fact and applied the law to those facts.	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Legal Ability	The judge followed legal precedent or explained departures from precedent.	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Legal Ability	The judge only considered evidence in the record.	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Legal Ability	The judge based opinions/decisions on applicable legal principles and controlling law.	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Legal Ability	The judge's opinions contained a readily understandable ruling.	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>

Rated on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high)



## Survey Report

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### Responses to Survey Questions (continued)

Category	Question	Judge Ronald L. Read	Justice Courts
Integrity & Judicial Temperament	The judge made sure that everyone's behavior in the courtroom was proper.	4.3	4.7
Integrity & Judicial Temperament	The judge paid attention to what went on in court.	4.5	4.7
Integrity & Judicial Temperament	The judge's personal life or beliefs did not impair his or her judicial performance.	4.5	4.4
Integrity & Judicial Temperament	The judge demonstrated respect for the time and expense of those attending court.	4.4	4.5
Integrity & Judicial Temperament	The judge worked to ensure that the participants understood the court proceedings.	4.6	4.6
Integrity & Judicial Temperament	The judge conducted proceedings without favoritism.	4.4	4.5
Integrity & Judicial Temperament	The judge considered arguments from all sides before ruling.	4.6	4.5
Integrity & Judicial Temperament	The judge demonstrated diligent work habits.	4.5	4.6
Integrity & Judicial Temperament	The judge maintained a professional demeanor in the courtroom.	4.7	4.7

Rated on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high)



## Survey Report

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### Responses to Survey Questions (continued)

Category	Question	Judge Ronald L. Read	Justice Courts
Administrative Skills	The judge was prepared for court proceedings.	4.5	4.7
Administrative Skills	The judge's interactions with courtroom participants and staff were professional and constructive.	4.7	4.7
Administrative Skills	The judge managed the court calendar effectively.	4.4	4.6
Administrative Skills	The judge convened court without undue delay.	4.6	4.5
Administrative Skills	The judge ruled in a timely fashion.	4.3	4.7
Administrative Skills	The judge communicated clearly.	4.4	4.7
Category	Question	Judge Ronald L. Read	Justice Courts
Procedural Fairness	The judge treated all courtroom participants with equal respect.	4.6	4.6
Procedural Fairness	The judge performed his or her duties fairly and impartially.	4.6	4.5
Procedural Fairness	The judge promoted public trust and confidence in the courts through his or her conduct.	4.5	4.6
Procedural Fairness	The judge provided the court participants with a meaningful opportunity to be heard.	4.7	4.6

Rated on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high)



## Survey Report

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### Adjective Question Summary

Survey respondents rated how well a list of adjectives describes the judge. A rating of 1 indicates the adjective *does not describe the judge at all*, and a rating of 5 indicates the adjective *describes the judge very well*. For the positive adjectives, a higher average score is better. For the negative adjectives, a lower average score is better.

Descriptor	Judge Ronald L. Read	Justice Courts	
Attentive	4.4	4.5	<b>Positive Adjectives HIGHER average score is better</b>
Capable	4.2	4.5	
Ethical	4.7	4.6	
Knowledgeable	4.2	4.4	
Impartial	4.2	4.2	
Open-minded	4.6	4.2	
Disrespectful	1.2	1.3	<b>Negative Adjectives LOWER average score is better</b>
Impatient	1.3	1.5	
Indecisive	1.8	1.5	
Unprepared	1.5	1.4	





## Survey Information

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This report presents the results from the 2017 survey process, conducted by Market Decisions, LLC. A detailed description of the survey methodology is available separately on the Utah Judicial Performance Evaluation website.

### Description of Sample

The following groups are invited to participate in the survey process:

- Attorneys with appearances before the judge,
- Court staff who work with the judge,
- Juvenile court professionals who work in the judge's courtroom on a regular and continuing basis to provide substantive input to the judge (juvenile court judges only), and
- Jurors who participate in jury deliberation (district and justice court judges only).

With the exception of the attorney survey, the survey contractor attempts to survey all court staff and juvenile court professionals who work with the judge and all jurors who reach the point of jury deliberation. The lists of court staff and juvenile court professionals are provided by the courts and by the Division of Child and Family Services and Juvenile Justice Services. A list of jurors is created after each trial. All lists are forwarded to the surveyor, Market Decisions, LLC.

