

## **2024 OHIO SUPREME COURT ELECTION**

In November 2024, three Ohio Supreme Court seats are up for election. After sweeping three open seats in 2022, Republicans have held a [4-3 majority](#) on the court in recent years.

In one 2024 race, Democrat incumbent Melody Stewart is running against Republican Joe Deters for a full six-year term. Deters, who was appointed to a vacancy on the court in 2023, elected to challenge an incumbent rather than run in a race to complete the final two years left in the term begun by Republican Justice Sharon Kennedy, whom voters promoted to chief justice in 2022. At the time of his appointment to the bench, Deters had no judicial experience but was considered a close ally of Governor Mike DeWine.

Decisions by the court affect issues statewide, including everything from enforcement of constitutional rights to voting, to enforcement of redistricting regulations, and oversight of laws made by the General Assembly. In recent months, the court has made rulings affecting the ballot initiative that would eventually enshrine abortion into the Ohio Constitution, the Ohio Statehouse district map approved by the Ohio Redistricting Commission, the enforcement of a six-week abortion ban, and heard arguments related to the consistency of criminal sentencing.

With the GOP's current narrow majority, the Ohio Supreme Court is the only branch of state government Democrats have an opportunity to win control of in 2024. However, Republicans have fared better in state judicial elections since the passage of a law that requires candidates' party affiliation to appear on the ballot.

As of late April, Deters held a significant fundraising advantage over Stewart. Deters disclosed nearly \$540,000 cash on hand, while Stewart disclosed nearly \$178,000.

### *Key Findings:*

**Longtime Republican politician and Hamilton County Prosecutor Joe Deters was appointed to a vacant Supreme Court seat by Governor DeWine in 2023 despite no previous experience on the bench.** A longtime county prosecutor, Deters was twice elected Ohio State Treasurer, resigning in 2004 amidst a pay-to-play scandal in which his former chief of staff pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges related to steering state business to Deters campaign donors. In 2004, the Columbus Dispatch reported that "Deters was able to temporarily dodge scrutiny for more than \$100,000 he got in 2001 from brokers who did millions of dollars in business with his office." In 2017, a state senator called for an investigation into whether Supreme Court Justice Patrick DeWine violated state ethics law in helping his son obtain an internship with Deters' Hamilton County Prosecutor's office. Deters' appointment to the Supreme Court was controversial. His political campaign had contributed more than \$10,000 to the campaigns of Governor DeWine and his son, Justice Patrick DeWine, and Deters had no experience on the bench. "It was not immediately clear what process...DeWine used to select Deters," Law360 wrote. The Ohio Capital Journal reported that "Deters...has never been a judge but is good friends with the governor's family," while a professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law said that the appointment "looks like political payback and rewarding a friend..." Deters recused himself from an abortion ban case in front of the court and was one of the Republican justices who voted to keep the Statehouse redistricting maps in place. In 1995, Deters attempted to change the definition of personhood in Ohio by charging a 16-year-old in the death of a fetus. "This case, we hope...will be able to change the definition of what a person is in this state for purposes of homicidal violence," he said. Deters has been called a "staunch" supporter of the death penalty. In 2021, a state legislator took issue with Deters'

“recent attack on bail reform...Deters fails to explain how our current system of imposing cash bail to promote public safety, often based on a bail schedule, keeps Ohio communities safe,” the sponsor of the legislation said. “Issue 1 is not complicated,” Deters said in 2022. “Do you believe judges in Ohio should be required to consider the safety of our communities when setting bail?”

**Deters holds a significant fundraising advantage in the race to date.** According to the most recent campaign finance reports filed in late April 2024, Deters raised over \$131,000 while Stewart raised nearly \$44,000. Deters also enjoys a massive cash on hand advantage over Stewart with \$538,776.15 compared to Stewart’s \$177,877.73.

