



OAJVotes: Meet the Candidates Guide

Executive Summary

The following guide will help you, as a proud trial lawyer and OAJ member, make the most of your opportunities to meet with candidates and legislators. As you attend events, fundraisers, and meet-and-greets, the goal is to build a personal and genuine relationships with them. By building that connection, you can be thought of as an expert legal resource for all matters, particularly legislation that affects Ohio citizens' access to a fair and impartial civil justice system.

OAJ Big Picture Talking Points

- The OAJ is a nonpartisan organization focused on promoting access to a fair and impartial civil justice system for all Ohio citizens and protecting the Seventh Amendment, our constitutional right to civil jury trial.
- The Seventh Amendment supports a free market economy because it enables citizens to hold each other and businesses accountable, without the intrusion of government.
- We support less government intrusion in the civil justice system.
- Legislation that limits the Seventh Amendment rights of Ohioans means that local citizens are stripped of their Constitutional role to serve as jurors and disputes are instead decided by the government and not by its citizens.
- Please look to me as a resource on issues like mediation, workers' compensation, personal injury, and medical negligence. Here are a few examples of policies that the OAJ is working on to support the Seventh Amendment:
 - Government employees get civil immunity when they cause an accident and hurt your constituents, just because they were "on duty." That's not a jury deciding the case, it's bureaucrats.
 - Ohio law allows car insurance policies to exclude covering family members of the at-fault driver (intra-family exclusion), which means a hitchhiker in your car has better insurance coverage than your own family. It's likely that your auto insurance policy has this exclusion.
 - Health care providers can sell you copies of your medical records or contract with third parties to facilitate selling you copies of your medical records, both of which charge you an-arm-and-a-leg for copies of your own records – including digital/electronically stored information. We want to reduce the costs for private citizens, and their representatives, to have access to their own health information.
- The OAJ and I want help you craft solutions to benefit all Ohioans.

Useful Questions for the Candidate

Here are some questions you can ask:

- What issues are you focused on and how can I be a resource for you on those issues?
- Are you working on other issues where legal expertise might be helpful?
- Too many politicians seem to have forgotten that our country's founders trusted juries, what are your thoughts about protecting the Seventh Amendment?

General Tips for Attending Political Events

Meet the candidate, even by Zoom: Candidates are doing everything they can to connect with potential voters. They are knocking on doors, hosting in-person fundraisers, and holding virtual office hours via Zoom, Facebook Live, or other technology. Attend an event or request a personal meeting. Building a personal relationship requires a personal meeting.

Know Your Audience: Learn a little about the candidate before attending the event. Check out their campaign website, social media or recent articles about the race. Do not use a party affiliation to assume a candidate's positions or opinions.

Build a Relationship First: Your end-goal is to become a resource for the legislator by initiating and developing a sincere relationship. Most importantly, make the conversation about them, not you, OAJ or civil justice. Do not force them to answer challenging or confrontational questions on subjects that they might not be educated on (such as tort reform). Build the relationship first, discuss issues later.

Use Your Network: If you're familiar enough with the candidate to know who they associate with, look for someone at the event who can make an introduction for you. This is not only the easiest way to make an introduction, but it also allows you to build trust by association.

Be Generous: If you can personally put the check in the candidate's hand, make that the first thing you do, along with offering your support. Listen more than you speak and look for ways that you can be a resource based on the content of the conversation. When the conversation ends, the candidate should feel that they've got a partner, not just a check.

Don't Be a Wallflower: In unfamiliar places, people often look for familiar faces so that they aren't left with a drink in one hand and your phone in the other. If you're not careful, it's easy to waste all your time with people you already know. A five-minute conversation with a candidate or legislator is worth way more than three hours at a table with your colleagues.

Follow-Up: The day after an event, follow up with an email to the candidate. Thank them for the conversation and their time and provide them with your contact info and an invitation to contact you if they need a resource. If they mentioned something during the conversation that you feel like you could help with, mention that in the email as well. Make an effort to meet again.