

BUT WAIT... THERE'S ANOTHER POWER ABOVE THEM

A Gateway to Understanding the Washington Supreme Court

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For: Moses Lake School District Transparency Initiative

YOU JUST LEARNED ABOUT THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Congratulations! You now know more about the 19 members of the Washington State House Education Committee than 99% of voters:

- Their voting records
- Their campaign donors
- Their organizational affiliations
- Their PDC violations (if any)
- Their extreme positions (if any)
- Their bills and proposals

You can now make informed decisions when these names appear on your ballot.

BUT THERE'S A PROBLEM

The Education Committee isn't the top of the power structure.

There's another group of people—**nine of them**—who have MORE power over Moses Lake schools than the entire Education Committee combined.

And when their names appear on your ballot, you get almost ZERO information about them.

THE POWER HIERARCHY (THE REAL ONE)

WASHINGTON STATE SUPREME COURT (9) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can order Legislature to spend billions• Can hold Legislature in contempt• Can impose daily fines on state• Can retain jurisdiction indefinitely
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WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

- Must obey Supreme Court orders
- Passes education laws
- Allocates state budget



HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE (19)

- Controls which bills advance
- Holds hearings
- Votes on education policy



OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT (OSPI)

- Implements state policy
- Administers funding
- Sets standards



MOSES LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Operates schools
- Hires teachers
- Implements state requirements

Notice who's at the top.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2012

In January 2012, **nine judges you probably never heard of** issued a decision called *McCleary v. State of Washington*.

That decision:

- Declared the Washington State Legislature was violating the State Constitution
- Ordered the Legislature to spend an additional **\$13+ BILLION** on K-12 education
- Required the state to fully fund teacher salaries, class size reductions, all-day kindergarten, and more
- Gave the Legislature a deadline: September 2018

Then, when the Legislature didn't move fast enough:

- The Court held the Legislature in **CONTEMPT** (2014) - first time in state history
- The Court imposed **\$100,000 PER DAY FINES** (2015) - collected over \$100 million
- The Court retained jurisdiction for **6 YEARS** (2012-2018) - unprecedented
- The Court supervised the Legislature like a parent supervising a child

The Legislature had no choice but to obey.

Result: - Property taxes increased statewide - School funding formulas changed for every district including Moses Lake - Local levy authority reduced - Teacher salary structure completely restructured

Nine judges. One decision. Billions in consequences.

THE BALLOT INFORMATION PROBLEM

When those nine justices run for re-election, here's what you see on your ballot:

- ☐ DEBRA L. STEPHENS
Supreme Court Justice, Position 7
- ☐ [Challenger Name - if any]
[Occupation]

That's it.

You DON'T get: - Which governor appointed them (if any) - Their judicial philosophy - Who funded their campaigns - Their previous major decisions - Their organizational affiliations - Their political leanings - Their voting record

Just: - Name - Current title - "NON-PARTISAN"

Yet these nine people have MORE power over your schools than your locally elected school board.

THE IRONY

We just spent **dozens of hours** researching the 19 Education Committee members so you could learn:

- Rep. Shaun Scott is a self-identified Marxist with \$11,000 in PDC fines
- Rep. Matt Marshall founded and led the Washington Three Percenters militia through 2023
- Rep. Joel McEntire's inflammatory social media got ethics complaints filed
- Every member's donors, bills, votes, and backgrounds

But when it comes to the NINE JUDGES who can order the Legislature around?

You get their name and "non-partisan."

That's the irony we're trying to fix.

DECISION POINT: DO YOU WANT TO GO DEEPER?

Here's what we've built for you:

A comprehensive guide to the Washington Supreme Court and the McCleary decision, structured like a swimming pool with marked depths:

- **Shallow End (5 minutes):** Quick overview - what happened, why it matters, the ballot problem
- **Wading Depth (15 minutes):** The McCleary story - the lawsuit, the battle, the \$100K/day fines
- **Swimming Depth (20 minutes):** The 2012 Court - the 9 justices who decided it, who wrote it, who dissented
- **Deep Dive (45+ minutes):** Today's 2025 Court - complete profiles of all 9 current justices

You choose how deep you want to go. Stop whenever you want. Each section stands alone.

FAIR WARNING: THIS GETS COMPLEX

The Supreme Court material is NOT as straightforward as the Education Committee research.

Why it's harder:

1. **Judicial decisions are complex** - not simple yes/no votes
2. **"Non-partisan" makes research harder** - they hide their affiliations
3. **Longer tenures** - some justices have been on court 30+ years
4. **Lower turnover** - incumbent re-election rate near 100%
5. **Less direct accountability** - appointed judges, not elected officials
6. **Legal terminology** - constitutional law, jurisdiction, separation of powers

If you found the Education Committee research challenging, this is 2-3x more complex.

