

January 12, 2024

Governor Tony Evers
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Evers:

I am writing to express my interest in being appointed to fill the Milwaukee County Circuit Court – Branch 41 vacancy, created by Judge Audrey Skwierawski's recent resignation. I believe that my twenty years of legislative experience, private practice attorney, former state public defender, and background in public service will allow me to make a significant contribution as a Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge.

Currently, I am in my 5th term as a Wisconsin State Senator and was first elected to this role in 2005. Prior to my election, I was a State Representative elected in 2004. After completion of law school from Southern Illinois University – Carbondale in 1994, I began my career as Public Defender for the State of Wisconsin. In that role for 2 1/2 years, I represented indigent individuals in both misdemeanor and felony cases.

In 1996, I opened my own legal practice. The scope of my firm encompassed a diverse array of legal areas, including business and real estate contracts, family law, personal injury, guardian ad litem, and bankruptcy. Predominantly, my focus resided in the realm of criminal law, encompassing federal and state jurisdictions. Within this domain, I adeptly navigated dismissals, negotiated deferred prosecution agreements, participated in pre-trial hearings, and engaged in the full spectrum of courtroom proceedings, from bail hearings and motion hearings to trials, sentencing hearings, and revocation hearings. As my practice expanded, so did my interest in affecting the law through legislation development and I ran for public office.

In 2016, I rekindled my involvement in personal injury law. Initially working as co-counsel with the Hausmann McNally law firm and a outreach and personal injury attorney with PKSD Law Office, I eventually resumed my own private practice. Over the past five years, my professional endeavors have shifted towards consulting in various domains, including real estate, business development, personal injury, and probate. This period has seen a limited caseload, predominantly centered on advisory roles with minimal courtroom obligations.

Through my legislative work, I led profound justice reform in Wisconsin. I have authored and passed into law, more than 120 pieces of legislation during my legislative career and have influenced oral arguments in the U.S. Supreme Court. I now look forward to bringing together my legislative and legal experience, coupled with my passion for public service, to assist the community in a different role. It is in this spirit, that I apply for the appointment to the Milwaukee County Circuit Court – Branch 41.

I have attached a copy of my resume for your review. I welcome an opportunity to further discuss my qualifications for this position, at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lena C. Taylor

██████████
Milwaukee, WI 53206



LENA CAROLYN TAYLOR

Milwaukee, WI 53206

EDUCATION

- J.D. Southern Illinois University – Carbondale School of Law, May 1993**
Chairperson, Health Advisory Board
President, Black Graduate Student Association
Law School Rep, Grad/Prof Student Council
Law Day Coordinator
Peer Support Network
Grad School Wksp Coordinator
- B.A. University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, May 1990**
Student Speaker for Admissions Department
Milwaukee Boys and Girls Club Scholarship Recipient
Federation of Women’s Club Scholarship Recipient
Dean’s Honor List
Worked 20/30 hours/week
Top Achiever Shakespeare I

EXPERIENCE

PKSD – Milwaukee, WI September 2013 to December 2016
Staff Attorney

Wisconsin State Senate – January 2005 to Present
State Senator for the 4th District - *Committee Assignments*: Joint Committee on Finance, Judiciary, Corrections and Privacy, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

Wisconsin State Assembly – April 2003 to January 2005
State Representative for the 18th Assembly District - *Committee Assignments*: Economic Development, Tourism, Urban and Local Affairs, Criminal Justice and Financial Institution

Taylor & Associates Law Office – Milwaukee, WI 1996 to Present
Defense Attorney

Wisconsin State Public Defender’s Office, Milwaukee, WI, August 1993 to 1996
Attorney

Williamson County Courthouse, Marion, IL Spring 1993
Judicial Clerk

Attorney General’s Office, Carbondale, IL, Fall 1992 & Spring 1993
Law Clerk

Women’s Center Free Legal Clinic, Carbondale, IL, Spring 1992 & Fall 1992
Volunteer

Hausmann-McNally, S.C., Milwaukee, WI, Summer of 1991 & 1992
Law Clerk

Muwongee & Associates, Milwaukee, WI, January 1992
Law Clerk

AFFILIATIONS

- Wisconsin State Bar**, April 1994 – Present
NAACP, December 1993 to Present – Prior Election Committee Chair, Member
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Spring 1989 to Present



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

Governor’s Judicial Selection Advisory Committee Questionnaire for Circuit Court or Court of Appeals

Your name	Position you are applying for
Lena Carolyn Taylor	Judge Milwaukee County Circuit Court – Branch 41

Governor’s Judicial Selection Advisory Committee Members:

Chief Legal Counsel Mel Barnes
Co-Chair
Office of Governor Tony Evers

Benjamin Wagner
Co-Chair
Habush Habush & Rottier

Attorney Jeanne Armstrong
Fuhrman & Dodge

Attorney Christine Bremer Muggli
Bremer & Trollop Law Offices

Attorney Michael Brose
Doar, Drill & Skow

Retired Judge Thomas Flugaur
Portage County Circuit Court

Attorney Kristen Hardy
Northwestern Mutual

Attorney Rebeca López
Godfrey & Kahn

Attorney Craig Mastantuono
Mastantuono Coffee & Thomas

Attorney Odalo Ohiku
Milwaukee Office of the City Attorney

Attorney Jon Padgham
Wisconsin State Public Defender’s Office

Attorney John Raihala
Clifford & Raihala

Attorney Katelyn Sandfort
Herrling Clark Law Firm

District Attorney John Sacia
Trempealeau County

Professor Miriam Seifter
University of Wisconsin Law School

Directions: You must answer each question in the questionnaire. If you need additional space to fully answer a question, attach additional pages to your application. Questions may be directed to the Office of the Governor at (608) 266-1212.

Last revised: March 2023

Section 1: Personal information

1. Provide the following personal information:

Name (First Middle Last)		Date of birth (MM/DD/YR)	
Lena Carolyn Taylor		07/25/67	
Email address	Home phone		
Work phone	Cell phone		
Place of birth (City, State)		Gender	
Milwaukee, Wisconsin		Female	
Wisconsin State Bar Number		Race	
1022930		African-American	

Maiden/alias/former name(s)	Dates used (MM/YR – MM/YR)
None	N/A

2. Are you a United States Citizen? Yes No

3. List each residential address you have had in the last 10 years:

Street address	City, State, Zip	Dates you lived at the address (MM/YR – MM/YR)
	Milwaukee, WI 53206	07/08 - Present

Section 2: Familial information

4. What is your current marital status: Married/domestic partner, Not married

5. If you are married/have a domestic partner, answer the following:

Spouse's/domestic partner's name (First Middle Last)	Date of birth (MM/DD/YR)
N/A	N/A
Date of marriage/domestic partnership	Place of birth (City, State)
N/A	N/A

Spouse/domestic partner's maiden/alias/former name(s)	Dates used (MM/YR – MM/YR)
N/A	N/A

6. List your spouse's/domestic partner's three most recent occupations, beginning with their current or most recent employer:

Employer	Employer's address	Occupation/job title	Dates of employment (MM/YR – MM/YR)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

7. If you have ever been divorced, answer the following for each former spouse/domestic partner:

Ex-spouse's/ex-domestic partner's name (First Middle Last)	Date of birth (MM/DD/YR)
N/A	N/A
Dates of marriage/domestic partnership (MM/YR – MM/YR)	Ex-spouse's/ex-domestic partner's occupation and employer
N/A	N/A

Ex-spouse's/ex-domestic partner's (First Middle Last)	Date of birth (MM/DD/YR)
N/A	N/A
Dates of marriage/domestic partnership (MM/YR – MM/YR)	Ex-spouse's/ex-domestic partner's occupation and employer
N/A	N/A

Ex-spouse's/ex-domestic partner's name (First Middle Last)	Date of birth (MM/DD/YR)
N/A	N/A
Dates of marriage/domestic partnership (MM/YR – MM/YR)	Ex-spouse's/ex-domestic partner's occupation and employer
N/A	N/A

8. If you have children or step-children, provide the following information:

Name of child	Age	State of residence	Occupation and employer

Section 3: Education background

9. List the name and location of each school you attended, beginning with high school:

Name of school	Location (City, State)	Dates attended (MM/YR – MM/YR)	Degree earned
Rufus King High School	Milwaukee, WI	08/80 - 06/84	High School Diploma
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	Milwaukee, WI	07/84 - 05/90	Bachelor of Arts
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	Carbondale, IL	7/90- 05/93	Juris Doctorate

10. List any scholarships, awards, honors, fellowships, or citations you received during college, graduate school, or law school.