## **STEWART’S SEAT**

JOSEPH DETERS

### **Background & Philosophy**

**Deters recused himself from abortion ban case due to previous position as Hamilton County Prosecuting Attorney.** “Justice Deters recused himself from the abortion ban case due to his previous position as Hamilton County Prosecuting Attorney. He was listed in the lawsuit because of his capacity as prosecutor.” [Ohio Capital Journal, 3/18/24]

**Deters was one of the Republican justices who voted to keep the Statehouse redistricting maps in place.** “But Deters was one of the Republican justices who voted to keep the Statehouse redistricting maps in place, signing on to Republican Chief Justice Sharon Kennedy's opinion that the bipartisan agreement 'is a changed circumstance that makes it appropriate to relinquish our continuing jurisdiction over these cases.’” [Ohio Capital Journal, 3/18/24]

**Deters previously served as Ohio Treasurer but resigned in 2004 amidst a pay-to-play scandal where former chief of staff pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges related to steering state business to Deters campaign donors.** “Deters also previously served as Ohio Treasurer but resigned from office in 2004 amid a pay-to-play scandal where his former chief of staff, Matt Borges, pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges related to steering state business to Deters campaign donors.” [Ohio Capital Journal, 3/18/24]

**Deters appointed to Supreme Court in 2023 by Governor Mike DeWine.** “Deters was appointed to the state supreme court by Gov. Mike DeWine in 2023 after Kennedy moved up to the chief justice's chair. Also last year, Borges was sentenced to five years in federal prison after being convicted on racketeering charges related to Ohio's House Bill 6 utility bailout and bribery scandal.” [Ohio Capital Journal, 3/18/24]

**1994: Deters worked as Hamilton County prosecutor.** [Columbus Dispatch, 2/10/94]

**2023: Announced plan to challenge incumbent Democratic Justice Melody Stewart instead of running for reelection to his seat.** “Ohio Supreme Court Justice Joe Deters, a Republican appointed to the court by Gov. Mike DeWine just last year, will challenge Democratic Justice Melody Stewart in 2024, instead of running for reelection to his seat, according to an Ohio GOP statement released Tuesday afternoon. Currently the Ohio Republican party holds a narrow, four-to-three majority on the court which is expected to determine the outer boundaries of Ohio's newly passed abortion rights amendment, as many of the three dozen anti-abortion laws passed since the 1980s get challenged in the

courts. Republicans have wanted to clinch a larger majority on the court since 2020, when Democrats gained a third justice a number it hadn't had on the court in decades. This narrow GOP majority means that in some instances, Republicans in the legislature haven't always prevailed before the bench when a Republican chooses to side with Democrats. Notably, former Ohio Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor sided with Democrats in a series of redistricting cases, concluding the legislature illegally gerrymandered congressional and state legislative seats for Republicans. Deters will be have most name recognition among the Ohio Republican Party's Ohio Supreme Court slate, giving him the best chance of defeating a Democrat. There's another advantage for Deters to not run in his current seat on the bench: He'd have to seek re-election to the position in 2026. If he can win the seat currently occupied by Stewart, he wouldn't have to run again for six more years.” [Plain Dealer, 12/19/23]

**1998: Deters ran for State Treasurer.** “Sue Pohlman, secretary for 13 years to Justice Andrew Douglas of the Ohio Supreme Court, will join the campaign staff of Joseph T. Deters, the Republican candidate for state treasurer. Pohlman, of Toledo, received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Ohio State University in 1995. Deters said as executive assistant for his campaign, Pohlman will perform duties similar to those she did in Douglas' office, overseeing scheduling and supervising special projects.” [Columbus Dispatch, 5/2/98]

**Deters had served as Hamilton County Prosecutor since 1992.** “Deters, Hamilton County prosecutor since 1992, wants to change how Ohio manages its debt. Ohio has at least 16 agencies and authorities that handle the state's debts, including the Department of Transportation and the Turnpike Commission. If Ohio consolidated its debt, it could save money, Deters said.” [AP, 10/19/98]

