

Cameron County Bar Association's Procedures for Conducting Polls

**1. Description of the Judicial Evaluation Poll and Judicial Preference Poll**

**(A) Judicial Evaluation Poll Description.**

The description of the Cameron County Bar Association's Judicial Evaluation Poll shall appear on the web interface. The text of the description shall read as follows:

***What is this?*** In accordance with the by-laws of the Cameron County Bar Association, the Bar is conducting a Judicial Evaluation Poll of judges who have been serving on their current bench for a period of one (1) or more years.

***How long does it take to vote?*** We estimate that voting will take no more than 15 minutes.

***Is this process anonymous?*** We know that it is critically important that no one be able to determine how any individual lawyer voted in this poll. *web interface* is designed from the ground up to keep your ballot secret. Click here to learn more about how *[the web interface name]* ensures that your vote will remain anonymous.

**(B) Judicial Preference Poll Description.**

The description of the Cameron County Bar Association's Judicial Preference Poll shall appear on the *web interface*. The text of the description shall read as follows:

***What is this?*** In accordance with the by-laws of the Cameron County Bar Association, the Bar is conducting a Judicial Preference Poll. The purpose of this poll is to show the Bar membership's preferences for individual judicial candidates; it is not to be construed as an endorsement by the Bar for any particular candidate.

***How long does it take to vote?*** We estimate that voting will take no more than 15 minutes.

***Is this process anonymous?*** We know that it is critically important that no one be able to determine how any individual lawyer voted in this poll. *The [web interface's name]* is designed from the ground up to keep your ballot secret. Click here to learn more about how *[web interface's name]* ensures that your vote will remain anonymous.

## 2. **General Procedure for Online Voting**

### (A) **On-Line voting in General.**

This section sets forth procedures for online voting using the BallotBox software by Collaborare *or any reasonably similar software of the Judicial Committee's choosing.*

### (B) **Poll Officers.**

For each poll conducted by the Bar, there will be three poll officers with the authority to “unlock” the online ballots. The default poll officers for the Judicial Evaluations Poll and the Judicial Preference Poll shall include: (1) the Executive Director of the Bar, (2) the President of the Bar, and (3) the Chair of the Judicial Committee. A quorum of two poll officers will be required to unlock the online ballots.

If a default poll officer is being evaluated in a judicial poll, that person shall not serve as a poll officer. In the event of such a conflict the President of the Bar shall appoint a substitute poll officer to serve in that person's place.

### (C) **Poll Administrators.**

The *Chair of the Judicial Committee* will serve as the *web interface* site administrator, user administrator and design administrator.

### (D) **Bar Membership E-mail Database Maintenance.**

The success of future online polls and Bar elections is dependent upon the maintenance of an updated membership E-mail database. Accordingly, the Bar encourages the Executive Director and the Judicial Committee to make membership database maintenance an extremely high priority. Specifically, the Bar recommends that the following measures be taken to ensure that the membership database remains updated:

D.1 Bar staff shall contact every member for whom it receives a “bounce-back” e-mail and obtain an updated e-mail address or that member. This obligation applies to bounce-backs from BallotBox, Bar announcements, and any other E-mail sent from or on behalf of the Bar to one of its members.

D.2 In advance of each Board meeting, the Executive Director will submit to the Board a report of the name and number of bounce-back e-mails received since the prior Board meeting.

D.3 The Bar will make it a policy to store only one E-mail address for each of its members. The member's e-mail address will be stored in the same field of the Bar's membership database.

### **3. General Procedure for Paper Voting**

#### **(A) Voting to be Conducted at the Bar Offices.**

Ballots shall be picked up by the voting member in person at the Bar offices. Bar staff shall not fax, mail or deliver ballots to members. Paper voting shall take place at the Bar offices. Members will not be permitted to leave the Bar office with their ballots.

#### **(B) Double Blind Voting.**

Paper voting shall be conducted by using a "double blind" envelope process to ensure the anonymity the member's vote. The voting member shall place her completed ballot in a blank envelope provided by the Bar office. Neither the ballot nor this envelope shall identify the voting member by name, bar number, or any other form of identification. The voter shall place this blank envelope in a second envelope, which will also be provided by the Bar office. The voting member's name shall be prominently displayed on the second envelope.

#### **(C) Verification of Paper Ballots.**

At the close of the voting period, the Bar staff will compare the list of members who voted online with the names of the members who voted on paper. The Bar staff will discard the paper ballot of any member who also voted online. The Bar staff will also verify that each person who voted on paper ballot is a current member of the Cameron County Bar Association.

#### **(D) Counting and Certifying Paper Ballots.**

The Bar staff will then remove the blank envelope from the outer envelope that list the member's name. The blank envelope will be shuffled to guarantee that anonymity of votes. The Judicial Committee will then count the paper ballots and verify the results by entering them into BallotBox.

### **4. Complaints Regarding Voting**

It is likely that the Bar staff will hear complaints from members who were unable to vote online or are experiencing other difficulties with the process. While each complaint should be handled on a cases-by-case basis, the following suggestions are provided for the purpose of having a relatively uniform response to similar concerns.

**(A) Member Did Not Receive an E-mail From Ballot Box.**

The Bar staff should remind any member having difficulty voting online that she may still vote on paper at the Bar offices. The Bar staff, in conjunction with the Chair of the Judicial Committee and Collabare support, should attempt to correct the problem during the poll so that the member may still vote online. The Bar staff is encouraged to use this opportunity to verify the member's e-mail and other contact information.

**(B) Member Requests that a Paper Ballot be Mailed or Faxed to Her.**

The Bar staff should refuse to fax or mail any paper ballots and refer the member to the Bar's printed procedures for paper voting.