

Gov. Kemp Expands Judicial Nominating Commission

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Gov. Brian Kemp has reconstituted his Judicial Nominating Commission, increasing the size from 20 to 35 members.

"It is my honor to appoint this remarkable coalition of legal professionals to the Judicial Nominating Commission," Kemp said in a written statement Wednesday. "I look forward to working with them to ensure that members of the state's judicial branch honor the law, share our values, and serve with integrity and humility. I am thankful to each of these distinguished individuals for answering the call to public service on behalf of our state."

Kemp signed a new executive order Tuesday that supplants the previous one creating his JNC when he took office in 2019. Of the 35 names listed in the order, 14 are new to the commission. At least two have served previously. The others are returning members.

"The JNC has an important mission, and it requires dedication and time from each member. Since 2019, we've had a few resignations due to unique circumstances, so we wanted to be sure to fill those positions," Kemp's communications director told the Daily Report. "The JNC is not term-limited or limited by a set number. To strengthen the board's mission, diversify the representation, and ensure that the geographic makeup of representatives matches the geographic makeup of the state, we felt it would be helpful to make additional appointments. This is consistent with many appointments he's made since he took office. All of this will help the JNC ensure that members of the state's judicial branch faithfully uphold the laws of the state."

The new executive order names the same three co-chairs who've served on the commission since 2019: **Robbins Firm** partner **Vincent Russo**; Gilbert, Harrell, Sumerford & Martin of counsel and Middleton Public Affairs president Mark Middleton; and Cherokee County District Attorney Shannon Wallace.

The newly appointed members include:

- Georgia Supreme Court Justice Michael Boggs
- Home Depot Vice President of Employment Practices and Associate Relations Derek Bottoms, a former Powell Goldstein associate married to Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms
- Augusta attorney Kristi Connell of the Connell Law Firm
- Plaintiffs lawyer Lance Cooper of the Cooper Firm in Marietta
- Georgia-Pacific Senior VP and GC Tye Darland

- The Trusted Lawyers Desai Law Group managing partner Sheetal Desai
- Columbia County Juvenile Court Judge Charles Evans
- Hunter, Maclean, Exley & Dunn partner T. Mills Fleming of Savannah
- Patrick Flynn, founder of Flynn+Phillips Attorneys at Law
- Meg Heap, former district attorney for Georgia's Eastern Judicial Circuit
- Holland & Knight partner Robert S. Highsmith Jr.
- Drew Hill, a shareholder at Blasingame, Burch, Garrard & Ashley in Athens
- Soo Hong, founding partner at Blevins & Hong of Marietta and Duluth
- Fayette County Solicitor General Jamie Inagawa
- Georgia Supreme Court Justice Shawn Ellen LaGrue
- Balch & Bingham partner Anne Kaufold-Wiggins
- Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Ben Land
- Georgia Technology Authority GC Anh Le
- Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders partner Jim Manley
- Ellis Painter partner Quentin Marlin of Savannah
- Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit Judge Shondeana Morris
- City of Perry in-house counsel Brooke Newby
- Natalie Paine, former district attorney for the Augusta Judicial Circuit
- Haynes Studstill, partner at the Studstill Firm of Valdosta and Nashville, Tennessee
- Sutton Law Group founding partner Darrell Sutton of Marietta
- Trey Taylor of Taylor Law in Dublin
- ***Ryan Teague*** of the ***Robbins Firm***
- Frank Turner, a partner at Greer, Stansfield & Turner in Covington
- Greenberg Traurig shareholder Richard Valladares
- Flint Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Holly Veal
- Middle Georgia State University counsel Josh Waters
- Kathleen Wilkinson of OakBridge Law Group