Milwaukee Boys and Girls Club Scholarship
 Federation of Women's Club Scholarship
 Minority Fellowship and Contract Full Scholarship and Stipend - SIU Law School

11. While attending any secondary school or college, have you ever been expelled, suspended, placed on probation, or withdrawn from enrollment due to an allegation of academic dishonesty or because of conduct that harmed or could have harmed others? Yes, No

12. If yes, provide the following information:

Name & location of school	Date conduct occurred (MM/YR)
N/A	N/A
Nature of conduct	Disposition / outcome
N/A	N/A
Details of incident	
N/A	

Section 4: Professional background and experience

13. List each court and administrative body in which you have been admitted to practice:

Bar admission	Date of admission (MM/YR)
Wisconsin State Bar	04/94

14. If any of your admissions listed above have lapsed, state when and why the admission lapsed.

N/A

15. List all your places of employment for the last 20 years since you've turned 18, including periods of unemployment, beginning with your most recent employer.

Employer	Employer's address	Occupation / Job title	Dates of employment (MM/YR – MM/YR)
Wisconsin State Senate	2 E Main Street, Madison, WI	Legislator/ State Senator	01/05 - Present
Pitman, Kyle, Sicula & Dentice	1110 N Dr. Martin L King Drive, Milwaukee	Attorney	09/13 - 12/16
Wisconsin State Assembly	2 E Main Street, Madison, WI	Legislator/State Representative	04/03 - 01/05
Taylor & Associates Law Office	1518 W Capitol Drive, Milwaukee	Attorney	08/96 - Present
WI State Public Defender's Office	819 N 6th Street, Rm 908, Milwaukee, WI	Attorney/Public Defender	08/93 - 8/96

16. If you served in the military, provide the particulars of your service, including: the dates of service, the branch of service, rank or rate, and type of discharge received.

N/A

17. Within the past 10 years, has your employment ended for one of the following reasons: you were fired; you resigned after being told you would be fired; you left by mutual agreement following allegations of misconduct or unsatisfactory performance; or you left for other reasons under unfavorable circumstances?

Yes, No

18. If yes, provide the following information:

Employer	Employer's address
N/A	N/A
Specific reason for separation	Date of separation (MM/YEAR)
N/A	N/A
Explanation	
N/A	

19. Provide the following information if, within the past 10 years, an employer investigated you or disciplined you due to actual or alleged misconduct:

Employer	Employer's address
Wisconsin State Legislature	2 E. Main Street, Madison, WI
Nature of allegation or misconduct	Disposition of investigation
Harassment and Discrimination	Please see attached document
Explanation	
<p>After questioning the work performance of an employee, I contacted HR for guidance. Upon learning that of my concerns, the employee (a trained HR professional herself) went out on FMLA for a few days, returned to work and filed retaliatory complaints against me. The employee then went on FMLA again. A review of the complaint by the HR Director determined that portions of the complaint were both unfounded and founded. There was a recommendation made for training, which I completed. I disagreed with both the allegations and "founded" findings of the HR Director, who was new to the legislature. The employee was skilled at filing such complaints and had done similar complaints with two previous employers. The employee, was directly supervised by the HR Director, during the period of "training" I was required to complete. During that time, the employee failed to adequately complete assigned tasks/work. Her employment was ultimately terminated during the period under HR supervision.</p>	

Section 5: Legal practice

20. Describe the general character of your practice. If you are currently a judge, describe your practice before you became a judge.

<p>When I began my career, I worked as a public defender for the State of Wisconsin, for 2 1/2 years. I represented indigent individuals in both misdemeanor and felony cases. In 1996, I opened my own legal practice. Leveraging my experience with the Public Defenders Office, my practice began with a fixed fee contract with a public defender's office and concurrent hourly engagements with Attorney Anne Bowe. The scope of my firm encompassed a diverse array of legal areas, including business and real estate contracts, family law, personal injury, guardian ad litem, and bankruptcy. Predominantly, my focus resided in the realm of criminal law, encompassing federal and state jurisdictions. Within this domain, I adeptly navigated dismissals, negotiated deferred prosecution agreements, participated in pre-trial hearings, and engaged in the full spectrum of courtroom proceedings, from bail hearings and motion hearings to trials, sentencing hearings, and revocation hearings. Over time, my practice expanded to include three lawyers and a dedicated support staff.</p> <p>In 2004, I ran for public office. After securing an electoral victory, I reduced my practice's caseload, completed pending cases, and turned my attention to my duties as an elected member of the Wisconsin State Legislature. Since that initial election, I have been elected to the Wisconsin State Senate in 2005, where I am currently serving my 5th, four-year term.</p> <p>In 2016, I rekindled my involvement in personal injury law. Subsequently, I collaborated as co-counsel with the Hausmann McNally law firm, where I had previously interned during my legal education. Later, I transitioned to a role with PKSD, assuming responsibilities in outreach and personal injury. However, the inherent challenges of balancing legal practice, with legislative duties, compelled me to reassess and prioritize my commitments.</p> <p>Over the past five years, my professional endeavors have shifted towards consulting in various domains, including real estate, business development, personal injury, and probate. This period has seen a limited caseload, predominantly centered on advisory roles with minimal courtroom obligations.</p>

21. Describe your typical clients and the areas, if any, in which you have specialized.

<p>The majority of my clientele has been comprised of businesses & individuals from diverse economic backgrounds. A significant number have been financially disadvantaged, from the greater Milwaukee area. They often hail from the community where I have resided my entire life. It has been important to me, to provide legal representation, guidance and advocacy to the community that helped nurture and support me over the course of my life. Originally my practice was litigation and general practice. More recently, I have done more consulting and little, to no, litigation.</p>
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22. How many cases have you tried to verdict? _____
23. Describe up to three significant trials, appeals, or other legal matters in which you participated as a judge or lawyer in the past seven years. Please explain your role in the case, jurisdiction, name of judge and opposing counsel, dates of involvement, a brief description of your involvement, and why it was significant:

I have not participated as a judge or lawyer in significant trials in the past 7 years, due to my role as a state legislator for the past 20 years. In addition, my limited practice has not included litigation.

However, in the legislature, I have been appointed as a member of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Joint Committee of Criminal Penalties Review, Judicial Council, and the Uniform Law Committee, in the last 7 years.

In 2010, I blazed a trail as the 1st woman and Black person to be Chair of the Judiciary, Joint Committee on Criminal Penalties Review, and the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Committee, all of which have a direct impact on Wisconsin's judicial system.

Through those chairmanships, I led profound justice reform in Wisconsin, as outlined in the attached 2009-2010 report card. Since, I have authored and passed into law, more than 120 pieces of legislation during my legislative career.

Below are examples that illustrate my work, in this area:

1. Redistricting - My legislative work on redistricting demanded extensive research, analysis, bill drafting, and negotiations. Furthermore, it exerted a substantial influence on the research, case law, legal arguments, and the subsequent decision of the US Supreme Court. This decision identified instances of voter rights violations within the Wisconsin maps, particularly against the black community, as outlined in the Court's order.

2. Independent Criminal Investigations - Crafting legislation for Independent Criminal Investigations, in cases of police-involved deaths serves as an illustration of my legislative work. This involved collaborative drafting and negotiations across party lines, particularly with Representative Gary Bies. The foundation for this legislation was laid upon the groundwork established by Representative A. Polly Williams, who initially advocated for inquests in police officer-involved deaths. While not entirely originating from my efforts, I, as the Lead Senate author, collaborated with Representative Bies to establish the nation's first accountability process for officer-involved deaths.

Similar to the rigor of the practice of law, research, drafting, and negotiation, my work, passage of legislation, and contributions influenced decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court.

24. Describe your experience in adversary proceedings before an administrative agency or commission.

In my capacity as a legislator, serving on both the Judiciary and Joint Committee on Finance, I actively engaged in hearings with Cabinet Secretaries and staff from administrative agencies. These proceedings necessitated thorough preparation of pertinent questions and the extraction of information from those appearing before the committees.

Additionally, during my time in private practice, I provided legal representation to individuals involved in revocation and unemployment hearings.

25. Describe your non-litigation legal experience (e.g., arbitration, mediation).

My legal experience, outside of litigation, is predominantly practice, at present. While the majority of my consultations are pro bono, the skills employed are akin to those utilized in legislative negotiations. I assist in elucidating processes, drafting documents, clarifying legal principles, and guiding parties through challenging landlord-tenant or family law issues. Additionally, I engage in negotiations to reach settlements in personal injury claims or business transactions.

26. Summarize any speeches or presentations you have given in the past five years about the law, including: the date of the speech or presentation and the organization to which you presented.

I have given a number of speeches over the years, to a variety of organizations, to include civic, faith, school, labor, corporate, and non-profit organizations on specific legislation, civic engagement, how a bill becomes law, legislative duties, and more. Below are just two examples of speeches, I've given:

2/21/22 Marquette University Pastoral Leader in Cultural Context Program, speech to equip clergy to be better informed and engaged on the social issues facing SE Wisconsin.