WHY BOTHER?

Good question. Here's why this matters:

Power

The Supreme Court ordered **\$13+ BILLION** in new spending. That's more financial impact than anything the Education Committee will EVER do.

Accountability

When you vote for Education Committee members, you get to research them thoroughly. When you vote for Supreme Court justices, you get almost nothing. **That's wrong.**

Transparency

The same principle that drove us to research the Education Committee should apply to Supreme Court justices: **Voters deserve full information about people with power over their schools.**

Pattern

If nine judges can order \$13 billion in education spending with minimal voter scrutiny, what else can they do? (Answer: A LOT.)

Local Impact

McCleary directly changed Moses Lake's funding, property taxes, and local control. **These nine people affect your daily life.**

WHO SHOULD READ THIS?

DEFINITELY read if you: - Want to understand why your property taxes increased - Are curious about the McCleary decision you've heard about - Vote in Supreme Court elections and want actual information - Believe in government transparency and accountability - Enjoy deep research and want the full story - Are involved in school board, PTA, or education policy - Study government, law, or political science - Just finished the Education Committee research and want more

SKIP if you: - Are satisfied with shallow overview of school governance - Don't vote in Supreme Court elections anyway - Find legal/constitutional material boring or confusing - Have limited time and just want basic facts - Already understand McCleary and current court composition - Don't care who these nine people are

No judgment either way. This is optional deep-dive material for motivated readers.

THE STRUCTURE (ONE MORE TIME)

If you proceed, you'll find:

Section 1: Shallow End (5 min)

- One-sentence summary
- Power hierarchy explained
- What Moses Lake voters need to know
- The “non-partisan” ballot reality

Section 2: Wading Depth (15 min)

- How the McCleary lawsuit started (2007)
- The trial court ruling (2010)
- The Supreme Court decision (2012)
- The 6-year enforcement battle (2012-2018)
- \$100,000/day fines
- What changed for schools statewide

Section 3: Swimming Depth (20 min)

- Who were the 9 justices in 2012?
- Who wrote the opinion? (Justice Debra Stephens)
- Who dissented? (Chief Justice Madsen, Justice Johnson)
- What was the separation of powers debate?
- How liberal was the court? (Stanford study data)

Section 4: Deep Dive (45+ min)

- All 9 current justices (2025) - complete profiles
- How each justice got their seat (appointed vs. elected)
- Which governors appointed them
- Their backgrounds and careers
- McCleary continuity (3 justices still on court from 2012)
- Election patterns (why incumbents almost never lose)
- What voters never learn about these judges
- The power they hold over education, taxes, and government

Each section has a STOP HERE marker. You’re not locked in. Exit whenever you want.

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE RESEARCHER

I spent **40+ hours** researching the Education Committee members with equal scrutiny:

- 50+ web searches per member
- PDC records examined
- Organizational affiliations investigated
- Voting records analyzed
- Bill sponsorships tracked

I documented Rep. Matt Marshall’s militia leadership and Rep. Shaun Scott’s Marxist affiliation **with the same rigor.**

Now I’m applying that same equal scrutiny to the Supreme Court.

Not because I have an agenda. Not because I want to attack judges.

But because **voters deserve the same transparency about Supreme Court justices that we now have about Education Committee members.**

If we’re going to research the people with power over Moses Lake schools, we should research **ALL** of them—including the nine at the very top.

That’s what factual, non-partisan transparency looks like.

READY TO PROCEED?

Option 1: DIVE IN

→ Click here to open: **“The Supreme Court & Your Schools: A Multi-Depth Guide”**

Option 2: SKIP IT

→ Return to main Moses Lake transparency site

Option 3: SAVE FOR LATER

→ Bookmark this page and come back when you have 20-60 minutes

ONE LAST THING

Whether you read the Supreme Court material or not, **remember this:**

When you see Supreme Court races on your ballot with just a name and “non-partisan,” you’re voting for people with **enormous power** over your schools, taxes, and daily life.

They deserve the same scrutiny we gave to the Education Committee.

The information exists. We’ve compiled it. The choice to read it is yours.

END OF GATEWAY PAGE

Next Step: Reader decides whether to proceed to the full Supreme Court guide

This gateway page is part of the Moses Lake School District Transparency Initiative. Our goal is factual, non-partisan information about people with power over local schools. We apply equal

scrutiny to all officials regardless of political affiliation.