

Senator Chuck Grassley
Questions for the Record
Cathy Bissoon, U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania

1. **What is the most important attribute of a judge, and do you possess it?**

Response: Judges must be fair, impartial and committed to following the rule of law. As a United States Magistrate Judge, I have demonstrated that I possess these attributes.

2. **Please explain your view of the appropriate temperament of a judge. What elements of judicial temperament do you consider the most important, and do you meet that standard?**

Response: Judges should be respectful of the parties and their positions, should hear all cases with an open mind, and should treat all litigants with dignity. I meet those standards in my role as a Magistrate Judge and I would continue to do so if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed.

3. **In general, Supreme Court precedents are binding on all lower federal courts and Circuit Court precedents are binding on the district courts within the particular circuit. Are you committed to following the precedents of higher courts faithfully and giving them full force and effect, even if you personally disagree with such precedents?**

Response: Yes.

4. **At times, judges are faced with cases of first impression. If there were no controlling precedent that dispositively concluded an issue with which you were presented, to what sources would you turn for persuasive authority? What principles will guide you, or what methods will you employ, in deciding cases of first impression?**

Response: Where neither the Supreme Court nor the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit have spoken on an issue that I must necessarily resolve, I would look to the text of the Constitution, statute or applicable legal provision, look to analogous precedential rulings from the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and study the available legislative history for guidance.

5. **What would you do if you believed the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeals had seriously erred in rendering a decision? Would you apply that decision or would you use your own judgment of the merits, or your best judgment of the merits?**

Response: Judges must adhere to precedent regardless of their personal viewpoints and, if confirmed, I intend to continue to follow this mandate.

6. **As you know, the federal courts are facing enormous pressures as their caseload mounts. If confirmed, how do you intend to manage your caseload?**

Response: As a Magistrate Judge, I have experience in managing a heavy caseload. I proactively monitor my docket for matters ripe for disposition and do not allow motions to linger on my docket unresolved. Additionally, in matters in which I do not sit as the trier of fact, I frequently serve as a facilitator in dispute resolution discussions. These measures have been effective in ensuring that my cases are efficiently moved through the system and I intend to continue to utilize these docket control measures if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed.

7. **Do you believe that judges have a role in controlling the pace and conduct of litigation and, if confirmed, what specific steps would you take to control your docket?**

Response: Yes. Please see response to #6.

8. **Please describe with particularity the process by which these questions were answered.**

Response: After carefully considering each question, I drafted responses which were reviewed by representatives of the Department of Justice. I finalized my responses before authorizing their transmittal.

9. **Do these answers reflect your true and personal views?**

Response: Yes.