**Won race for Ohio Treasurer.** “Taft may soon have to consider a proposal by Joseph T. Deters, the state's new treasurer, to consolidate Ohio's various debt-issuing agencies. During an interview after his election victory, Deters said he hopes to work with Taft on his consolidation proposal, which he said could save the state millions of dollars. However, Deters conceded that combining the agencies could take several years. The other major task the new governor must undertake is school funding, a burning issue in Ohio for many years. A judge is currently reviewing the state's efforts to improve a school funding system that was declared unconstitutional by the Ohio Supreme Court in March 1997.” [Bond Buyer, 1/13/99]

**1999: Ohio Citizen Action flunked Deters for failing to identify employer of every contributor who gave more than \$100.** “Ohio Citizen Action flunked state Treasurer Joseph T. Deters and gave a "C" to Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer yesterday for failing to identify the employer of every contributor who gave more than \$100 to their campaigns last year. The watchdog group awarded an 'A' to each of the other statewide officeholders who ran campaigns last year. That included Gov. Bob Taft, Attorney General Betty D. Montgomery, Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell, Auditor Jim Petro and Supreme Court Justices Paul E. Pfeifer and Francis E. Sweeney.” [Plain Dealer, 4/27/99]

**1999: Opposed Ohio's participation in state lottery.** “Ohio will join the 'Millennium' lottery and probably another multistate game before the year is out -- but should never have got into the lottery business in the first place, state Treasurer Joseph T. Deters said yesterday. Deters, who has no connection with the games other than overseeing payments and deposits, based his prediction on the Ohio Lottery's need to compete with huge jackpots offered in neighboring states and the proliferation of casino gambling. ‘The reality is the lottery's going to continue...(but) I disagree with being in the business to start,’ Deters said. ‘I think it's hypocritical of us to be in gambling as a state and then prosecute people for the same thing.’” [Columbus Dispatch, 5/11/99]

**1999: Deters hoped to moonlight as Hamilton County GOP chairman, a post that could help him position for GOP nomination for Ohio AG in 2002.** “State Treasurer Joseph Deters hopes to moonlight as the new Hamilton County GOP chairman, a post that could help him position for the GOP nomination for Ohio attorney general in 2002. Deters, a Cincinnati native, has signaled an interest in the race, and State Auditor Jim Petro of Cleveland is already raising money for it. The public reason for Deters' second job is to help his home party deal with an insurrection from social conservatives unhappy that some on their slate of legislative candidates were not endorsed. Other Republicans, however, fear that Deters will use the power of his new post to expand his already sizable political network.” [Plain Dealer, 12/12/99]

**2000: Deters received Pinnacle Award for Innovation from Association for Financial Professionals for online BidOhio program.** “State Treasurer Joseph T. Deters has received the Pinnacle Award for Innovation from the Association for Financial Professionals for his online BidOhio program. BidOhio allows financial institutions to bid over the Internet on interest rates for holding interim state funds. Deters' office estimates that the increased competition for the deposits has increased interest income to the state by \$3 million in BidOhio's first 11 months.” [Columbus Dispatch, 11/21/00]

**2001: State Treasurer Deters dropped out of race for AG, allowing GOP to avoid what could have been a costly and divisive primary.** “State Treasurer Joseph Deters dropped out of the race for attorney general Friday, allowing the Ohio Republican Party to avoid what could have been a costly and divisive primary. Deters, a former Hamilton County prosecutor in his first term as treasurer, had tried bucking his party by challenging Auditor Jim Petro, a fellow Republican, for attorney general. But Deters, 41, said in a news release that he will now run for re-election to avoid a primary fight that could have damaged the party. He was elected treasurer in 1998.” [AP, 12/21/01]

**2002: In successful reelection for Treasurer, Deters accused of “pay-to-play” after receiving \$300,000 from Hamilton County GOP, which he used to head.** “Boyle and Deters, who is finishing his first term, are in a heated battle for the state treasurer's seat - normally a sleepy office that fails to grab headlines. But earlier this year, news stories about Deters' campaign fund raising were a hot topic. A Cleveland-area stockbroker who did business with Deters' office gave \$50,000 to the Hamilton County GOP's operating fund, and five Columbus-area brokers gave the county party \$125,000. The Hamilton County GOP, which Deters used to head, contributed \$300,000 to Deters' campaign coffers last year. Boyle accuses Deters of ‘pay-to-play’ politics - a practice in which campaign contributors are rewarded with state contracts.” [Dayton Daily News, 10/27/02]

