

Michael P. Donnelly



Office: Franklin County – Ohio Supreme Court

Age: 51

Residence: Cleveland Heights, OH

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Occupation: Judge, Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, 2005-Present

Education: J.D., Cleveland State University Cleveland-Marshall College of Law; B.A., John Carroll University; St. Ignatius High School

Work Experience: Assistant Cuyahoga County Prosecutor, 1992-1997; Attorney in Private Practice, 1997-2004

Family: Married with two children

Affiliations: Gesu Catholic Church

Endorsements:

- AFSCME Council 8
- Cleveland American Middle East Organization (CAMEO)
- Cleveland Building & Construction Trades Council
- Cleveland Stonewall Democrats
- Columbus Fire Fighters Union Local #67, I.A.F.F

Judicial Votes Count



WHAT'S AT STAKE?

In 2018, Ohio voters elected judges to the Supreme Court of Ohio and all 12 districts of the Court of Appeals, as well as most courts of common pleas and county courts.

Election Results

2019 Voter Registration Deadlines

For Primary Election: April 8, 2019

For General Election: Oct. 7, 2019

[Register to Vote Online or Update Your Name/Address Here](#)

2019 Election Dates

Primary Election: May 7, 2019

General Election: Nov. 5, 2019

Polls are open on Election Days from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

CONTACT US



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- Congresswoman Marcia Fudge
- Cuyahoga County Democratic Party
- Cuyahoga County Young Democrats
- Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)
- Lake County Bar Association
- Ohio AFL-CIO
- Ohio Association of Public School Employees (OAPSE)
- Ohio Conference of Teamsters
- Ohio Democratic Party
- Ohio Education Association (OEA)
- Ohio Patrolman's Benevolent Association
- Ohio State Representative John Rogers
- Ohio State Senator Joe Schiavoni
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
- Stonewall Democrats of Central Ohio
- Summit County Progressive Democrats
- United Auto Workers, Region 2
- United Steelworkers of America, District 1

Bar Association Ratings: Lake County Bar Association – Highly Recommended

(1) List your judicial experience (courts and years):

I was elected to serve as a Judge in the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas in November 2004 and took office on January 3, 2005. I was reelected in 2010 and in 2016. During the last thirteen years, I have presided over thousands of cases involving virtually every type of criminal and civil claim which can be litigated in the General Division. From 2010-2017, I served as one of five judges on Cuyahoga County's Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Court, which oversees criminal cases that involve defendants who suffer from schizophrenia, schizophrenic disorder, or a developmental disability.

(2) What about your non-judicial legal experience qualifies you to be a judge?

Fighting for victims as a Cuyahoga County Assistant County Prosecutor and for injured workers as a private attorney taught me how important it is that people can see that their court system operates fairly and efficiently, and that they have access to it. Building greater trust in our court system requires advocating for systemic criminal and civil justice reform. I currently serve as first Vice President of the Ohio Common Pleas Judge's Association. I am also a current member of both the Ohio State Board of Bar Examiners and the Ohio Jury Instruction Committee. I served for six years on the Ohio Supreme Court's Commission on Professionalism.

In each of these roles, I have worked to advance policies that make our court system more transparent and fair. I have worked to expose the practice of prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges who allow criminal defendants to resolve serious accusations, such as rape and gross sexual imposition, by accepting factually baseless pleas. Allowing defendants to plead to irrelevant offenses that have no basis in fact enters incorrect information into the public record, gives an inaccurate account of criminal activity, and often circumvents registration laws for sexual offenses. Because of this practice, employers who conduct important criminal background checks and those who rely on conviction data (such as law enforcement, victim advocacy groups, future sentencing courts, and the general public) cannot have confidence that the information they receive accurately reflects what people may have done.

For a number of years, I have led an effort to have Ohio adopt a

modification of Ohio's Criminal Rule 11 to specifically require that plea agreements maintain a factual basis, as is already required in our federal system. Despite having the backing of The Plain Dealer, The Columbus Dispatch, the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, and the Ohio Alliance Against Sexual Violence, the current Ohio Supreme Court rejected this effort without explanation. The Ohio Supreme Court is the steward of Ohio's justice system and must take responsibility for making it fairer and more effective. I believe my efforts to reform the system have helped prepare me for the role of Associate Justice, where I will be able to work with all of our justice system's stakeholders to shape statewide judicial policy and help restore and deepen the public's trust in the justice system.

(3) Why are you running for this particular court seat?

In the broadest terms, the Ohio Supreme Court is responsible for ensuring:

1. That Ohio's justice system runs fairly, effectively, and efficiently.
2. That Ohio's laws are justly applied.

When these jobs aren't done well, the public's faith in our courts begins to erode and I believe that's what has been happening in Ohio. People fear that our courts are focused less on the fair application of the law and more on serving the interests of those who can afford to access them and those who help fund judicial election campaigns. Maintaining public confidence in our court system should be a priority for everyone. Our justice system is the backbone of our society because it provides the means for parties to resolve their disputes. Without our courts, these disputes would tear apart families, businesses, and communities. To operate as designed, however, our courts must earn the public's trust. People must be confident their court system will treat them fairly and that its decisions will be just. I believe our courts can and must do better at earning society's trust. The most important element in accomplishing this is greater transparency because the public's ability to discern that our courts are functioning properly and efficiently resolving disputes depends upon it.

I also strongly believe that Ohioans suffer from a huge justice gap. Citizens with lower income face significant barriers to justice. This is not a matter of opinion or debate; it is a matter of established fact. I have worked hard in my courtroom and in the other settings to advance policies that would reform our court system. But, inevitably, there is a limit to how much a single trial court judge can do; building greater trust in our court system requires advocating for systemic criminal and civil justice reform. I'm running for Associate Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court for the opportunity to help rebuild the public's trust in its courts and prove to Ohioans that justice is for ALL of us.