9/27/21 Session Floor Speech Need for impartial redistricting, impact on communities of color and the voting rights act protections

8/28/21 March on Washington Commemorative speech highlight work of civil rights, the legal advancements, and legal setbacks and work ahead

27. List any articles or publications you have authored about the law. Include a citation or hyperlink to each article or publication.

I have penned more than 1000 weekly editorial columns for the Milwaukee Courier local newspaper, Legislatively Speaking. For nearly 20 years, I have written articles that explain, raise awareness, or opine legal, legislative or policy issues. An archive of those articles can be found at <https://milwaukeecourieronline.com>.

Two examples and links of these articles are provided below:

"Just 24 Words" (Equal Rights Amendment) <https://milwaukeecourieronline.com/index.php/2023/09/23/just-24-words/>

"A Down Payment on a Promise" (Voting Rights Protections) <https://milwaukeecourieronline.com/index.php/2023/05/05/a-down-payment-on-a-promise/>

In addition, over the past two decades, I have authored thousands of writings, office newsletters, press releases, and written testimonies for committees on various legal and policy matters.

Section 5: Professional and public service

28. Identify your participation in professional, civic, and charitable organizations.

Name of association	Offices held and committees served on	Awards, honors, or citations	Dates of participation
Wisconsin State Bar			1996 - Present
National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women			2004 - Present
National Black Caucus of State Legislators		2023 Regional Legislator of the Year	2004 - Present
Rodel Fellow			2013 - Present
NAACP			1993 - Present
Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Inc			1989 - Present
Rainbow Push Coalition		Please consider this as a sampling of the many organizations of which I am	2008 - Present

29. Do you currently belong to, or have you ever belonged to, any organization that discriminates on the basis of gender identity, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, through membership requirements or membership policies? If so, identify the organization, the dates in which you belonged to the organization, and what, if anything you did to change such requirements or policies.

I am a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Inc, which is a female-focused organization. I have also been a member of Women In Government and National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women, which are also a female-focused organizations. I am also a National Black Caucus of State Legislators, which is focused on support and networking for Black State legislators, but they do not bar participation based on race.

Other than that, I do not, nor have I ever belonged to any organization that discriminates on the basis of gender identity, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, through membership requirements or membership policies.

30. Identify all public offices to which you were appointed or elected.

Name of office	Elected or appointed?	Dates of service
Wisconsin State Senate	Elected	2005 - Present
Wisconsin State Representative	Elected	2003 - 2005

31. Identify any awards or honors you have received in the past 10 years, which have not been listed elsewhere on this questionnaire.

Entity providing the award or honor	Name of the award or honor	Date received (MM/YR)
Please see attached document		

32. Describe any significant pro bono legal work or volunteer service you have performed.

I have engaged in a considerable amount of volunteer work, and while it's challenging to recall every instance, I have selected three endeavors that I believe exemplify my dedication and compassion towards others.

1. Free Legal Clinic - For two decades ago, I initiated a free monthly legal clinic at Greater New Birth church. This clinic facilitated on-site driver's license assistance, featuring the collaboration of municipal court judges, DMV staff, and legal professionals to guide individuals through immediate challenges. Additionally, we extended support for various issues and provided referrals as needed.
2. USDA Farmers to Families Food Boxes - For several years, I coordinated the distribution of 30,000 food boxes per month in collaboration with USDA partners. During this time, I also played a role in inspiring and mentoring others to participate in food distribution activities according to their capacity. Notably, the initiative spearheaded by Farina Brooks, which evolved into the Dream Team, now conducts pop-up events across the city, delivering essential food supplies.
3. Housing for Homeless - My commitment to aiding the homeless aligns with the legacies of my mother and grandmother, both of whom dedicated themselves to this cause. I have contributed by providing real estate at below-market rates, and in some instances, at no cost, to men, women, and families facing housing insecurity due to a variety of reasons to include re-entering citizens, addiction, domestic violence, unemployment, and mental health.

Section 6: Business interests

33. If you or your spouse/domestic partner are a director, officer, or otherwise engaged in the management of any business entity, provide the following information:

Name of the business	Nature of the business	Duties you or your spouse/domestic partner perform	You or your spouse's/domestic partner's intended involvement if you are appointed
Taylor & Associates Law Office	Law Office	Owner/Attorney	None
Taylor Rentals	Real Estate	Own and manage rental real estate properties	Secure manager for properties

Section 7: Previous partisan or non-partisan political involvement

34. List any position you've held in a judicial, non-partisan, or partisan, political campaign (e.g. treasurer, campaign manager, volunteer).

I have not held an official position in a judicial, non-partisan, or partisan, political campaign, to my recollection.

My engagement in political activities encompasses providing guidance to candidates and volunteering in various capacities such as door knocking, fundraising, and making calls for both local and out-of-state races. This involvement spans partisan and nonpartisan races at the local, state, and federal levels.

35. If you have ever run for public office, provide the following information:

Office sought	Date of primary election	Date of general election	Outcome / percentage of vote you obtained
Please See Attached			

36. If you have ever publicly endorsed a judicial or non-partisan candidate in the past ten years, provide the following information:

Name of endorsed candidate	Office sought by candidate	Year of endorsement
Everett Mitchell	State Supreme Court	2023
Aisha Carr	MPS School Board	2021
Shandowlynn Hendricks-Williams	MPS School Board	2023
Pedro Colon	Circuit Court Judge	2011, 2017
Deb Kerr	DPI State Superintendent	2021
Rebecca Dallet	State Supreme Court	2018

Section 8: Character and fitness

37. Answer the following questions. If you answer “no” to any of the following questions, you must attach a detailed explanation of why you answered no.

	Yes	No
a. Are you in good standing with each jurisdiction in which you are admitted to practice law?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Are you current with your continuing legal education requirements in each state in which you are admitted to practice law?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Are you free of any physical or mental impairment that in any way would limit your ability or fitness to properly exercise your duties as a member of the judiciary in a competent and professional manner?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Have you met every deadline imposed by a court order or obtained an extension when needed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Were all of your taxes (federal, state, local) current as of the date of your application?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

38. Answer the following questions. If you answer “yes” to any of the following questions, you must attach a detailed explanation of why you answered yes.

	Yes	No
a. Has any tribunal ever held you in contempt or otherwise formally reprimanded or sanctioned you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Have you ever been disciplined, reprimanded, or sanctioned by any regulatory or licensing entity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Have you ever been party to a lawsuit, either as a plaintiff or a defendant?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Have you ever been subject to an investigation by the Wisconsin Judicial Commission, the Wisconsin Supreme Court, the Office of Lawyer Regulation, the Crime Victim Rights Board, or any other equivalent entity in any jurisdiction?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. If you are a quasi-judicial officer, have you ever been disciplined or reprimanded by a sitting judge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Has a tax lien ever been filed against you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Have you or your spouse/domestic partner ever been subject of any audit, investigation, or inquiry for either federal, state, or local taxes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Have you or your spouse/domestic partner ever filed for bankruptcy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. Is there anything in your current or past financial situation that would affect your ability to be a judge or justice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j. Are there any circumstances in your professional or personal life that create a substantial question as to your qualifications to serve as a judge or justice that might interfere with your ability to serve?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

39. Provide five references, three of which must be practicing attorneys or judges.

Name	Occupation
Maxine White	Chief Judge Court of Appeals
Address	Phone Number
901 N 9th St #500, Milwaukee, WI 53233	[REDACTED]

Name	Occupation
Dr. LaKeshia Myers	State Representative
Address	Phone Number
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Name	Occupation
John Chisolm	Milwaukee County District Attorney
Address	Phone Number
821 W. State St., Room 405 Milwaukee, WI 53233	[REDACTED]

Name	Occupation
Everett Mitchell	Judge
Address	Phone Number
215 S. Hamilton Street, Room 6109 Madison, WI 53703	[REDACTED]

Name	Occupation
Evan Goyke	Attorney and State Representative
Address	Phone Number
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Section 10: Additional information for consideration

40. Attach your answers to the following questions. Each answer must be 500 words or less. Your answers must be attached as a Word document.

- a. Why do you want to serve the people of Wisconsin as a judge or justice?
- b. Decisions by the Wisconsin Supreme Court and U.S. Supreme Court can greatly impact the people of Wisconsin. Describe which case in the past 25 years by the Wisconsin Supreme Court or U.S. Supreme Court you believe had a significant positive or negative impact on the people of Wisconsin.
- c. Identify two or three judges or justices whom you admire and explain why.
- d. Describe the proper role of a judge.

