



1. What are the top issues facing the Ohio judicial system, and how should the Ohio Supreme Court provide leadership to those issues?

1. I think that our judicial system is not as efficient and as effective as it could be. There are too many cases across the state that linger for far too long in our court system. Although Ohio does not have a unified court system, the Ohio Supreme Court should work with every court in the state to make sure each court is operating as effectively and as efficiently as it can operate. And if there is a failure on the part of one or more elected officials to make this happen if provided the proper staffing and resources, those elected officials should be held accountable.



2. Access to the courts and securing legal representation is also an issue, especially in our rural counties. There are programs in place designed to help with these issues and the governor has allocated quite a bit of resources over the past few years for indigent legal representation, but I think the Supreme Court can be more active in creating incentives for attorneys and judges to continue improvement in this area.
3. A final issue that is of great concern is the ever-increasing politicization of the judiciary and the growing influence of partisan interests on the Supreme Court and appellate courts. The recent actions of one political party holding a super majority in the legislature to require political party affiliation on the ballot of candidates running for election or re-election to the intermediate and highest appellate courts, but not for the trial courts is just the latest example of this. Partisan politics should have no place in the judiciary. And this recent political power grab, opposed by judges of both parties, by the Ohio State Bar Association, and the Ohio Judicial Conference, only undermines the impartiality of these courts and further erodes the confidence of citizens in the judiciary. The members of the Supreme Court should all be publicly vocal in opposition.



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Worse still, requiring party affiliation on the ballot allows the weakest of candidates to run for a seat on one of these two courts with a leg up on winning – not because the person is the better candidate, but because he or she runs as a member of the political party that the particular voting constituency leans in favor of. My re-election bid is a classic example of this. I have been an elected jurist for almost 18 years on the highest and second highest courts in the state. I was elected to the Supreme Court by more than 1.8 million voters. This background history alone sets me apart from my opponent who never served as a judge or even a magistrate on any court before being appointed to the highest court in our State. My opponent has run for, and been elected to, several other public offices over the decades, but he has never run for a judicial office. I think this clearly demonstrates his lack of interest in the job and that his appointment to the Court was based solely on personal and/or political reasons and not for ones having anything to do with good government, public service or having the most competent person on the court.

2. How do you see the role of amicus curiae parties or briefs in Ohio Supreme Court litigation?

In my almost 18 years as a jurist, I find amicus curiae very briefs helpful. They often give us more context to inform our rulings and sometimes elucidate different facets of a case that may not be fully addressed by the parties to the case.

3. Can you explain your judicial philosophy in plain English?

My judicial philosophy is to apply the law as written, if there is ambiguity interpret the law based on the context of where and how the law was derived, make sure the law applies equally to everyone, and don't abandon common sense.