

News Roundup

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Everyone knows the headline results from Tuesday: President Obama was re-elected; Pat McCrory will be the next governor; Republicans control the General Assembly; and Justice Newby narrowly retained his seat. But there are lots of interesting details in the State Board of Election's preliminary results, [here](#). For example:

- Every district attorney who ran this year was unopposed.
- The only sitting superior court judge who was not re-elected was Judge Abe Jones, narrowly defeated in Wake County by Public Defender Bryan Collins.
- The three court of appeals judges who essentially campaigned as a package met very different fates. Judge McGee retained her seat with 61% of the vote, Judge Bryant won more narrowly, and Judge Thigpen lost with only 47% of the vote.

In other news:

1. Perhaps he will behave differently in his second term, but [this recent study](#) concludes that "President Obama . . . has granted clemency at a lower rate than any modern president . . . pardoning just 22 individuals while denying 1,019. He has given pardons to roughly 1 of every 50 individuals whose applications were processed by the Justice Department. At this point in his presidency, Ronald Reagan had pardoned 1 of every 3 such applicants. George H.W. Bush had pardoned 1 in 16. Bill Clinton had pardoned 1 in 8. George W. Bush had pardoned 1 in 33." Seems like there's a pretty clear trend line, regardless of party.
2. As a final note on the election, [this story](#) notes the re-election of Chicago Judge Cynthia Brim, with 63% of the vote. Judge Brim (a) has been charged with battery after allegedly shoving a bailiff, (b) has been barred from the courthouse by a panel of supervising judges, (c) has been characterized by her own attorney as "absolutely psychotic in the sense of not having the ability to think straight or to even organize her thinking," (d) has been deemed insane by a psychiatrist, (e) has repeatedly been rated as "not recommended" by the local bar association, (f) has been described as "not qualified" by the Chicago Council of Lawyers, which stated that it had received "consistently negative reports" about her performance, and (g) has been "suspended from hearing cases since March," though she continues to collect her \$182,000 salary. I'm not sure whether this story is more notable for what it says about judicial elections or about life in Chicago, but it sure caught my eye.
3. Moving beyond the election, the *Wall Street Journal* recently [reported](#) on new data concerning gun thefts. Two numbers jumped out at me. One, about 230,000 guns per year are stolen in the United States. Two, the percentage of households owning a gun dropped from 54% in 1993 to 41% in 2010.
4. Finally, a California appellate court has [ruled](#) that a 15 year old convicted of sex crimes can't be banned from Facebook and other social networking websites as part of his probationary sentence, because the internet played no role in his crimes. The court stated that "[a]bsent any connection between [the offender's] criminal history and the blanket Internet ban, there is no support for the People's claim that [the ban] is properly related to future criminality."