41. Attach two legal writing samples. Your writing samples must be attached as a Word document.

42. Do you wish to request that your application remain confidential to the extent permitted by law? Please note that state law only provides limited protections. A request for confidentiality will not adversely affect your application.

Yes, No

REMINDER: Do not forget to attach the following documents to your application:

- Your resume;
- Your cover letter;
- Two legal writing samples;
- Your answers to question 40;
- Your waiver, notice of disclosure, and affidavit (see below); and
- Any necessary attachments (e.g., explanations).

SUBMISSION: Email your application and application materials as a PDF to GOVJudicialAppointments@wisconsin.gov. The email address will provide an automatic confirmation if your submission is received. The email address will not accept attachments exceeding 10 mb in size. If your attachments exceed 10 mb in size, send the attachments in two separate emails.

NEXT STEPS: After you submit your application materials, the Governor's Office will review the application for completeness and accuracy. Complete and accurate applications will be forwarded to the Governor's Judicial Selection Advisory Committee for consideration. If you are selected for an interview, the Committee will contact you to setup an interview. The Committee will base its recommendation on your materials, references, interview, and any other information it deems relevant.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION: You may have individuals submit letters of recommendation on your behalf. The letters must be sent to GOVJudicialAppointments@wisconsin.gov. The letters must be received by the application due date. No more than 10 letters may be submitted.

Waiver and Authorization

I hereby authorize the Office of the Governor or his staff to solicit information and records pertaining to me from any or all of the following sources:

1. My present employer.
2. My previous employers.
3. Any school, college, university, or other educational institution that I attended.
4. Any place of business.
5. Any governmental agency or political subdivision.
6. The Wisconsin Department of Revenue.

I further authorize any recipient of a request for information from the Governor or his staff to provide any such information as may be necessary to consider my application.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Notice of Disclosure

I acknowledge and understand that my application and its attachments will become public records once they are submitted to the Office of the Governor. I further acknowledge and understand that, while state law provides limited confidentiality protections, most of my application and its attachments are subject to disclosure to the general public under the Public Records Law.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Affidavit

I, _____, do swear that the information provided in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sworn and subscribed to before me
this ____ day of _____, 201__

Notary Public, State of Wisconsin
My commission: _____

Affidavit

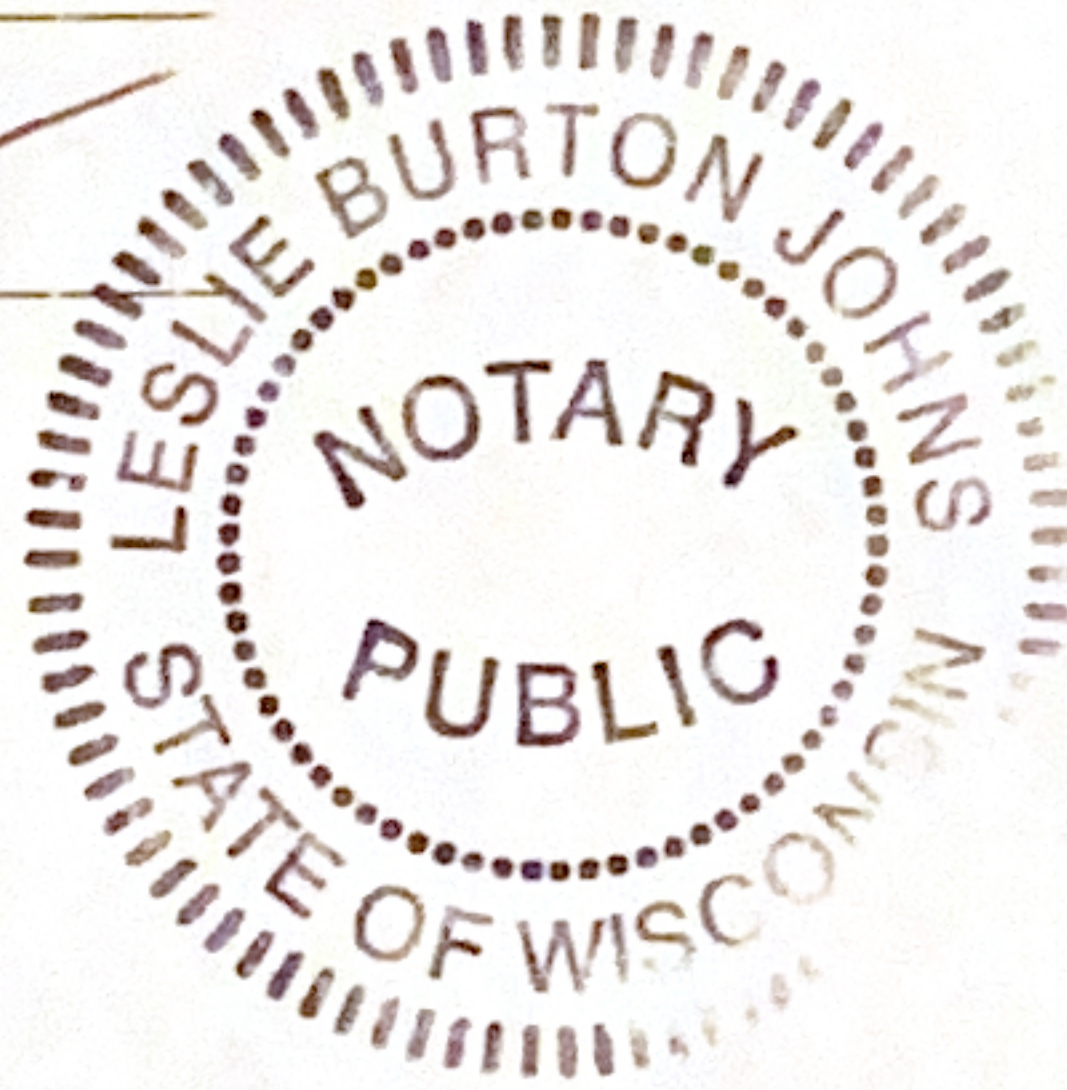
I, Lena C Taylor, do swear that the information provided in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate.

Signature: *Lena C Taylor*

Date: 1/12/24

Sworn and subscribed to before me
this 12th day of January, 2024

Leslie Burton Johns
Notary Public, State of Wisconsin
My commission: 6/5/25



31. Identify any awards or honors you have received in the past 10 years, which have not been listed elsewhere on this questionnaire.

Entity providing the award or honor	Name of the award or honor	Date received (MM/YR)
Rainbow Push	Trailblazer Award	2011
Planned Parenthood	Rebecca Young Award	2011
Greater Milwaukee Committee	Leadership	2013
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc	Central Region State Coordinator	2014-2018
Wisconsin Builders Association	Friend of of Housing	2014, 2015, 2018
Universal Academy for the College Bound	Community Service Award	2015
Wisconsin Counties Association	Outstanding Legislator Award	2015-2016 session
Milwaukee Community Journal	Lifetime of Service	2016
PMI Business Group	Community Reviver	2016
MW BLSA	Leadership	2017-2018 session
WI PTA	John Dykstra Friend of Children Award	2017-2018 session
A-LEGO	Woman of Excellence Award	2018
Mana Behavioral Services Corp	Jerry Alexander Lifetime Achievement Award	2018
Milwaukee Health Services	Community Service Award	2019
Wisconsin Hemp Alliance	Hemp Hero	2020
Grace International Fellowship	Leadership	2021
MKE OMG (On the Grind)	Living Legend Award	2021
Wisconsin Conservation Voters	Scorecard recipient	2021-2022 session
All of Us or None	Politically Justice Driven	2022
National Black Caucus of State Legislators	Regional Legislator of the Year Award	2022
1st Student	Black Excellence	2022
HBCU Alumni of Greater Milwaukee	HBCU Advocacy Award	2023
Beating the Odds Inc	Lifetime Achievement Award	2023
CLAWW	Vel Phillips Award	2023

35. If you have ever run for public office, provide the following information:

Office sought	Date of primary election	Date of general election	Outcome / percentage of vote you obtained
Milwaukee Municipal Court	2/21/2023	4/4/2023	Lost - 48.4%
Mayor of Milwaukee	2/15/2022	4/5/2022	Lost - 12.8%
Lt. Governor	8/9/2022	11/8/2022	Withdrew before primary
State Senate	8/11/2020	11/3/2020	Won - 99%
Mayor of Milwaukee	2/18/2020	4/7/2020	Lost - 36.5%
State Senate	8/9/2016	11/8/2016	Won - 100%
State Senate	8/14/2012	11/6/2012	Won - 86.1%
State Senate	unopposed	11/4/2008	Won - 100%
Milwaukee County Executive		4/1/2008	Lost - 40.40%
State Senate		2004	Won
State Assembly		4/30/2003	Won

40. Attach your answers to the following questions. Each answer must be 500 words or less. Your answers must be attached as a Word document.

a. Why do you want to serve the people of Wisconsin as a judge or justice?

