

I respond to my opponent's recent letter, "Newspaper was a source for ad editorial criticized," which appeared last Saturday. While state Sen. David Goodman's letter seems to be directed at The Dispatch in an attempt to answer the newspaper's reported criticism of his negative campaign advertising, I am the real subject of his smear and feel compelled to respond.

Franklin County voters should be troubled by a candidate for judge to any court who would be so remiss as to back up erroneous claims with selective quotes from newspaper articles. It's now clear Goodman never attempted to review the actual court record, nor does his letter show the slightest familiarity with the case he questions or the standard sentencing guidelines used.

If Goodman ever handled a criminal case, then he should know that common jury instructions include a statement from the judge that jurors "are instructed not to read the newspaper." Why? Only the evidence presented in the courtroom may be relied upon by jurors in rendering their verdict. Further, any judge who would sentence a defendant on the basis of what a newspaper reports would be in dereliction of his or her responsibility.

While the general public may not be aware that our legal system does not allow or permit convicting or sentencing defendants for crimes they are not charged with, any first-year law student, not to mention a candidate for judge, should be aware of this fact. This most basic tenet of our judicial system seems to be missed in Goodman's self-serving analysis of the Andrew S. Selva case.

In the past 16 years, I have disposed of approximately 25,000 cases and more than one-third, or about 8,000, of those cases were criminal cases. I have handled some of the most high-profile cases in this county during my term in office, and I have always handled my criminal docket with professionalism, dispatch and consideration for all parties.

As a judge, I have consistently been one of the least-reversed on our Franklin County Common Pleas Court, and I am proud of my service to the county during my 16-year tenure. I understand my responsibility to protect the public from future crimes and to rehabilitate defendants where possible and appropriate.

I have never put an admitted rapist on the streets of Franklin County, as my opponent would have readers believe. In fact, if my opponent ever took the time to read the actual record in the Selva case, as any first-year law student would do, and would stop relying on newspaper accounts of the case, as most laymen do, he would find that Selva was free to walk the streets of Franklin County until he met up with me in Courtroom 6D. It was then that he was first put on restraint by me and moved to Dayton to a residential treatment facility; he is presently under the control of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and not permitted to return to Franklin County.

My record has been recognized by the Judicial Screening Committee of the Columbus Bar Association, which rated me as "highly recommended" for the Court of Appeals. The screening committee of the Central Ohio Association for Justice (formerly the Franklin

County Trial Lawyers Association) also rated me as "highly recommended." My opponent was rated as "not recommended" by both groups because of his lack of judicial experience and scant courtroom experience.

Records for both Common Pleas Court and Municipal Court indicate my opponent hasn't made an appearance on a case in those courts in nine and 13 years, respectively. So with few legal accomplishments to offer voters and little qualifications for the office he seeks, it would appear the only thing left is his continued attempts to smear me while proffering no evidence to voters of his own qualifications.

And finally, in comparison with my opponent's purported 16 years as an attorney in good standing with a mere handful of cases to his credit, I have a total of 42 years of legal experience as an assistant attorney general (seven years), private-practice attorney (19 years) and trial judge on the Court of Common Pleas, General Division bench (16 years). I have practiced law in every appellate-court district in Ohio and at least 14 times before the Supreme Court of Ohio.

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Candidate 10th District Court of Appeals

Columbus