**2004: Cuyahoga County Prosecutor appointed special prosecutor in public-corruption investigation linked to Deters’ office.** “Cuyahoga County Prosecutor William Mason has stepped aside and appointed a special prosecutor in a public-corruption investigation reportedly linked to state Treasurer Joseph T. Deters' office. Mason has appointed Thomas Sammon, a former 31-year assistant Cuyahoga County prosecutor, to investigate whether imprisoned Cleveland securities broker Frank D. Gruttadauria tried to win business from Deters' office through a bribe of illegal campaign cash. Mason yesterday declined to say whether Deters was a target of the investigation. Deters has denied any wrongdoing.” [Columbus Dispatch, 3/2/04]

**2004: Columbus Dispatch: “Deters was able to temporarily dodge scrutiny for more than \$100,000 he got in 2001 from brokers who did millions of dollars in business with his office.”** “In the same way, Treasurer Joseph T. Deters was able to temporarily dodge scrutiny for more than \$100,000 he got in 2001 from brokers who did millions of dollars in business with his office. Instead of giving directly to Deters, the donors were told to funnel the money through the state-candidate fund of the Hamilton

County Republican Party -- of which Deters is former chairman. One added benefit to the contributors: They didn't have to divulge their employer on a donation to a party, as they would have if they'd given to Deters' campaign fund." [Columbus Dispatch, 7/11/04]

**2004: Deters: "Every time I run for office, I'm always the Democrats' best chance."** "Deters said the grand jury will conclude that the treasurer's office 'is not for sale' and that Democrats will fail again in 2006 to defeat him. 'Every time I run for office, I'm always the Democrats' best chance,' Deters said. 'I hope they keep underestimating me.' Still, Deters said it is imperative for the GOP to enact campaign-finance reforms to reassure voters that Republicans deserve continued control of state government." [Columbus Dispatch, 7/18/04]

**2004: Two former Deters employees pleaded guilty to misdemeanor campaign finance charges; special prosecutor found no evidence Deters ever acted criminally.** "Two former employees of state Treasurer Joseph T. Deters pleaded guilty Tuesday to misdemeanor charges involving campaign funding. A special prosecutor said there is no evidence that Deters ever acted criminally. The charges allege that a \$50,000 donation made in 2001 from then-stockbroker Frank Gruttadauria to the Hamilton County Republican Party was intended to benefit Deters' political campaign fund. One of the charges referred to 'certain brokers' who had made contributions to Deters' campaign fund in return for 'a preferential position.' Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Eileen Gallagher fined Eric Sagun, a former Deters fund-raiser, \$5,000 and Matthew Borges, Deters' former chief of staff, \$1,000. Only Sagun faced possible jail time, up to six months, but no jail time was imposed." [AP, 7/27/04]

- **Individual admitted funneling \$50,000 to Deters through Hamilton County GOP's operating fund.** "Two lobbyists and a fundraiser involved in a pay-to-play scheme involving contracts to brokers from former state Treasurer Joseph T. Deters' office pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges this year and in 2004. Among the brokers was Frank D. Gruttadauria, of Cleveland, who is in prison for bilking investors out of millions of dollars; he has admitted funneling \$50,000 to Deters through the Hamilton County GOP's operating fund." [Columbus Dispatch, 7/17/05]