When I made the decision to attend law school, I had a very singular focus. I wanted to see corrections in our judicial system that created disparities in the treatment of our citizens. As a student of history, I understood, in particular, that many of the seismic shifts in behavior along racial and gender lines, started with changes to the laws.

It's never lost on me that I am just 2 years older than the 1965 Voting Rights Act, 3 years older than the 1964 Civil Rights Act, a few years older than Affirmative Action, 6 years older than the right for women to have control over their reproductive health, and 13 years older than *Brown v. Board of Education*.

These changes to law made monumental differences between my life and that of my parents. While slow to be implemented and accepted, the rule of law still stood. It was a starting point to push back, challenge, and enforce fair treatment.

What I would later learn is that "fair" is not always "equitable". Yet like a dependable friend, the law could be counted on to be responsive to the will of the people. Lady Justice, often accused of not being so blind in the dispensation of justice, was a symbol of what we aspired to be. The law dictates what we are and what we do.

Understanding the inherent power and opportunity to affect our community, I knew that I wanted a seat at the table. Whether at a defendant's table, legislative desk, or judicial chamber, my career path has been about serving the needs of this community. I have been committed to ensuring a justice system that is responsive, representative, and above reproach in the application of the law.

b. Decisions by the Wisconsin Supreme Court and U.S. Supreme Court can greatly impact the people of Wisconsin. Describe which case in the past 25 years by the Wisconsin Supreme Court or U.S. Supreme Court you believe had a significant positive or negative impact on the people of Wisconsin.

Without hesitation, I believe that the 2011 redistricting case has had the most detrimental impact on Wisconsin's legislative process and voters. The historic lawsuit before the U.S. Supreme Court involving *Gill v. Whitford* spoke to the harmful effects of partisan gerrymandering, that deprived residents the rights to representation.

The state's constitution is very intentional about compact districts, maintaining communities of interest, and requires that districts be bound by county, precinct, town or ward lines. In November 2016, the 2011 maps were deemed an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander that violated both the Equal Protection Clause and the plaintiffs' First Amendment freedom of association.

We know, ultimately, how the case played out. Appeals ensued, motions to stay the case were granted, and the case was drug out until the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on partisan gerrymandering appeals in other states. In 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court's held that partisan gerrymandering claims were not capable of being decided by legal principles or by a court of justice and the Wisconsin case was dismissed.

In the meantime, we have held elections in the state in which Democrats have won a majority of the statewide Assembly vote, but Republicans have walked away with 2/3 of the Assembly seats.

In my home county, Milwaukee, 70% of the state's Black population lives here. Yet, Milwaukee County voters were spread across 8 predominantly white Assembly districts, in effect cracking or diluting the Milwaukee County (black vote)

The legislation that we see every day in the halls of the Capitol are impacted by this unfair advantage. Bills that address interests of concern to liberal leaning concerns, Black voters, urban residents, and others are difficult to get passed into law when conservatives have a super-majority. The positive aspect of negotiation and compromise is also adversely impacted. However, it is in compromise that the needs of most residents are met.

We have furthered racial, regional, resource, and political divides because of unfair redistricting processes.

c. Identify two or three judges or justices whom you admire and explain why.

1. Judge Everett Mitchell – I value his life story and determination to complete his education and care for his family. I appreciate how he sees the humanity in many individuals and families that come through his court. I like that he connects with them, and while administering his role as judge, he incorporates hope, reconciliation, and change where possible. I am thrilled that he is representative of the community he serves and an example of what can be.
2. Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson – She was a trailblazer, much like Judge Vel Phillips, whom I also admired. As the first female Justice on the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the first female Chief Justice in state history, I had a front row seat to it all. Watching her in the Capitol, I was struck that she was often one of the last people out of the building at night. She remembered her roots and the people who helped her along the way. Aside from being a brilliant legal mind, she was humble and kind. Never too busy to talk or offer guidance, I was enamored by her style as much as I was her substance.
3. Chief Judge Maxine White – Judge White represents the dreams of my ancestors. Often it is said in the Black community that enslaved people endured and sharecroppers toiled, because they could see the future. They believed in the power of education and what was possible. Judge White often talks with great affection and stark reality about the challenges her family faced. Her story is not that different from a lot of Black people from the South, but her outcomes have been significant. She is a powerful example of brilliance

nurtured, mentors engaged, and opportunities provided and taken. Her practical approach to justice is inspiring. Her even-handed application of the law is admirable and her connection to this community is invaluable.

d. Describe the proper role of a judge.

Aside from the obvious, of leading court proceedings, using established laws and guidance to determine sentencing, and ruling on the constitutionality of various laws and legal precedents, depending on the type of judge you are, there is also a practical role of a judge.

A judge should be an independent thinker, who respects and is knowledgeable of the law. A judge should be neutral and able to listen to all involved. The judge's decisions should be reasonable and fair minded. A judge must assure that all parties have appropriate representation, because they also have a role to protect the integrity of the legal system.

I also believe that judges are role models and should educate the community on how the legal system works. As a result, I believe their roles are not limited to the courthouse. There is a role and place to engage in and with the community, to create and champion innovative initiatives that can bring about tangible reforms in addressing systemic issues impacting the courts and community.

Case search results

You searched for: Last name: Taylor, First name: Lena, Middle name: C

Showing 1 to 25 of 31 entries

Case number	Filing date	County name	Case status	Name	Date of birth	Caption
2023CV002007	03-20-2023	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena		Lena Taylor vs. City of Milwaukee
2020CV006107	10-16-2020	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		WaterStone Bank SSB fka Wauwatosa Savings Bank vs. Lena C Taylor et al
2019SC020674	06-27-2019	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Lena C Taylor vs. Shanyel McCloud
2019TR000215	01-10-2019	Jefferson	Closed	Taylor, Lena Carolyn	07-1966	State of Wisconsin vs. Lena Carolyn Taylor
2018SC009010	11-14-2018	Dane	Closed	Taylor, Lena		Valley View Apartments vs. John Green et al
2018CV005537	07-03-2018	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Tamara Caldwell Reed et al vs. American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S. I. et al
2013SC026927	09-11-2013	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Lena C Taylor vs. Lamont Williams et al
2013CV001816	02-21-2013	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Nationstar Mortgage LLC vs. Lena C Taylor
2012CV013323	12-11-2012	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Nationstar Mortgage LLC vs. Lena C Taylor
2012CV012825	11-27-2012	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Nationstar Mortgage LLC vs. Lena C Taylor
2012CV002420	03-01-2012	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena		Richard C Scull vs. Lena Taylor et al
2008SC044062	12-04-2008	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena		Lena Taylor vs. Mike Powell et al
2006SC036150	11-17-2006	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena		Lena Taylor vs. Wellington Turner et al
2005SC022724	07-11-2005	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Juwona Griffin vs. Lena C Taylor
2004SC028579	09-03-2004	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Taylor Rentals et al vs. Kim Grant
2004SC028578	09-03-2004	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Taylor Rentals et al vs. Shawn Harris
2004SC027485	08-24-2004	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Taylor Rentals et al vs. Darnita Blackwell
2004SC004040	02-10-2004	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena		Lena Taylor vs. Latisha Threats
2003CV010980	12-16-2003	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Lena C Taylor vs. Lamar Hargrove
2002SC034595	11-20-2002	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Lena C Taylor vs. Ambrose Rhodes
2002SC020932	07-18-2002	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Lena C Taylor vs. Teresa Tate
2001SC029455	09-27-2001	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Lena C Taylor vs. Lauada Thompson
2001SC028963	09-21-2001	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena C		Lena C Taylor vs. Jowanda Flowers
1997FA005057	09-12-1997	Milwaukee	Closed	Taylor, Lena		Steven Raymond Sandrin vs Patricia May Sandrin
1997PR001334	05-27-1997	Milwaukee	Closed	TAYLOR, LENA		In the Estate of DANIEL J. FREITAG

Case search results

You searched for: Last name: Taylor, First name: Lena, Middle name: C

Showing 26 to 31 of 31 entries

Case number	Filing date	County name	Case status	Name	Date of birth	Caption
1996PR002567	10-28-1996	Milwaukee	Closed	TAYLOR, LENA		In the Estate of JEFFREY E. MUSIAL
1996PR002499	10-18-1996	Milwaukee	Closed	TAYLOR, LENA		In the Estate of GERALD L. ALBERT
1996PR001973	08-14-1996	Milwaukee	Closed	TAYLOR, LENA		In the Estate of WARNER J. WARE
1985PR000112	07-08-1996	Lincoln	Closed	Taylor, Lena		In the Estate of Lena Taylor
1995PR000623	03-09-1995	Milwaukee	Closed	TAYLOR, LENA CAROLYN		In the Estate of HAZEL E. HORTON
1976PR012512	01-01-1990	Waupaca	Closed	Taylor, Lena		In the Estate of Lena Taylor



**WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE**

April 26, 2018

HAND DELIVERED

Dear Senator Taylor:

The Legislative Human Resources Office (LHRO) received a formal complaint from a legislative employee against you, which alleged that you:

1. Harassed/discriminated against the employee on the basis of the employee's disability(ies) and lighter skin color;
2. Retaliated against the employee for not aiding you with your last campaign election;
3. Retaliated against the employee for taking FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) leave; and,
4. Bullied the employee and other staff members, in violation of the Senate Policy Manual.

