

North Carolina Supreme Court Election

Candidate	✓ Anita Earls	Sarah Stevens
General information	Democrat Incumbent, Senior Associate Justice, North Carolina Supreme Court, since 2018. Founder and Executive Director Southern Coalition for Social Justice, 2007-2017. Holds a JD from Yale Law School. Bi-racial with a strong civil rights focus. Co-chair of former Gov. Roy Cooper's Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice. Age 66. Endorsed by Roy Cooper. Website (full): earls4justice.com/	Republican challenger to Anita Earls. Private practice attorney for 40 years (family law) and state legislator for 17.5 years. State House Speaker Pro Tem 2017-2024. Chaired Judiciary and Elections Law Committees. Holds JD from Campbell University but has no experience as a judge. Age: 66. Endorsed by N.C. Values Coalition. Website (sparse): sarahstevensnc.com/
An economy for all?	Earls is endorsed by NC AFL-CIO, Down Home North Carolina, and Equality North Carolina. "Even before joining the court, Earls spent her career fighting for justice for working-class North Carolinians. She founded the Southern Coalition for Social Justice...." (NC AFL-CIO).	Stevens "describes herself as a conservative; her legislative record includes votes in favor of tax-cut measures such as reducing franchise taxes" (PredictionEdge). Stevens disagreed with the statement "It is the government's responsibility to ensure everyone has a livable income" (iVoter guide, 2020).
Healthcare for all?	Earls is endorsed by Planned Parenthood, Pro-Choice North Carolina, and the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists PAC. Earls "supports access to healthcare and has described protecting access to healthcare as a constitutional or policy priority; as a justice she has authored opinions that protect retired state employees' health insurance benefits." (PredictionEdge).	Stevens supported North Carolina's S.B. 20 12-week abortion ban (<i>The Daily Tar Heel</i>). Stevens "strongly disagreed" with the statement "It is the government's responsibility to ensure everyone has health insurance" (iVoter guide, 2020).
Childcare and Quality K-12 education?	Earls is endorsed by the NC Association of Educators. She issued a fiery dissent in the 2026 Supreme Court ruling to end all remediation funding in the Leandro case, a case dating to 1994 when 5 poor rural counties sued NC over insufficient educational funding and won based on students' constitutional right to a basic education. The case was upheld several times but finally thrown out by the Court (NC Newsline)	Stevens worked to reform the NC child welfare system. She helped pass Jessica's Law to limit sex offenders from accessing locations primarily intended for minors. She supported Marsy's Law to strengthen victims' rights. She chaired the Children, Youth and Families Committee and partnered with both the Social Services Working Group and the Child Well-Being Transformation Council (candidate website).
Fair and accessible Elections?	Earls defends voting access and opposes partisan gerrymandering (Duke Chronicle). Earls was a civil rights attorney focusing on protecting the fundamental right to vote. She is considered an expert in redistricting litigation (Alliance for Justice). She also served as the director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law's Voting Rights Project and as a deputy assistant attorney general for civil rights under President Bill Clinton (Ballotpedia)	Stevens served as Chair of the House Elections Law Committee in the NC State House. Stevens has stated, "I am running because my opponent has twice ruled against the constitution on issues of voter identification and redistricting" (ncsbe.gov). Stevens supported many of the election laws that Earls opposed as a civil rights lawyer and that Earls found unlawful as a justice (Boltsmag).
A healthy planet?	Earls "supports protecting a clean environment and has a record of legal advocacy for communities affected by environmental harms; endorsements from environmental groups indicate alignment with pro-environment policies." (PredictionEdge). Her rulings "hold polluters like Chemours accountable" (NC AFL-CIO). Endorsed by Sierra Club North Carolina (candidate website).	Stevens "has endorsed state funding for renewable energy development but has indicated opposition to government regulation of greenhouse gas emissions and has voted for measures favoring fossil fuel and nuclear-inclusive, market-oriented energy policies. Public materials emphasize a conservative judicial philosophy without an explicit climate-focused platform." (Prediction Edge).