**2012: Deters served as Hamilton County Prosecuting Attorney.** [Lima News, 2/12/12]

**2015: Members of Greater Cincinnati Criminal Defense Lawyers Association expressed frustration and disapproval of Deters' public statements regarding cases pending in the county court system.** "The members of the Greater Cincinnati Criminal Defense Lawyers Association (GCCDLA) wish to express our frustration and disapproval of the public statements made by Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters regarding cases pending in the county court system. Making such comments on any pending criminal case only serves to damage the accused's presumption of innocence in the eyes of the public. The GCCDLA deems Deters' statements inflammatory, inappropriate and unprofessional. Any matter in which a person is accused of a crime should be handled in a court of law, not a court of public opinion. By expressing his opinion in a forum where it is highly unlikely anyone would challenge him, he has presented his assertions as facts, influencing any and all potential jurors prior to a trial date even being scheduled." [Cincinnati Enquirer, 8/17/15]

**2017: State senator called for investigation on whether Supreme Court Justice Patrick DeWine violated state ethics law in helping son obtain internship with Deters' Hamilton County prosecutor's office.** "A state senator is calling for an investigation on whether Ohio Supreme Court Justice Patrick DeWine violated state ethics laws in helping his son obtain an internship with the Hamilton County prosecutor's office. Sen. Cecil Thomas, D-Cincinnati, called for the investigation

Wednesday after CityBeat, a Cincinnati weekly newspaper, obtained an email from DeWine to Prosecutor Joseph Deters, a former state treasurer. 'Joe, can you find a spot in your internship program for my son Matt this summer?' DeWine wrote Deters in an April 23 email. 'It would be a great experience for him. If you can, I would really appreciate it.' Deters replied within an hour with instructions to his executive assistant to apparently hire Matt DeWine, who began working as an \$11-an-hour office intern on May 11, CityBeat reported. Richard Michael DeWine, another of Patrick DeWine's sons, is working as an intern in Deters' office for a third year, CityBeat reported. Richard and Matt DeWine are the grandsons of Attorney General Mike DeWine, who is running for the Republican nomination for governor next year." [Columbus Dispatch, 8/17/17]

**2023: Governor DeWine named Deters Supreme Court justice.** "Ohio's governor on Thursday named Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph T. Deters as the newest state Supreme Court justice, filling a seat that will soon be vacated when an incumbent justice is elevated to the court's top spot. Deters, a Cincinnati Republican, will replace Justice Sharon L. Kennedy, who beat fellow Democratic Justice Jennifer Brunner in November in an election for chief justice. He is slated to be sworn in on Jan. 7 and must run for election in 2024." [Law360 Legal News, 12/22/22]

**Deters' political campaign had contributed more than \$10,000 to campaigns of Governor DeWine and Justice Patrick Dewine; Deters had no experience on the bench.** "The 65-year-old - whose political campaign has contributed more than \$10,000 to the campaigns of Gov. Mike DeWine and his son, his soon-to-be colleague Justice R. Patrick DeWine - has no experience on the bench listed in the biography provided by the governor's office. He is the longest serving prosecutor in Hamilton County, having served from 1992 to 1999 and from 2005 to the present. He was also previously the state's treasurer and did a stint as Hamilton County's clerk of courts. He graduated from the University of Cincinnati College of Law in 1982." [Law360 Legal News, 12/22/22]

- **Law360: "It was not immediately clear what process...DeWine used to select Deters..."** "It was not immediately clear what process Gov. DeWine used to select Deters or how many candidates were interviewed. Spokesperson Dan Tierney acknowledged in an email that the governor did not use a selection committee to choose Deters. Deters' appointment comes at a time of change at the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor's impending retirement not only means new leadership but also a possible ideological shift." [Law360 Legal News, 12/22/22]
- **Professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law: "This looks like political payback and rewarding a friend...when someone's experience is as an elected political official and as a prosecutor and that's it, it's reasonable to have some questions."** "Jonathan H. Adler, a professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland, said he most likely expects Deters to be another reliable conservative on the state's high court, at least on crime and issues like redistricting that currently matter most to state Republicans. But while he has a political career to judge, he does not have a clear judicial philosophy that has been on display for years, Adler said. The professor also said that 'this looks like political payback and rewarding a friend,' but is happy to be proven wrong. Still, 'when someone's experience is as an elected political official and as a prosecutor and that's it, it's reasonable to have some questions,' Adler said." [Law360 Legal News, 12/22/22]

**Ohio Capital Journal: "Deters...has never been a judge but is good friends with the governor's family..."** "Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine is appointing Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters, who has never been a judge but is good friends with the governor's family, to the Ohio Supreme Court.

