



# COLORADO

## Governor Jared Polis

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### Governor Polis Appoints Colorado Supreme Court Justice

**DENVER** - Today, Governor Jared Polis announced that he is appointing Judge Maria Encarnacion Berkenkotter to the Colorado Supreme Court.

“I’m thrilled to appoint Judge Berkenkotter to the Colorado Supreme Court,” said Governor Polis. “Throughout her career, she has shown a keen ability to render sound and wise decisions on a broad range of issues. She has deftly presided over high-profile, complicated, and often emotional cases, and has implemented beneficial operational changes within the Judicial Branch. She has decades of experience in her field and is universally respected among the Colorado bar. I have no doubt she will be an asset to the State and add immense value to the Supreme Court.”

“I’m honored to be selected by Governor Polis for this important position,” said Judge Berkenkotter. “It is essential for the foundations of our democracy, including our courts, to remain strong during these unprecedented times.”

Judge Berkenkotter is currently an Arbiter with the Judicial Arbiter Group, Inc., a group of former judges who provide professional dispute resolution and litigation services. Her practice focuses on mediation, arbitration, judge pro tem appointments, and civil and domestic dispute resolution. Judge Berkenkotter is also a Judicial Coach for the Colorado Judicial Department. She has held both positions since 2018.

Previously, Judge Berkenkotter served in Colorado’s 20th Judicial District as a District Court Judge from 2006 to 2017. She was appointed to Chief Judge of the 20th Judicial District by Chief Justice Michael Bender in 2013 and served in that capacity until her retirement in 2017. During her time on the 20th Judicial District Court bench, she presided over civil, criminal, domestic relations, and juvenile cases. She was also a First Assistant Attorney General with the Colorado Attorney General Consumer Protection Section (2000-2006); an Assistant Attorney General with the Colorado Attorney General Regulatory Law and Consumer Protection Sections (1990-2000); and an associate with Holmes & Starr, P.C. (1988-1990). Judge Berkenkotter received her undergraduate degree from Western Michigan University in 1984 and her J.D. from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law in 1987.

“It has been an honor to serve Colorado on the Supreme Court for 20 years,” said Chief Justice Coats. “During these unprecedented times, our court’s purpose to uphold the Colorado Constitution has taken on new meaning, and I know that Judge Berkenkotter will treat this duty with the deliberation and care that she has shown throughout her career.”

“Judge Berkenkotter has shown extraordinary dedication to upholding the laws of Colorado,” said Justice Brian Boatright, who will become the new Chief Justice. “She will be a terrific addition to the Colorado Supreme Court and I look forward to our work together.”

This is Governor Polis’ first appointment to the Colorado Supreme Court. This judgeship is created by the retirement of the Honorable Nathan B. Coats and is effective January 1, 2021.

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