You were notified about the formal complaint and investigation into the complaint conducted by the LHRO. You were also given an opportunity to respond to the complaint allegations and provide names of pertinent witnesses to be interviewed and pertinent documentation. As a result of the investigation into the allegations listed above, the following was determined:

1. **The following allegations were unfounded and policy violations were not found:**
 - a. Senator Taylor was not found to have engaged in behaviors in violation of the Senate Policy Manual's anti-harassment/discrimination provisions as it relates to the employee's disability(ies) and/or lighter skin color.
 - b. Senator Taylor was not found to have engaged in behaviors in violation of the Senate Policy Manual's anti-retaliation provisions as it relates to the employee not aiding Senator Taylor with her last campaign.
2. **The following allegations were founded and policy violations were found:**
 - a. Senator Taylor was found to have engaged in behaviors in violation of the Senate Policy Manual's anti-retaliation provisions as it relates to the employee's FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) leave.
 - b. Senator Taylor was found to have engaged in behaviors in violation of the Senate Policy Manual's anti-bullying provisions as it relates to the employee and other staff members.

As a result of the findings listed above, and after consultation with Senate leadership, the following remedial actions are required:

1. Training with the Legislature's Human Resources Manager related to State/Federal/the Senate's anti-harassment, anti-retaliation and anti-bullying provisions for yourself (to be completed within the next three (3) months); and,
2. Interpersonal Communication and Management Coaching (to begin no later than within the next three (3) months).

Sincerely,

Amanda Jorgenson
Legislature HR Manager

Jeff Renk
Senate Chief Clerk



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

Amanda Jorgenson, Human Resources Manager

July 16, 2018

Senator Lena Taylor
DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Re: Completion of Training and Coaching Per 4/26/18 Letter

Dear Senator Taylor:

This letter is to document that as of July 9, 2018, you completed both the required training and interpersonal communication and management coaching, before the required timeframes, outlined in the April 26, 2018 letter sent to you. In addition, you were extremely cooperative in complying with the required training/coaching, and you have actively engaged in more training and coaching than required per the April 26, 2018 letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Jorgenson', written in a cursive style.

Amanda Jorgenson
HR Manager
Wisconsin Legislature
Amanda.Jorgenson@legis.wi.gov

From: "Angela O'Brien (Support)" <elections@wisconsin.gov>

Date: January 12, 2024 at 2:28:08 PM CST

To: Lena Taylor <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Elections <elections@wi.gov>

Subject: Re: Urgent request

Reply-To: Support <elections@wisconsin.gov>

Your Wisconsin Elections Commission request number (29476) is updated with the information below.

Angela O'Brien (Wisconsin Elections Commission)

Jan 12, 2024, 14:28 CST

Dear Sen. Taylor,

Thank you for your call this morning. You requested information on complaints that have been filed against you with the Wisconsin Elections Commission ("the Commission"), or its predecessor agencies, for the entirety of your 20-year public service career.

I am able to provide you with the following information as a courtesy, subject to these caveats: First, as you are aware, the work of the Commission has been performed by three different agencies over the past two decades, and while information and records have been preserved, they do not exist in a single, integrated database in our system. This means that a search for information necessarily meant reviewing and consulting various sources and records, some of which are from long ago. Nothing in this response can guarantee or confirm that no other complaints or records have ever been filed against you with the Commission or its predecessor agencies over the past 20 years. I can only confirm the information I was able to find—nothing more. We are providing this information to you as a courtesy, given the same-day deadline that you gave us. Second, if you wish to request copies of any of the records corresponding with the information below, we can process that request as a request for public records, but would certainly not be able to fulfill a request of that scope within the same business day it was requested.

That being said, I was able to produce the following information regarding complaints that were filed against you, as well as complaints that were filed by you.

Complaints Against You

Case Name	Date of Complaint	Date it was Resolved	Resolution
Jackson v. Taylor	9/4/2020	2/3/2021	Dismissed
Jackson v. Taylor	6/17/2020	7/31/2020	Dismissed
Jackson v. Taylor	6/8/2020	6/10/2020	Dismissed*

*Commission heard this complaint as an “appeal” by Mr. Jackson, but affirmed staff decision to reject the complaint as untimely filed

Complaints Filed by You

Case Name	Date of Complaint	Date it was Resolved	Resolution
Taylor v. Brox	Unknown	3/14/2003	Challenge Sustained; Referral to DA issued
Taylor v. King	6/4/2012	6/8/2012	Challenge Partially Sustained, Partially Dismissed

Best,

Angela O’Brien Sharpe

Staff Attorney

Wisconsin Elections Commission

201 West Washington Avenue

Madison, WI 53703

Lena Taylor

Jan 12, 2024, 11:10 CST

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organization.

Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern

I'm in great need of assistance with a list of the WEC complaints filed against me. I need dates of complaints filed and closed. My hope is to give better clarity by phone and hopefully that this can all happen today. Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely

Lena Taylor

Sent from my iPhone

KAREN D. DARDY
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 971
Madison, Tennessee 37116

(414) 807-2706
karendardy@gmail.com

January 11, 2024

Governor Tony Evers
Wisconsin Governor's Judicial Selection Advisory Committee
GOVJudicialAppointments@Wisconsin.gov

RE: Lena C. Taylor, Letter of Recommendation for
Milwaukee County Branch 41 Judicial Appointment

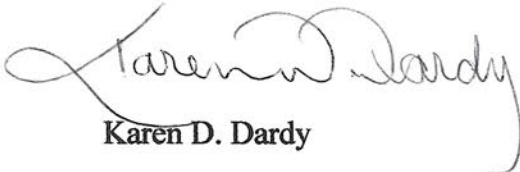
Dear Governor Evers and Judicial Selection Advisory Committee Members:

I write this letter in support of the judicial appointment of my friend and colleague Lena C. Taylor to Branch 41 of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court.

I have known Lena Taylor since the early 1990s when she was practicing in the State Public Defender's Office in Milwaukee where with dedication, she efficiently maintained a heavy case load for a number of years. I observed the tenacity with which she subsequently established a private practice, broadening her knowledge and experience in a wide range of legal areas. I have followed Lena Taylor throughout her tireless career in public service as a member of the Wisconsin Assembly and the Wisconsin State Senate where she has demonstrated valuable gifts for, among other things, strong communication skills, independent thinking, leadership, honesty as well as an ability to resolve issues and controversies.

As a proven advocate for justice for the citizens of the State of Wisconsin, Lena Taylor would be an asset to the Milwaukee County Circuit Court bench. I hope that you will consider appointing her to Branch 41.

Respectively Submitted,



Karen D. Dardy

KDD/kd

Lindsey D. Draper

[REDACTED]
Wauwatosa, WI 53225-4422
[REDACTED]

January 8, 2024

Judicial Selection Advisory Committee
State of Wisconsin
Madison, WI

Dear Selection Committee Members:

I am writing in support of the application of Lena Taylor for appointment to fill the Milwaukee County Circuit Court Branch 41 vacancy.

I have known Ms. Taylor for roughly three decades, having first met her when she worked for the State of Wisconsin as an Assistant State Public Defender assigned to the Milwaukee Criminal Division. In part, based on my own experience as a member of the Juvenile Division of that same office, I knew of the workload circumstances of Ms. Taylor's performance of her duties representing indigent clients in the criminal justice system. It was in that context that I first observed her vigorous advocacy on behalf of her clients and her efforts to provide support for her colleagues in the office.

When I was appointed to the position of Judicial Court Commissioner, I had the opportunity to observe Ms. Taylor's advocacy from a different perspective. She was thorough in her preparation and arguments on behalf of her clients and took obvious personal interest in their well-being.

As a member of the state legislature, Sen. Taylor has been a strong voice for individual constituents and for the district she represents. She has turned what others might have regarded as obstacles into opportunities including when, though representing an obviously urban district, she was assigned to an agriculture-focused committee, she worked to develop programs emphasizing urban farming.

