

2008 Ohio Election Briefing - Supreme Court

Campaigns for high-profile offices such as President get much of the attention during most elections, and this year is no different. However, voters in Ohio should not overlook two very important races further down the ticket: elections for the **Ohio Supreme Court**.

Although many Ohioans don't know much about the Supreme Court, it has a direct and immediate impact on the economic competitiveness of every company, the job security of every employee, and the future prosperity of every family.

Candidates for Supreme Court have generally fallen into one of two categories in Ohio. The first are those who feel that courts should be independent, fair, impartial bodies that decide issues of law as they are set forth by the elected members of the legislature.



In the other category are candidates and judges who want to use their position to actually create and implement laws from the bench. These "activist" judges often make decisions in Ohio which make it hard for companies to stay in business and which hurt consumers and taxpayers in the form of higher costs for products and services.

Fortunately, recent elections for the Supreme Court have focused on this critical difference, and armed with the right information, voters have elected a majority of Justices who believe in the principles of judicial restraint and the separation of powers. The decisions made by Ohio voters in those elections were critical in helping to improve the business and job climate in Ohio. This year, voters must once again be sure to support candidates who won't harm the economy and job opportunities in Ohio.

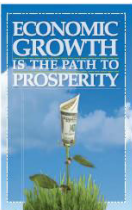
There are two different Supreme Court elections confronting voters this year. One involves Justice Evelyn Stratton, who has served on the court since 1997, and her challenger, Judge Peter Sikora.

In the other contest, current Supreme Court Justice Maureen O'Connor, who has served on the court since 2003, is running for reelection against Judge Joseph Russo.

A comparison between Justice O'Connor and Judge Russo is included below, with statements in their own words concerning their judicial philosophy and their views on the role of the court.

	 Justice Maureen O'Connor	 Judge Joseph Russo
Judicial Experience	Justice, Supreme Court of Ohio, 2003-present; Judge, Summit County Court of Common Pleas, 1993-1995; Magistrate, Summit County Probate Court, 1985-1993	Judge, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court General Division, 2001-present
Other Experience	Lieutenant Governor and Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, State of Ohio, 1999-2003; Prosecuting Attorney, Summit County, 1995-1999; Attorney, private practice of law, 1981-1985	Adjunct Professor, Case Western Reserve School of Law, 2006-Present; Principal, Law Offices of Joseph D. Russo Co., L.P.A., 1992-2001; Associate Attorney, Landskroner & Phillips Co., L.P.A., 1991-1992; Law Clerk, 300 Associates, Inc., 1989-1991; Summer Associate, Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, 1990; National Recruitment Manager, Premier Industrial Corp., 1988
Statements on the Judicial Philosophy	"I have always performed my duties diligently and impartially. I am confident that I have not shown favoritism or bias no matter who has come before me as a judge. I strongly support the Constitutions of the US and Ohio. I am not directed by my own personal beliefs as a judge."	"We need to restore balance to the Supreme Court, both politically and philosophically. We need more ideas from different points of view. All I am looking to do is bring a different perspective."
Statements on the Role of the Court	"I believe that the role of the court is to interpret the law as it is written. I strongly support the three co-equal branches of government and believe in the separation of power as contained in the Constitution."	Russo told the <i>Cincinnati Enquirer</i> that "I believe in the bedrock of prior Supreme Court decisions (stare decisis). I believe that each new decision that is made must either add to those cherished decisions, or clearly overturn that area of law for reasons that are clearly stated, and properly supported by the law."
<i>See more information about the candidates on next page</i>		

	Justice Maureen O'Connor	Judge Joseph Russo
Community Service and Awards	MADD Law Enforcement Award, Summit County, Ohio, 1997; Cleveland State University Distinguished Alumnae Award for Civic Achievement, 1997	Hergenroeder Award in Trial Advocacy; Francis J. Colbert Law Scholarship
Major Endorsements/Ratings	The Ohio State Bar Association – “Recommended”; The Cleveland Plain Dealer; The Columbus Dispatch; The Cleveland Fire Fighter Association, Local 93; The Fraternal Order of Police; The Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association; The Ohio Restaurant Association; The National Federation of Independent Business; The Ohio Society of CPAs; The Columbus Fire Fighters Union, Local #67, I.A.F.F.; The Ohio Manufacturer's Association; Academy of Medicine of Cleveland-Northern Ohio Medical PAC; The Ohio Osteopathic Association PAC; Votes for Women; The Ohio Optometric Association; The Ohio Podiatric Medical Association; International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 18; The Ohio Hospital Association; The Ohio Chamber of Commerce	The Ohio State Bar Association – “Recommended”; Ohio AFL-CIO; North Shore AFL-CIO; Tri-County Regional Labor Council, AFL-CIO; Ohio Education Association; Cleveland Building Trades Council; IBEW Local 38; Ohio Civil Service Employees Association; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 11; Teamsters Local 407
Sources/Campaign Information	O'Connor for Supreme Court JB Hadden, Treasurer 211 S. Fifth Street Columbus, OH 43215 614-228-2481 amy@oconnorforjustice.com www.oconnorforjustice.com	Judge Russo for Justice Steve Hussell, Treasurer 3099 Huntington Shaker Heights, OH 44120 216-443-8746 info@judgerussoforjustice.com www.judgerussoforjustice.com



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