For the attorney survey, a representative sample of attorneys is drawn to evaluate each judge based on appearances over a designated time period. The sample is weighted to select those with the greatest experience before the judge, assuming that these people will have a better knowledge base about the judge than those with less experience. Attorneys are first stratified into three groups: those with one or more trial appearances, those with three or more non-trial appearances, and those with one to two non-trial appearances. Attorneys within each sample are then randomized prior to selection. Selection begins with attorneys who have trial experience, then those with a greater number of non-trial appearances (if needed), and finally those with fewer non-trial appearances (if needed).

### Summary of Survey Methods

Surveys are conducted online, using web-based survey software. Each qualified respondent receives an initial email notification signed by the Chief Justice and JPEC Chairperson. Next, an email invitation, signed by JPEC's Executive Director and the Utah State Bar President, contains links to all the individual surveys each respondent is invited to complete. A reminder email is sent one week later to those who did not respond by completing and submitting a survey. This is followed by at least two additional reminder emails sent to respondents over the next three weeks. If a respondent completes only part of the survey, he or she is able to finish the survey at a later time. Once a respondent has completed the survey for a specific judge, that survey is locked and cannot be accessed again.



The number of questions included in the survey varies, ranging from 9 (jurors) to 35 (attorneys with an appearance before an appellate court judge). Each question is evaluated on a sliding scale ranging from 1 (inadequate) to 5 (outstanding).

Responses to individual questions are used to calculate averaged scores in three statutory categories: Legal Ability, Integrity & Judicial Temperament, and Administrative Skills. Judges also receive an average score in Procedural Fairness.

### **Evaluation Period**

The retention evaluation period for judges standing for election in 2018 began on January 1, 2016 and ended on September 30, 2017.



# Courtroom Observation Report

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## Evaluative Criteria

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
<b>RESPECT</b>	
Listening & focus	Listening refers to all indications of attention and engagement through active listening. Giving voice to those in court is included below under “Considered voice”.
Well-prepared & efficient	Efficiency refers to the judge’s behaviors. The court’s efficiency appears below under “Courtroom tone & atmosphere”.
Respect for other's time	This includes the starting time of sessions as well as all interactions with those in court that take into consideration the value of their time.
Courtesy, politeness, and general demeanor	This refers to respectful behaviors generally, as well as behaviors directed at specific individuals that indicate respect for a person’s value or status.
Body language	This refers to eye contact and facial expressions, general body language, and engaged behavior.
Voice quality	This refers to both mechanical qualities such as pitch and volume, and emotional qualities such as inexpressive, sarcastic or exasperated tone.
Courtroom tone & atmosphere	This refers more generally to the tone and atmosphere of the courtroom.
<b>NEUTRALITY</b>	
Consistent and equal treatment	This refers to listening to all sides, and treating individuals in similar situations similarly.
Demonstrates concern for individual needs	This refers to concern for individual differences and giving due regard to the individual’s specific situation. Expressing concern that individuals understand the proceedings is included below under “Ensures information understood”.
Unhurried and careful	This refers to allowing sufficient time for the judge and those in court to conduct themselves in a thorough manner.
<b>VOICE</b>	
Considered voice	This refers both to allowing those in court to express themselves and to the judge’s consideration of what was expressed in his/her statements or decision.
Formal voice	This refers to giving voice based on required procedure without apparent consideration by the judge of what was expressed.
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	
Communicates clearly	This refers both to clarity of speech and to the use of language appropriate to the listener.
Ensures information understood	This refers to active attention by the judge in ensuring those in court understand all information relevant to them, and includes translation and comprehension for non native English speakers.
Provides adequate explanations	This refers to providing sufficient explanation of the basis of decisions and of legal procedure and terminology to ensure that those in court understand proceedings relevant to them.