Throughout the years, I have seen her participate in numerous community-serving agencies. She is regularly a participant in programs that improve the knowledge base of her constituents and works to ensure the voices of underrepresented citizens are heard.

I sincerely believe that Sen. Taylor's career-spanning dedication to the law and the people served by it would continue if that service were from the bench.

Very truly yours,


Lindsey D. Draper



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
18th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



January, 12, 2024

Dear Judicial Selection Committee,

I write in support of State Senator Lena Taylor's application to fill the vacancy in Milwaukee Circuit Court Branch 41.

I have worked alongside Senator Taylor for the last 11 years and have seen her dedicated service and steadfast defense of our community's values first hand. She's proven herself to be up to the task of public service and is ready on day one to excel when given the appointment to the Circuit Court.

Senator Taylor is well known in Milwaukee and beyond, but I want to share a lesser known aspect of Senator Taylor and her service to Milwaukee.

No other Legislator I know works as hard on constituent cases as Senator Taylor. It's common place and expected that Legislative offices respond to constituent contacts. Frankly, it's routine. Senator Taylor, however, breaks that routine in the lengths she goes to help people, especially those individuals most marginalized and vulnerable, whether they live in her district or not. This is especially true for those individuals in our care inside our prisons and jails.

I have spent a large portion of my legislative career working to improve Wisconsin's criminal legal system. I receive a tremendous amount of correspondence from incarcerated individuals. Repeatedly, these individuals share their stories of how helpful Senator Taylor has been in working to address issues they have. Several times they have pointed out how much more helpful she has been than I have. I can say this with credibility: no one I have worked with gives more time, attention, and effort to help those incarcerated than Senator Taylor.

I share this because I believe it sheds light on the type of judge Senator Taylor will be. She sees the humanity in everyone. She knows the power of the legal system to help reduce harm in our community. She will ensure that everyone that walks into her courtroom is treated with fairness and respect.

What I hope you take from this letter is simply that Senator Taylor walks the walk. Many people in office, or those that run for office, easily talk the talk about their concern for system impacted individuals, their families, disparate impacts within the system, etc. Senator Taylor has proven her commitment through her work, when the cameras aren't rolling and no election is approaching. This is the type of commitment and service I want in our judiciary.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my support for Senator Taylor's judicial candidacy and I'm happy to provide additional comment or answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evan Goyke", written over a horizontal line.

State Representative Evan Goyke
18th Assembly District

Danyel W. McNeil, MBA **Your**
Name



Dear Governor Ever's Judicial Selection Committee:

Thank you all for your valuable time and effort on this important, pivotal committee and process.

Allow me to introduce to some and remind others the unshakable stature of the human being named Lena C. Taylor J.D.; heretofore called Lena. Lena and I met when we were in 7th grade;45 years ago. WE became friends for life AFTER a serious disagreement-she said something and I said something and before we knew it, our mothers were called to retrieve us from the principal's office. We have been family ever since. Lena has seen me through child rearing, the loss of a sibling, the loss of a son, the loss of a parent and grandparent, marriage, divorce, marriage again, a short stint as a business owner, small steps towards building wealth in real estate and every life event in between. Lena has been there for me during the highest and the lowest. Even when we have not shared for a year, we simply talk and get right back to where we left off last. I consider pinning this letter an honor and opportunity to share just a few words about my friend, my sister, and the public servant Lena was destined to become.

Lena was borne of a compassionate, dedicated, non-traditional family wherein public service was ingrained and expected, along with entrepreneurship. Momma Delta, Lena's maternal grandmother, was a pillar in her community, feeding the hungry, sheltering the unsheltered, training of the unskilled; building a prosperous community before, during and after the civil rights movement. This lineage is important to note in order to grasp the level of dedication, commitment, enthusiasm, professionalism, compassion, concern, accountability and knowledge Lena carries with her at all times-no matter the setting. Regarding her specific talents that warrant review for this important position; Lena earned a Juris Doctorate in 1989 and went immediately to the Milwaukee County Public Defender's office wherein she took care of hundreds, thousands of cases for the most vulnerable and unfortunately criminal element of Milwaukee County.

Lena's time with the Public Defender's office predated prosecutorial options for diversion. During her time, diversion options were not acceptable to the palate of the legislature and the Department of Justice of the United States. Lena remained steadfast



in creative approaches to defending individuals who were at a crossroads in their lives and the lives of their families. The need to enforce the law to hold offenders accountable and balance that against navigating over incarceration of black and brown people of Milwaukee County led Lena to create a network of supportive service providers to help decrease recidivism for her clientele; while supporting healing measures for the larger community as well. Lena has been tested throughout her work as an attorney and an elected official while fiercely providing good stewardship to her community. Lena coordinated campaigns to become a member of the legislature noting that writing bills to become law would afford an opportunity for the voiceless to be heard. Each office Lena has attained has increased her reach, responsibility, commitment and awareness of how important civil service is for improving lives. Lena has the love of the law, the knowledge of the law, the compassion for service and dedication to the justice system necessary for a judicial appointment.

Warm regards,
Danyel W. McNeil



Dear Judicial Selection Committee

Senator Lena Taylor Judicial Recommendation

Former Representative Barbara Jordan said, “More is required of public officials than slogans and handshakes and press releases. More is required. We must hold ourselves strictly accountable. We must provide the people with a vision of the future.” As I write this recommendation for Attorney Lena Taylor, there is no greater representation in the Milwaukee community of a public official that has moved beyond slogans and handshakes to providing a vision of the future for her community. Over the last 20 years, Attorney Taylor has passionately sought the best for the communities she has served. Whether taking a stand to push against ACT 10 and collective bargaining rights or marching against unjust policies in the legislature, Attorney Taylor uses her legal training to position the community in a way that they feel heard and accepted.

One of the consistent narratives related to Wisconsin is how our state continues to lead the country in racial disparities within our criminal justice and educational systems. While judges don’t have direct influence on all the systems that dictate the numbers, the role of the judiciary allows for us to bring a broad life experience to ensure that our decisions in child welfare, criminal, civil and family are done with equity, consistency, and equality. The United States Constitution enshrined due process in our Constitution to ensure all people are given the opportunity to have their cases heard regardless of their class or racial status. A judge that has experience working with all people adds a significant value to the work of the judiciary.

I strongly recommend Senator Taylor for a judicial appointment in the Milwaukee Circuit Court because she embodies the willingness to listen and be fair to all parties. As a judge, human beings from all aspects of the community access the courts looking for someone to recognize their humanity and ensure their voices are truly heard. There are a lot of judges that are tone deaf to racism, sexism, and classism. In my experience, Senator Taylor took great care to lean into the hard conversations and chose to be present rather than distant. When she took great risks to be present during the fight, I knew then that her character and love for the people of Wisconsin represents a rare talent. I have no doubt, she will continue to represent the law, justice, fairness, and equality in the same manner as a Circuit Court Judge.

In appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. Mitchell', written over a rectangular stamp area.

Judge Everett Mitchell
Presiding Judge Juvenile Division
Dane County Circuit Court
Branch 4

January 11, 2024

Dear Governor Evers' Judicial Selection Committee,

I want to thank you for your time and consideration and thank you for your service on the Judicial Selection Committee. My name is Representative Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, I am honored to represent Wisconsin Assembly District 8. I am writing this letter in strong support of Senator Lena Taylor's application for an appointment to the Milwaukee County Circuit Court.

I got to know Lena first, when I was a Milwaukee County Supervisor in 2018 and have had the opportunity to work in the legislative branch since 2020. We have worked on countless legislation together, I would like to take a moment to give you the highlights of the issues we have tackled together. My first experience was passing a bill that legalized fentanyl testing strips. This was the first piece of legislation that we passed and it was quite the learning experience, but a good one. This was the first time Lena showed me how to work across the aisle, and with stakeholders. During that same term, we also worked on the Workforce Housing Bills.

I further got to know Senator Taylor when I was fortunate enough to get re-elected to my second term to the State Assembly. We have continued to work closely together in drafting, advocating for and attempting to advance a variety of legislation, including bi-partisan election reform bills, uniformity of our Marijuana Laws, and reintroducing the Good Samaritan Law. Currently, we are working diligently and strategically on D.A.C.A Workforce Development

legislation. I have personally seen her dedicated and commitment to issues effecting people's quality of life.

I appreciate many things about her, her tenacity and her ability to get the answers to solving problems is just amongst a few things. I know she will continue her dedication as a Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge and continue improving people's live through the law. Lena's ability to work across the aisle and to ask the necessary legal questions, and ability to solve problems will be a great asset to the courts. No one can question her compassion, relentless hard work and commitment to helping people, I have seen it first hand. I know she has the commitment to work hard and will be an invaluable asset to the Judiciary branch.

