



WENDY WOOD

Court of Appeals, District 06, Position 02

For the past fifteen years, Wendy Wood has worked at the Court of Appeals for Judge Larry Vaught. Prior to her current role, she spent ten years working as a trial lawyer.

How do you define justice?

Treating people fairly and giving them what they deserve under the rule of law.

Can you explain your judicial philosophy in plain English?

I believe in the equal and transparent application of the rule of law no matter a person's station in life.

What are the biggest changes you think we need to make to the criminal justice system?

I believe the Arkansas judiciary should continue its work to create alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders with the implementation of Arkansas specialty courts such as adult and juvenile drug court, veteran's treatment court, DWI court, family treatment court, and mental-health court. These reforms to traditional incarceration are in part a recognition that some nonviolent offenders may be given another chance in a spirit of grace to help people get back on track.

What role should money/cash bail play in pretrial release?

The Court of Appeals does not impose money or cash bail; however, when it is imposed by a trial court it may not be unconstitutionally excessive.

To what extent do you believe that a judge should or should not defer to the actions of a legislature?

The separation of powers is established in the Arkansas Constitution. Judges should defer to the legislature's power to make law. In interpreting laws, a judge should apply the law's plain meaning as it is written.

Do you believe that policies criminalizing drug use in Arkansas have been effective or ineffective?

Under our constitutional system of separation of powers, reforms of policies criminalizing drug use are going to involve enacting laws and implementing policies by the legislature and executive branches of government. However, I believe the Arkansas judiciary has worked to implement alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent drug use with the implementation of Arkansas specialty courts as discussed previously.

What factors do you believe are driving the growing prison population and the overrepresentation of people of color and poor Arkansans? What role do judges play in addressing these disparities?

The criminalization of drug use is one factor among others. See previous answer.

In what ways will you work to promote public transparency within your courtroom?

I promise to write easy-to-follow opinions that will explain to the reader the reasons why I decided a case. Having worked as a lawyer at the Court of Appeals for over fifteen years, I bring to the table expertise in having handled over 1,500 appeals and written over 500 draft opinions. I am uniquely qualified to bring about swift justice and will be ready to serve the people of Arkansas on day one.

How would you make determinations on fines/fees in your courtroom?

The Court of Appeals does not impose the types of fines/fees this question is referring to.

Arkansans are facing crushing amounts of court debt, how would you address fines & fees in your jurisdiction?

The Court of Appeals does not impose the types of fines/fees this question is referring to.

Would you support eliminating the \$10 monthly automation fee? Why or why not?

The Court of Appeals does not impose an automation fee.