Deters, the 65-year-old attorney will join the court — making a 4-3 majority of conservatives. This means that the former independent voice of Maureen O'Connor will just be a memory. In 2023, justices will hear cases on redistricting, abortion and LGBTQ+ rights. It is highly likely that Deters will side with the GOP on the legislative and congressional maps.” [Law360 Legal News, 12/22/22]

- **DeWine: “I think what we need on the Supreme Court is people who are constitutional conservatives.”** “I think what we need on the Supreme Court is people who are constitutional conservatives,’ DeWine said during a press conference Thursday. The attorney has a long history in politics. Deters has been the prosecutor in Hamilton County for a combined total of around 25 years. He served from 1992-1999 and then from 2005 to the present. He is known for being tough on crime. He has also served as that county's clerk of courts and been the Ohio State treasurer twice. As treasurer, he was 'responsible for collecting, managing and investing more than \$11 billion in assets for the State of Ohio,' according to DeWine's Office. But there is one unique way that he is very clearly different from the other sitting justices. 'You are appointing somebody to the Supreme Court who has no judicial experience and who is a friend of the family. Can you walk me through that decision-making process?' News 5 Statehouse reporter Morgan Trau asked the governor. 'Sure,' DeWine said. 'I chose Joe Deters because I know him, I trust him.’” [Ohio Capital Journal, 12/23/22]

**Deters ran against Melody Stewart.** Joseph Deters - Deters was appointed to the court by Gov. Mike DeWine in Jan. 2023 to fill the seat vacated when Justice Sharon Kennedy was elected as chief justice. Instead of running for the seat he currently occupies, Deters is running to replace Justice Melody Stewart on the court. Deters was previously the Hamilton County's prosecutor and clerk of courts, and served as Ohio Treasurer in 1998 and 2002. [Ohio Capital Journal, 12/22/23]

### Abortion & Reproductive Rights

**1995: Deters hoped to change definition of personhood in Ohio by charging woman in death of a fetus.** “A 16-year-old girl was indicted yesterday on two counts of aggravated vehicular homicide in the deaths of a woman and the fetus she was carrying. If the charge involving the fetus survives court challenges, Ohio law could change dramatically. State law does not define what a person is, but Ohio courts have held that a person is someone born alive. Therefore, killing a fetus is not considered a crime, Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters said. But Deters said he pursued the charge against Krystal White because the fetus that died was developed enough to live outside the womb. Supreme Courts in other states, including Oklahoma and Massachusetts, have held that a viable fetus is a person, he said.” [Plain Dealer, 10/5/95]

- **Deters: “This case, we hope...will be able to change the definition of what a person is in this state for purposes of homicidal violence.”** ““This case, we hope...will be able to change the definition of what a person is in this state for purposes of homicidal violence,’ Deters said at a news conference.” [Plain Dealer, 10/5/95]
- **Deters said he’d be willing to appeal to Ohio Supreme Court; said his quest shouldn’t affect abortion rights: “This is involving homicidal violence.”** “The prosecutor said that if the charge involving the fetus is dismissed, he is prepared to appeal up to the Ohio Supreme Court. He said his quest to change state law should not affect abortion rights. "This is involving homicidal violence," Deters said.” [Columbus Dispatch, 10/5/95]

- **Judge ruled 16-year-old charged with vehicular homicide couldn't be held responsible for death of the fetus.** "A 16-year-old girl charged with vehicular homicide in the deaths of a woman and her unborn child cannot be held responsible for the death of the fetus, a judge ruled yesterday. Ohio law does not recognize a fetus as a person with legal rights, Judge Thomas Crush ruled in Hamilton County Common Pleas Court. The judge ruled that Krystal White could not therefore be charged with vehicular homicide in the Aug. 14 death of Austin Joseph Daly, a fetus killed the month before he was to be born. County Prosecutor Joseph Deters, who wanted to use the case to change Ohio law, said he would challenge the judge's ruling. Deters said he would take the case to the 1st District Ohio Court of Appeals and, if necessary, to the Ohio Supreme Court. 'Which is where we need to be, because that's who ultimately needs to make the decision on this,' Deters said. 'This was not unexpected. Everyone knew from the start that where we would need to be is in the Ohio Supreme Court.'" [Plain Dealer, 11/14/95]