## FOUR OVERVIEW SECTIONS

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Overall assessment	<p>The first statement in this section is an overall summary of the entire set of observer comments.</p> <p>The second statement indicates the number of observers indicating that they would feel comfortable appearing before the judge.</p>
Widely agreed-upon themes	<p>Behaviors reported by all (or almost all) observers and thus well established. Deficits mentioned here were widely reported and therefore merit attention.</p> <p>The subsequent statements are not intended to be a complete summary of the observers comments, but rather highlight the most frequently noted and forcefully expressed themes in the way that the observers expressed them, with the goal of evoking an overall sense of the entire set of observer comments.</p>
Minority observations	<p>Behaviors noted by two (or possibly three) observers that would be worth building on (if desirable) or otherwise thinking about avoiding.</p> <p>Not every behavior reported by a minority of observers is summarized here, only those that reflect a notable or somewhat discrepant perspective that was not widely agreed upon.</p>
Anomalous comments	<p>Comments of one (or in rare cases two) observers that reflect a markedly different or decidedly contradictory perspective from all other observers are included here. They are intended to stimulate reflection, such as: why were these observers affected by this behavior, or does this particular situation tend to lead to this uncharacteristic behavior?</p> <p>Not every anomalous comment in the report is included in this summary section. While all have been included in the report, some are not included in this summary section because they are too minor, or appear to reflect something about the observer rather than the judge.</p>

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### Italicized text

Throughout the report, italicized text refers to actual words or phrases used by the observers.

### Terminology

In all three overview sections, paragraphs are introduced with the following terminology.

If the number of observers is specified, e.g. “All observers reported...” or “Three observers reported...”, then every statement in the paragraph was mentioned or implied or alluded to by that number of observers.

If the word “variously” is added, e.g. “All observers variously reported...” or “Three observers variously reported...”, then not every statement in the paragraph was directly mentioned or implied or alluded to by every one of those observers, but rather the sense of all the statements in the paragraph taken together was.

To avoid repetition, the word “variously” is not used to open every paragraph in every detail box of the report, even though it generally applies.



# Content Analysis

## Overview

OVERALL ASSESSMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All observers were positive about Judge Read.</li> <li>All observers reported confidence that if appearing before Judge Read they would be treated fairly.</li> </ul>
WIDELY AGREED-UPON THEMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All observers variously reported that Judge Read listened carefully and was efficient and highly organized. He welcomed defendants by name, thanked them and wished them good luck. While he did not smile and his demeanor was business-like, forthright, down to earth, and professional, he was also polite, friendly, and courteous, and kind to confused or unstable participants. His voice was comforting, and he looked most speakers in the eye showing he was interested in what they had to say, although he was less comfortable making eye contact when sentencing. He was consistent and impartial, dealt with each case in a thorough and unhurried manner, and went the extra mile to ensure that individuals' rights were upheld. Observers provided many examples of Judge Read's care, sympathy and compassion for defendants, and his willingness to accommodate their individual needs as long as the state's rights were not infringed. He gave each participant ample opportunity to express their positions and concerns and asked if they had any questions. He made sure defendants understood their rights in detail and reiterated important points in his instructions.</li> <li>All observers reported that Judge Read was particularly strong in ensuring that each person understood what was going on. He consistently explained what he was doing, explained where defendants should go next and how to fill out paperwork, and he patiently explained the different pleas, fines, and the ins and outs of community service.</li> </ul>
MINORITY OBSERVATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
ANOMALOUS COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One observer commented that Judge Read spoke rather quickly and some defendants might have been a bit lost ("Voice quality").</li> <li>One observer commented on a statement made by Judge Read that suggested he could be more aware of the impact of his statements (see "Demonstrates concern for individual needs").</li> </ul>

### Summary and *exemplar language* of four observers' comments

<i>RESPECT</i>	
Listening & focus	One observer reported that Judge Read <i>listened carefully to each person as they spoke.</i>
Well-prepared & efficient	Three observers reported that Judge Read was <i>efficient and highly organized.</i> He had <i>a lot to get through with a lot of paperwork,</i> and he was <i>able to stay on top of it and make sure everyone had what they needed.</i>
Courtesy, politeness, and general demeanor	All observers reported that Judge Read <i>welcomed each defendant to court by name,</i> asking " <i>How are you?</i> " and <i>thanking them as they identified themselves.</i> He wished them <i>good luck</i> and <i>reminded them to contact the court if they could not comply and to avoid being arrested on a warrant.</i> However, one observer commented that while he <i>ended each case with some version of, "Thank you, have a nice day,"</i> it was <i>more of a way of moving on than a sincere expression.</i>