Lena also has a great depth of experiences and accomplishments. She is able to handle a variety of topics and digest complex information. Finally, Senator Taylor has been like a mentor to me. I have been able to call her from advice about how things work in the Capital. Lena, on many occasions gave me things to think about, and showed me that you need to listen to everyone's perspective. For all these reasons and more, Senator Lena Taylor has my full support to be a Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge.

I want to thank you once again for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Sylvia Ortiz-Velez

January 9, 2024

Dear Governor Evers' Judicial Selection Committee,

I want to thank you for your service on this committee, to which you all have devoted substantial time and commitment.

I write this letter in strong support of Senator Lena Taylor's application for an appointment to the Milwaukee County circuit court. I believe that she has the legal experience, two decades of invaluable legislative experience, and a lifetime commitment to effectuating social change and equity that make her a very unique and special candidate.

I first met Senator Taylor in 2003, after she had been elected to the State Assembly by her hometown of Milwaukee. I was then the public policy director for Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin. There was no legislator with whom I worked who was more committed to reproductive rights and justice than Lena Taylor, as a person, a state Representative and now a State Senator. She was, and continues to be, relentless in her advocacy, authoring and sponsorship of proactive reproductive health and justice bills, and an outspoken public advocate for these rights. To say her commitment is needed now more than ever in public service, and in the judiciary, is an understatement!

I further got to know Senator Taylor when I was fortunate enough to get elected to the State Assembly. We worked closely together in drafting, advocating for and attempting to advance social justice bills, including police reform and use of force standards, and gun safety measures. When Senator Taylor is invested in an issue, she dives deep, and becomes an expert in the area. She does her homework. In drafting and co-sponsoring bills together, I saw her commitment and unwavering devotion to improving people's lives through the law.

Senator Taylor and I also served two budget cycles together on the Joint Finance Committee, the legislative budget writing committee. As only two of four Democrats on the sixteen-member committee, we spent hours, weeks and months together, traveling the state for budget hearings, and attending unending budget sessions. We tried the best we could to beat back the deluge of regressive, harmful policies sneaked into various budget motions, and misguided budgetary priorities. Senator Taylor is someone you want on your team. I was blown away by the breadth of her legislative knowledge across a wide scope of legal issues and policies. She takes tough legislative and policy positions that others often do not have the tenacity to embrace or intelligence to understand. And she never shies away from fighting for what is right, even when she is exhausted, even when it's hard, and even when she is going to lose. Senator Taylor will never, ever turn her back on a person who needs help or a situation that is unjust.

Senator Taylor will bring this same inquisitiveness, intelligence, thirst for the truth and steadfast and unwavering commitment to justice and equity to the Milwaukee County circuit court. As a Milwaukee native, who has weathered hardships and injustices in her own life, she will always do right by her community, and those who appear before her on the bench. She has the

intelligence, the energy and the drive to devote the time it takes to get up to speed on whatever rotation she receives.

Finally, I am privileged to call Lena Taylor a friend. Over the last twenty years, I have oftentimes been in awe of her efforts to effectuate real change and to better people's lives. But I have also been personally grateful for her support, for her willingness to be in the trenches with me and for her ability and strength to pull me out when needed. Lena has an optimism about her, a twinkle in her eyes that keeps her going in her quest to create a more just and equitable world, despite the hardship she encounters and the difficulty of this work. Milwaukee County would be fortunate to have Lena Taylor on the Milwaukee County circuit court.

Thank you for your time and again, for your service.

Please contact me at [REDACTED] should you have any questions.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Chris Taylor

P.S. I am really enjoying the Court of Appeals!

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Governor Tony Evers
Attention: Chief Legal Counsel
115 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Re: Senator Lena Taylor

Dear Governor Evers:

I am writing in support of Senator Lena Taylor's application for the position of circuit court judge in Milwaukee County.

I have known Senator Taylor for many years. She started her career in the Milwaukee Public Defender's Office and transitioned into private practice. As a new public defender in Milwaukee, I would have the opportunity to meet with then Attorney Taylor, ask for advice and talk about issues that we both saw as we represented individuals oftentimes marginalized in our community as well as the criminal justice system. When I moved to Madison and took a position as part of the Public Defender's administrative team, I had the chance to work with Senator Taylor on policies, programs and potential legislation that impact the justice system both from a criminal as well as a civil perspective.

Senator Taylor has continued to represent individuals in a variety of legal matters while still balancing a very busy legislative calendar.

Senator Taylor has always been committed to the rule of law, leveling the playing field for individuals involved in the system and fighting for financial support that provides programming and resources for the individuals of Milwaukee County as well as the whole state.

The people of Milwaukee County would be fortunate to have someone with her credentials on the Bench.

Sincerely,

Kelli Thompson

January 11, 2024

VIA EMAIL - GOVJudicialAppointments@wisconsin.gov
Judicial Selection Advisory Committee

Re: Senator Lena C. Taylor

Dear Members of the Judicial Selection Advisory Committee:

My children graduated from Rufus King High School as did Lena Taylor, now serving her fourth term as Senator representing the 4th Senate District. As a lifelong Milwaukee resident, Senator Lena Taylor has dedicated her life fighting for equal rights and justice while proudly representing the citizens and residents of her district and primarily in the great diverse City of Milwaukee.

I have been acquainted with Senator Taylor for over a quarter century and have come to better know her recently. I have watched her work in the Senate, conduct and participate in meetings, and even read about her in the newspapers. One thing is clear, Senator Lena Taylor persistently insists on equal rights for all human beings. Friends and enemies alike recognize that her life is dedicated to the proposition that all African-Americans must be treated as equal human beings.

More recently, she trusted me to represent her son in a civil rights case involving his stop and seizure by two Milwaukee Police Officers as he took a turkey to his neighbors just before Christmas several years ago. I have seen close up that she is not only committed to the community and her constituents but that she is a proud and caring mother who taught her son to respect each human being and in return demands that America treat her child fairly and equally.

Her record of service speaks for itself and without a doubt, it is clear that Senator Taylor has great courage and is unafraid to speak for the powerless to the powerful. Senator Taylor will not retreat from the cause of equal rights even when attacked and intimidated. These times require persistent courage and the Milwaukee County Circuit Court-Branch 41 needs her service. In his essay "Reconstruction", Frederick Douglass warned that "[n]o Republic is safe that tolerates a privileged class, or denies to any of its citizens equal rights and equal means to maintain them." As Judge, we can be certain that Senator Taylor is up to this challenge.

I respectfully submit that this Committee consider and recommend Senator Lena Taylor to the Milwaukee County Circuit Court-Branch 41. Her life experiences, accumulated knowledge and courage are now needed more than ever in our Court. Senator Taylor is well recognized and clearly respected. All one need look at is her record of success running for office and in tough races, and during which her friends and community carried her across the finish line. Lena brings many skills and her unique Milwaukee history to the bench and seeks now to put those skills to work for all the people.

Governor Evers certainly has many reasons to appoint Senator Lena Taylor to the bench and in doing so will generate much good will throughout Milwaukee County and all to the benefit and greater good of the citizens and of the great State of Wisconsin.

Eau Claire

101 Putnam Street, P.O. Box 390
Eau Claire, WI 54703
Phone: (715) 839-9500
Fax: (715) 839-9571

Madison

8150 Excelsior Drive
Madison, WI 53717
Phone: (608) 833-2632
Fax: (608) 833-2874

Milwaukee

219 N Milwaukee Street, Ste. 520
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Phone: (414) 837-4167
Fax: (414) 763-6413

Waukesha

741 N Grand Avenue, Ste. 209
Waukesha, WI 53188
Phone: (414) 837-4167
Fax: (414) 763-6413

January 11, 2024

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Thank you for your consideration and your hard and crucially important work.

Sincerely,

GINGRAS, THOMSEN & WACHS, LLP



Mark L. Thomsen

Direct Dial: (414) 935-5482

Direct Fax: (414) 763-6413

Email: mthomsen@gtwlawyers.com

MLT/rek



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

Governor's Judicial Selection Advisory Committee Agenda for Thursday, January 18, 2023

Location: Zoom (link below):



8:30 am	JSAC Members Join Zoom, Call to Order
8:35 – 9:20 am	Interview with Andrew Brehm
9:20 – 10:05 am	Interview with Hannah Jahn
10:05 – 10:50 am	Interview with John Remington
10:50 – 11:35 am	Interview with Edgar Lin
11:35 – 12:00 pm	Discuss Candidates
12:00-12:40 pm	Lunch Break
12:40 – 1:25 pm	Interview with Christian Thomas
1:25 – 2:10 pm	Interview with Lena Taylor
2:10 – 2:55 pm	Interview with Andrew Golden
2:55 – 3:40 pm	Interview with Jake Sosnay
3:40 – 4:00 pm	Discuss Candidates