**1996: Disciplinary counsel of Supreme Court found allegations that Deters showed racial bias unfounded.** "Allegations that the Hamilton County prosecutor showed racial bias in two vehicular homicide cases were unfounded, an officer of the Ohio Supreme Court found. The disciplinary counsel of the Supreme Court, who investigates complaints against attorneys, also said there was no credible evidence to support allegations that Prosecutor Joseph Deters violated the code of conduct for lawyers. 'The charges were groundless, and anyone who has looked at them has concluded the same thing,' Deters said Tuesday in Cincinnati. In January, the group Black MARCHERS accused Deters of prosecuting a black teenager more aggressively than he did a white motorist a year ago. Deters, who is white, denied the allegation." [Plain Dealer, 3/21/96]

### Crime & Criminal Justice

**1994: Deters asked Supreme Court justices to prohibit ten prisoners in capital punishment cases from filing further appeals in state courts without obtaining permission from high court.** "A new battle over lengthy appeals filed on behalf of Death Row prisoners surfaced in the Ohio Supreme Court last week. Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters asked justices to prohibit 10 prisoners in capital punishment cases from filing further appeals in state courts without obtaining permission from the high court. Assistant Prosecutor Christian Schaefer said the motion is intended to preclude more state-court delays of cases that are at least 8 years old." [Columbus Dispatch, 3/21/94]

**2001: Columbus Dispatch: Deters a "strong supporter of capital punishment..."** "State Treasurer Joseph T. Deters, a former Hamilton County prosecutor, a strong supporter of capital punishment and a likely candidate for state attorney general in 2002, said he was outraged that Scott's execution was halted after 18 years of court battles. 'It's thwarting the will of the people,' Deters said. 'What's worse, it was done without request by the defense.' Deters blamed the federal appeals court -- based in Cincinnati but covering Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee -- with blocking the movement of capital-punishment cases. 'When I travel throughout the state and I'm asked why executions are taking place in other places and not Ohio, I just say, 'Look at the 6th Circuit.'" [Columbus Dispatch, 5/17/01]

- **2012: Columbus Dispatch: Deters a "staunch" supporter of death penalty.** "But don't expect prosecutors -- two of whom are on the task force -- to warmly embrace the idea. Joseph T. Deters, a Republican from Hamilton County, and Dennis Watkins, a Democrat from Trumbull County, are both staunch capital-punishment supporters." [Columbus Dispatch, 1/13/12]

**2016: Ohio Supreme Court ducked direct ruling on whether police body-camera videos were public records but found Deters acted reasonably in waiting to release video of fatal shooting by**

**an officer.** “The Ohio Supreme Court ducked a direct ruling on whether police body-camera videos are public records, but found Tuesday that a prosecutor acted reasonably in waiting to release video of a fatal shooting by an officer. The ruling came in a case in which six media organizations sued Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters after he did not immediately release a body-camera video of a University of Cincinnati police officer shooting an unarmed motorist as the man sat in his car. Deters acted lawfully in waiting six business days to release the video to the news media, the court ruled, stating that the law affords public offices time to examine records to determine whether any parts are exempt from release and must be redacted. State law also does not set a deadline for honoring public-records requests, but only requires they be made available within a reasonable amount of time, Justice Judith Ann Lanzinger wrote in the court's opinion. While he ultimately released the video after it had been reviewed by a grand jury that indicted then-UC Officer Ray Tensing on a charge of murder, Deters argued that the video was exempt from release as a confidential law-enforcement investigatory record.” [Columbus Dispatch, 12/21/16]