Courtesy, politeness, and general demeanor <i>continued</i>	While Judge Read <i>didn't smile</i> , he was <i>polite, friendly, unfailingly courteous</i> , also <i>forthright, professional, down to earth, clearly in command of his courtroom and comfortable in his position</i> , and his demeanor was <i>open, calm, and pleasant</i> . He was <i>kind to a nervous man with mental disabilities who was confused about where he was supposed to be</i> , and he <i>stayed calm when an unstable young woman started yelling and swearing</i> . He <i>invited a defendant who was late to come up to the table to fill out the forms because "it might be more comfortable."</i>
Body language	Three observers reported that Judge Read <i>looked defendants in the eye</i> . His <i>physical bearing and eye contact</i> indicated that <i>he enjoyed talking to each individual and was sincerely interested in what they had to say</i> . One observer reported that Judge Read <i>made eye contact with some but not all of those he was addressing as he had to do a lot of reading from the plea agreements</i> , although he <i>made an effort to look up from time to time</i> . The observer felt that he was <i>less comfortable making eye contact when he was sentencing than when doing other business</i> .
Voice quality	One observer reported that Judge Read has a <i>very comforting voice in all situations</i> , but another reported that he <i>talked rather quickly</i> and there were <i>a couple of defendants who might have been a bit lost</i> .
Courtroom tone & atmosphere	Three observers reported that the atmosphere was <i>formal</i> , and Judge Read <i>conducts his courtroom through paperwork concerning statements of understanding of rights and potential penalties that are filled out and signed by defendants</i> .
<b>NEUTRALITY</b>	
Consistent and equal treatment	Two observers reported that Judge Read was <i>consistent with each case</i> . When a defendant was a <i>slight acquaintance of his he bent over backwards to ensure that the defendant was comfortable with him</i> and added he was <i>more than willing to recuse himself</i> , but the defendant appeared to have <i>complete confidence in his impartiality</i> .
Demonstrates concern for individual needs	All observers reported that Judge Read cared about the people in the courtroom, despite his very <i>business-like demeanor</i> . While <i>consistent in sentencing</i> he showed <i>sympathy and compassion</i> , and he had <i>absolutely no problem with accommodating the needs of defendants so long as the rights of the state were not infringed</i> . He was <i>cognizant that even a small monthly payment could have a severe impact</i> , and he <i>made every effort to accommodate their individual needs with a payment schedule that would not create an impossible burden</i> . In one case he gave the defendant <i>two years to pay the entire fine</i> and did not require <i>monthly payments</i> as it was <i>unlikely he could accommodate that in the near term</i> . He explained to every defendant taking a plea in abeyance that <i>if they could not comply they should come back and talk to him so they wouldn't lose that plea</i> , and he <i>readily allowed a defendant concerned about his job to appear at a later date via phone call</i> . He also made numerous suggestions that ensured defendants would <i>maintain their rights</i> , for example, <i>suggesting a defendant change her plea, stopping a defendant from telling about his case</i> , and <i>suggesting a different legal option that might suit a defendant's goals better</i> .  One observer suggested that Judge Read <i>could be more aware of the impact of his statements</i> . After hearing a <i>recommended sentence</i> , the judge asked the defendant <i>if he understood that the judge was not bound by the recommendations</i> , and when the defendant was <i>a bit startled by this</i> , the judge <i>leaned forward to say that in the over one year he had been on the bench he had never gone against the prosecutor's recommendation and that this should give the defendant some confidence</i> . The observer was <i>completely amazed and very disappointed</i> as this suggested the judge may have <i>pre-judged the sentence and was trying to ensure the defendant accepted the plea</i> , and also that the judge <i>does not necessarily think for himself on the bench</i> .
Unhurried and careful	Two observers reported that Judge Read dealt with each case in a <i>thorough and unhurried manner</i> . He <i>went the extra mile to ensure that individuals' rights were upheld</i> , in one case <i>very carefully going through the charging paperwork</i> with a defendant who was backtracking on his plea, so the judge could ensure that there was no mistake in the charges and the individual agreed to what he was pleading guilty to.



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VOICE

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Considered voice	Three observers reported that Judge Read was <i>very comfortable</i> in <i>consistently giving each participant ample opportunity to express their positions and concerns</i> . He asked, “ <i>If you have any questions, let me know,</i> ” or, “ <i>Any questions at all?</i> ” One observer was <i>extremely impressed</i> at Judge Read’s <i>handling of a well-publicized case involving a charge of assault</i> in which the judge <i>asked pointed questions and allowed each side to express their concerns</i> leading to a <i>clear, respectful, professional, thorough, and remarkably civil discussion</i> .
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COMMUNICATION

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Ensures information understood	Two observers reported that Judge Read <i>explained defendants’ rights in detail</i> and made sure they understood. He <i>reiterated important points to make sure defendants understood their instructions</i> , and he was <i>very willing to answer questions</i> .
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One observer noted that because most defendants in justice court are unrepresented, and *a couple of defendants who were confused weren’t given a lot of time to think about their pleas*, the observer suggested that *his approach with one defendant to reword his question in order to clarify it might have been helpful with other defendants*.

