

O'Marro campaign: Vilas County Judicial Candidate Meg O'Marro, urges caution over opponent's lack of trial experience and his push for virtual trials

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Conover, Wis., — Vilas County Judicial candidate, Meg O'Marro, expressed deep concern at a March 12 Conover forum that her opponent's lack of trial experience and push for virtual hearings may undermine citizen's Constitutional rights to due process, a fair trial and the right to confront and cross examine accusers. Judicial candidates, Meg O'Marro and Daniel Overbey, debated at the Candidate Forum at the Conover Community Center, approximately three weeks ahead of the April 5, 2022 election.

Underscoring her concern, O'Marro said it is necessary to elect judges with extensive litigation experience in vast areas of the law, in response to her opponent Overbey's statement that a Judge merely "helps the case flow" and he indicted some trials could be held virtually.

"A judge does not just process cases," O'Marro said. "A judge must know the Constitution and understand its requirements, and to do that, a judge must have experience researching, writing and arguing Constitutional issues. A judge must also have experience trying cases to a jury and litigating evidentiary issues that govern the presentation of evidence in court. "

How can a someone ensure a defendant has been provided a fair trial and an impartial jury if he has never participated in a trial, examined witnesses or been part of the jury selection process?" O'Marro said.

Voters should be troubled by Overbey's push for virtual justice, O'Marro added. "We need to be careful about any push towards virtual justice," she said. "There is no

way to determine the credibility of a witness who is testifying virtually. There is also no way to prevent witness and jury tampering by off camera individuals during virtual trials.”

O’Marro later said her work in mandated virtual hearings in Milwaukee because of Covid gave her a first-hand view and urged voters to consider the threat to their Constitutional rights. O’Marro supports the adoption of court rules that regulate the types of hearings that can be held virtually.

Another problem with moving to virtual justice too quickly, O’Marro added, is that hearings can be copied, distributed and remain in cyberspace forever. “Intimate and embarrassing details are often discussed in court. This endangers the safety and privacy of all those involved, as well as putting extended families and friends at risk. We must ensure security measures are in place to address the risk before unleashing virtual justice on a massive scale,” she said.

When it comes to the question of which candidate has more experience, Meg O’Marro handled 969 cases in Vilas County in just three years, eight months as Vilas County Assistant Corporation Counsel, according to public court records supplied by Vilas County Clerk of Courts Beth Soltow.

In contrast, Overbey has handled only 56 Vilas County cases in the 18 years he has lived and worked here.

O’Marro has almost 30 years of trial experience in the public and private sectors as state prosecutor, county attorney and private counsel. O’Marro has expertise in 17 areas of the law. Compared with Overbey who has never tried a case to a jury and his legal knowledge is limited to three areas of the law.

As Vilas County’s Assistant Corporation Counsel from 2017 through April 2021, O’Marro represented Vilas County in civil matters impacting the welfare of citizens, preservation of natural resources and function of governing agencies. She has also served children in need of protection or services, adults at risk, mental health commitments, child support, paternity, and truancy. Meg’s work serves people of all ages, races and backgrounds.

Meg has worked with Native American families under the Indian Child Welfare Act, protecting their cultures and traditions and families

A proud mother of five children, Meg O’Marro’s community involvement included being a member of Vilas County’s Drug Endangered Children Task Force, Truancy Task Force and Child Death Review Team.

The Branch 2 Circuit includes Arbor Vitae, Boulder Junction, Cloverland, Conover, Eagle River, Lac du Flambeau, Land O’ Lakes, Lincoln, Manitowish Waters, Phelps, Plum Lake, Presque Isle, St. Germain, Washington and Winchester townships.

O’Marro lives in Eagle River and represented Vilas County in civil matters impacting

the welfare of citizens, preservation of natural resources and function of governing agencies.

About Meg O'Marro

Licensed by the State Bar of Wisconsin and a member in good standing since 1992, O'Marro's areas of practice include civil, administrative, municipal, public records, children's, elder and disability, family, criminal, probation and parole, juvenile and appellate law. She has served in the public sector as a prosecutor and in the private sector as defense counsel skilled in court procedure and evidentiary law.

In addition to her work for Vilas and Milwaukee counties, O'Marro was an attorney with Sterling Law Offices from 2015-17, obtaining a not guilty verdict in a criminal trial, a dismissal in a felony case and the relicensing of a foster parent wrongly accused of misconduct. She represented family law litigants and presented family law seminars.

Meg owned and operated O'Marro Law Offices, L.L.C. from 2004-15 providing legal representation to individuals in civil, children's, juvenile, elder and disability, family, criminal, probation and parole, and appellate law matters. She served as guardian ad litem for children and adults at risk.

From 1992- 2004, Meg was a family, criminal, probation and parole, and appellate law attorney for Felli Law and from 1992-94, an Associate Attorney in those areas and real estate law for Nelson Law.

O'Marro began her legal career at the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas, Dayton, Ohio, serving as Law Clerk to the Honorable John M. Meagher and to the Court Administrator.

Meg earned her Juris Doctor Law degree in 1992 from the University of Dayton, School of Law, where she was selected for the Regional Moot Court Team and earned the Dean's Award for work entitled Law and the Mentally Disabled.

A University of Wisconsin, Madison graduate, Meg earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1988, majoring in Political Science.