**2021: State Legislator: “Deters’ recent attack on bail reform reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the legislation...”** “Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters' recent attack on bail reform reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the legislation I co-sponsor... While I share Mr. Deters’ concerns that we should not make excuses for bad behavior, the truth is that Senate Bill 182 and House Bill 315 are designed to fix real public safety problems in our system that currently allow bad people to engage in bad behavior if they have enough cash to get out of jail. These bills are far from dangerous and were designed with public safety uppermost in mind. I hope that Mr. Deters will reevaluate his position and join fellow conservative advocates of change to avoid hurting those with few resources while allowing the well-off to potentially harm innocent victims. In Deters' telling, our recent bail reform legislation suffers from the same public safety defects as efforts in other states and localities, but other states' bail reform efforts Deters cites are readily distinguishable from Ohio. Senate Bill 182 and House Bill 315 seek to end our present system of wealth-based detention and instead focus the attention of the pretrial process on public safety and the likelihood a defendant will appear at trial - the ultimate and historical use of bail.” [Cincinnati Enquirer, 7/7/21]

- **“Deters fails to explain how our current system of imposing cash bail...keeps Ohio communities safe...That’s because there is nothing to suggest cash bail or bail schedules are useful public safety tools.”** “Deters fails to explain how our current system of imposing cash bail to promote public safety, often based on a bail schedule, keeps Ohio communities safe. That's because there is nothing to suggest cash bail or bail schedules are useful public safety tools.” [Cincinnati Enquirer, 7/7/21]

**2022: Attorney General Dave Yost and Deters, working with state legislators, announced intent to push for proposed constitutional amendment regarding bail reform.** “The following information was released by the office of the Ohio Attorney General: Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost and Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph T. Deters, working in tandem with three state legislators, today announced their intent to push for a proposed constitutional amendment regarding bail reform to protect law-abiding Ohioans...The group's effort comes in direct response to *Dubose v. McGuffey*, a recent Ohio Supreme Court opinion upholding an appeals court ruling that public safety cannot be considered when determining the level of cash bond for a criminal suspect. With the help of Sen. Theresa Gavarone and Reps. Jeff LaRe and D.J. Swearingen, Yost and Deters have sought legislation to create an amendment to the Ohio Constitution to make clear that courts must consider public safety when setting cash bond.” [States News Service, 3/29/22]

- **Deters: “Issue 1 is not complicated...Do you believe judges in Ohio should be required to consider the safety of our communities when setting bail?”** “Issue 1 is not complicated. Do you believe judges in Ohio should be required to consider the safety of our communities when setting bail? What is complicated is unpacking the heap of misinformation sent out by the ACLU and other activist groups against Issue 1. It is important that voters know the truth before casting their ballots. Does cash bail punish poverty? Cash bail does not punish poverty. Violent crime punishes poverty. Crime skews towards our poorer neighborhoods. This is not a comment on the character of most people in these areas, but simply a discernable fact. The vast majority of people in our high-crime communities are just good people, doing the best they can, trying to raise their families. But allowing dangerous, violent criminals out on bond continues the cycles of poverty and violence and will never allow these communities to thrive.” [Dayton Daily News, 11/6/22]

### Voting Rights & Ballot Access

**2008: ACLU sent letter to Hamilton County Special Prosecutor after Deters began investigation into voters who took advantage of Ohio’s five-day window in which a person could simultaneously register to vote and cast a ballot.** “The following information was released by the American Civil Liberties Union: The American Civil Liberties Union and other voting rights groups sent a letter to Hamilton County Special Prosecutor Michael O’Neill today urging him to suspend investigations of voters where there is no specific, credible evidence of fraud. According to news reports, Hamilton County Prosecuting Attorney Joseph Deters began an investigation into voters who took advantage of Ohio’s five-day window in which a person may simultaneously register to vote and cast a ballot. Deters declined to give any specific evidence of voter fraud that would have triggered an investigation and local elections officials confirmed they received no reliable reports of voter fraud.” [States News Service, 10/21/08]