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Provides adequate explanations	All observers reported that an <i>impressive strength</i> of Judge Read was making sure <i>each person understood what was going on</i> . He <i>consistently explained his actions</i> , for example explaining that he <i>asked a person to step outside before a defendant was brought in because there was reason to believe that the unstable defendant might react negatively to this young woman</i> . He <i>routinely explained his rulings in plain language</i> so the defendant would understand, and he explained to a defendant <i>exactly where to find the public defender’s office and how to fill out the paperwork</i> . He explained <i>a plea in abeyance in detail and allowed an individual to change their plea based on his clarification</i> . He <i>carefully explained the difference between no proof of insurance and no insurance and the very different fines</i> , and he <i>very patiently explained the ins and outs of community service in lieu of fines</i> .
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## How to Read the Results

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The results are shown in both graphs and tables. Each judge's scores are shown along with a comparison to other judges who serve at the same court level. The comparison group is called "Justice Courts" on the charts.

The statutory category scores and the procedural fairness survey score represent average scores on a scale of 1 (inadequate) to 5 (outstanding). Responses from all survey respondent groups contribute to the average score shown for each category, with the exception of Legal Ability. Only attorneys answer the Legal Ability questions.

### **What does it take to "pass"?**

The judge must score a minimum of 3.6 on Legal Ability, Integrity & Judicial Temperament, and Administrative Skills to earn a presumption of retention from the Commission. That is, if a judge scores an average of 3.6 in each of these categories, the commission will vote to recommend retention unless it can articulate a substantial reason for overcoming the presumption in favor of retention. Similarly, if a judge fails to get a 3.6 in a category, the commission will vote against retention unless it can articulate a substantial reason for overcoming the presumption against retention.

For procedural fairness, the judge must demonstrate that it is more likely than not, based on courtroom observations and relevant survey responses, that the judge's conduct in court promotes procedural fairness for court participants. Judges will receive either a Pass or Fail in procedural fairness, and this determination will be made by the commission only during the retention cycle.

Respondents are asked whether or not they think the judge should be recommended for retention only during the retention cycle.





# JUSTICE COURT—Full Evaluation\*

Visit [JUDGES.UTAH.GOV](http://JUDGES.UTAH.GOV) for more information about this judge



## Honorable Ronald L. Read

- Serving **Washington** County Justice Court
- Commission Recommendation: **RETAIN**
- Commission Vote Count: 13 - 0 (for retention)
- Performance Standards: Passed 7 of 8

Did not meet the standard for timely issuance of opinions.

Appointed to the Washington County Justice Court in 2014, Judge Ronald L. Read’s scores are consistent with his peers on all scored minimum performance standards. All survey respondents recommend him for retention. Most respondents express confidence in Judge Read’s abilities, noting he is a competent judge who takes his job seriously. Respondents and courtroom observers commend the judge for ensuring the understanding of those in court. All observers report confidence that if appearing before him, they would expect to be treated fairly.

However, Judge Read does not meet the judiciary’s minimum performance standard governing timeliness of opinions. After a meeting with Judge Read, the commission is satisfied that the cases exceeding the time standard were confined to his initial period on the bench and that the judge has implemented changes in his practices to avoid future violations. This judge meets discipline standards set by statute and has been certified by the Judicial Council as meeting education requirements and mental and physical competence standards.

Judge Ronald L. Read was appointed to the Washington County Justice Court bench in September 2014 and to the Orderville Justice Court bench in November 2017. He received a B.S. degree from Southern Utah State College in 1981 and a Juris Doctor from the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law in 1990. Following law school Judge Read served as a law clerk for Judges Marion J. Callister, Mikel H. Williams, and Larry M. Boyle at the United States District Court for the District of Idaho. Judge Read then returned to Southern Utah to practice law, initially with the law firm of Hughes & Read, next as the Assistant City Attorney for the City of St. George and then with Read & Wright.

\*See Judges Section Introduction for Justice Court Information

