

WASHOE COUNTY DISTRICT JUDGE DEPARTMENT 1 (GENERAL JURISDICTION)
CANDIDATE DEREK DREILING (NP)

<u>POTENTIAL HITS FROM THE LEFT</u>	<u>POTENTIAL HITS FROM THE RIGHT</u>
• “Narrow” support for charges against fake electors in 2025 • Dismissed domestic violence charges against former official	• Supported charges against fake electors in 2025

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Dreiling narrowly allowed felony forgery charges for the Nevada “six electors” to advance to a higher court in 2025.**
- **Dreiling has no recorded ethics violations.**
- **Dreiling dismissed domestic violence charges against former Nye County Commissioner Leo Blundo in 2023, citing “inexcusable prosecutorial neglect” and double jeopardy grounds.**

JURISDICTION CONTEXT

Anchored by Reno and Sparks, Washoe County has over 509,000 residents, making it the second-largest county by population in the state. [[Census](#), accessed 8/19/26] [[NV Department of Taxation](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Washoe County is a majority non-Hispanic white district (56.3%), with Hispanic (27.7%), Black (3.5%), and Asian (7.3%) citizens making up a minority of the county’s residents. [[Census](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Republicans outperformed Democrats in the 2026 primary elections for NV-02. Republican candidates received 41961 votes and Democratic candidates received 38804 votes. [[NV SoS](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Washoe County is currently represented by Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV-02). [[Rep. Amodei](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Kathleen Drakulich, current Department 1 District Judge for the Second District Court, was appointed by former Governor Sandoval (R) in 2017. “Judge Kathleen Drakulich was appointed to Department One of the Second Judicial District Court on June 30, 2017, by Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval.” [[Washoe Courts](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Drakulich ran unopposed in the 2020 general election for Department 1 and received 182,031 votes. [[Ballotpedia](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Derek Dreiling is running for Department 1 against current Probate Commissioner Edmund “Joe” Gordon. [[Ballotpedia](#), accessed 8/19/26]

BACKGROUND

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1993-1996: Dreiling attended Lewis & Clark Law School. [[Derek Dreiling LinkedIn](#), accessed 8/17/26]

1986-1991: Dreiling attended the University of Nevada, Reno and studied international affairs and economics. “Activities and societies: Sigma A[l]pha Epsilon.” [\[Derek Dreiling LinkedIn\]](#), accessed 8/17/26]

FAMILY BACKGROUND

1994: Dreiling married Buffy Jo Dreiling (nee Brown), a former Juvenile Court Master in the Family Division at the Second District Court of Washoe County “Judge Deborah Schumacher, stated that Buffy Dreiling, Juvenile Court Master, Family Division, Second Judicial District Court was unable to attend the meeting so she would be testifying before the committee.” [\[Legacy Obituaries\]](#), accessed 8/19/26] [\[Washoe County Clerk\]](#), accessed 8/19/26] [\[MINUTES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON CHILD WELFARE AND JUVENILE JUSTICE\]](#), 6/21/10]

2012: Buffy Jo was arrested and charged with a DUI following a car crash. [\[Attorney Nashville\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

2015: Dreiling married Heather Hyde-Dreiling. [\[Washoe County Clerk\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

2026: Heather Dreiling works as a Victim Advocate in the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office. [\[Victim Information\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

PROFESSIONAL & LEGAL BACKGROUND

1997-1999: Dreiling served as a Carson City Deputy District Attorney. [\[Derek Dreiling LinkedIn\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

2000-2019: Dreiling served as a Deputy District Attorney (2000-2014) and then Chief Deputy District Attorney (2014-2019) in Washoe County. [\[Derek Dreiling LinkedIn\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

2019: Dreiling was sworn in as a Justice of the Peace for Reno/Verdi, Department 1. [\[Fox11\]](#), 1/7/19]

2023: Dreiling retired/resigned from the Reno Justice Court. “In Reno Justice Court, Judge Derek Dreiling retired a year ago. Two candidates each will compete for their seats.” [Reno Gazette Journal, 1/17/24]

2026: Dreiling’s campaign website lists him as an “appointed Senior Justice of the Peace serving courts across Northern Nevada.” [\[Derek Dreiling Campaign Website\]](#), accessed 8/17/26]

2026: A news story listed Dreiling as a “Carson City justice of the peace.” “As a Carson City justice of the peace, Dreiling ruled in October 2025 that forgery charges in Nevada’s so-called “fake electors” case could proceed to the district court level. At the time, he called it the “hardest call I’ve had to make in my career.” [Reno Gazette Journal, 1/20/26]

2026: Dreiling self-described as a former Trial Deputy of the Year at the Washoe County District Attorney’s Office. “Once named Trial Deputy of the Year at the Washoe County District Attorney's Office, and having tried more than 20 felony jury trials across my 22-year career, I’ve spanned the full spectrum of Nevada criminal law.” [\[Derek Dreiling Campaign Facebook\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

INTEGRITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Dreiling has no listed ethics violations or disciplinary actions with the Nevada State Bar. [\[Nevada State Bar\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

POLITICAL AFFILIATION & ACTIVITY:

Ideology & Politics

2022: Dreiling publicly expressed disapproval of virtual hearings. “I completed the survey. As stated in your email below, it was intended to be confidential. I also am writing to make my feelings publicly known. I believe virtual hearings should be the exception to the rule of in person appearances - a very narrowly used exception...Many people do not take it as seriously as when they are in person. I believe virtual hearings hamper the truth seeking function by tossing aside the formalities of the courtroom which instill the need to be honest and act appropriate. People feeling they have not truly been heard or had their day in court. They are coercive to the judge who may want to take a person into custody yet has no ability. Making a ruling face-to-face requires a firm conviction, that is lost a bit when you don't have to actually look a person in the eye when granting or denying a request.” [\[Dec 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes\]](#), 12/2/22]

Affiliation with political figures/organizations:

Keri Kosach, Organizational Change Manager for the Office of Organizational Change, hosted a Dreiling campaign event in June 2026. “Thank you to Gail and Keri Kosach and Kathy Rogers for hosting this event, and thank you to those who attended for their support and encouragement. I look forward to meeting more voters, hearing your perspectives, and continuing the conversation throughout Washoe County.” [\[NV Department of Taxation\]](#), accessed 8/19/26] [\[Derek Dreiling Campaign Facebook\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Kathy Rogers, who works at the Second Judicial Court, also helped host Dreiling's campaign event. [\[Kathy Rogers Facebook\]](#), accessed 8/19/26] [\[Kathy Rogers LinkedIn\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Dreiling posted with Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam and Acting Undersheriff Wayne Yarbrough. “I enjoyed attending the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District Flag Raising and Pancake Breakfast, where it was wonderful to see Sheriff Darin Balaam, Acting Undersheriff Wayne Yarbrough, first responders, and so many familiar faces. It was also a pleasure cheering on the Kids Bike & Local Heroes Parade in Incline Village.” [\[Derek Dreiling Campaign Facebook\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Dreiling posted commemorating Sparks Fire Chief Walt White. “It was an honor to attend two recent dedications at the Sparks Heritage Museum recognizing the history of the Sparks Fire Department, Fire Chief White's retirement, and the volunteers who have worked to preserve our community's railroad heritage—including my dad's cousin.” [\[Derek Dreiling Campaign Facebook\]](#), accessed 8/19/26] [\[City of Sparks\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Partisan posts

Dreiling posted in support of an “America250” event in Washoe County. [\[Derek Dreiling Facebook\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]



Legal & Ethics

No findings of note.

Campaign Background

2026: Dreiling announced he was running for Washoe County Judge Department 1. “In Department 1, where Judge Kathleen Drakulich announced her retirement, current Justice of the Peace Derek Dreiling, who is in the middle of his term, is running against Washoe County Probate Commissioner Edmund Gorman Jr.” [\[Nevada Independent, 1/21/26\]](#)

2026: Dreiling stated he was running for District Court Judge on his record of integrity and equal justice. “Experience alone isn’t enough. A good judge maintains an orderly, respectful, and law-and-fact-focused courtroom. I work to ensure everyone is heard, proceedings move efficiently, and decisions are based on the law—not emotion, pressure, or politics. I listen carefully, treat people with dignity, and issue clear, timely rulings. Voters initially elected me as Justice of the Peace because they trusted my judgment and temperament. I have maintained that trust through my conduct on the bench by being fair, prepared, and consistent. If reelected, I will continue to serve with integrity, independence, and a strong commitment to equal justice under the law.” [\[Derek Dreiling Candidate Statement, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

Endorsements

Our Nevada Judges lists an endorsement for Dreiling from the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 3, but no supporting documents confirm the endorsement. [\[Our Nevada Judges, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

IUOE Local 3 was sued for numerous alleged labor management violations in 2013. “Lead plaintiff David Slack et al. accuse IUOE, Local 3 – headquartered in Alameda – and 68 other defendants of violating labor management laws, the California Labor Code, ERISA and racketeering laws, in the 111-page complaint. The IUOE represents heavy equipment operators and other construction workers and is the 10th largest union in the AFL-CIO. Local 3 is its largest branch, representing workers in California, Nevada, Utah, Hawaii and the Pacific Rim islands. The class begins by accusing IUOE bosses of forcing all members to contribute 1 percent of their salaries to the “President’s Club,” a euphemism for the union’s political action committee fund. Although federal election laws prohibit unions from forcing PAC contributions from members, the plaintiffs claim IUOE threatens members

with termination and deducts the contribution directly from their paychecks.” [\[Courthouse News, 10/30/13\]](#)

The Las Vegas Police Protective Association (LVPPA) endorsed Dreiling in 2026. [\[LVPPA Endorsements, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

Campaign finance

2026: Dreiling has \$76,306.47 in cash on hand as of July 15. [\[Dreiling CE Report #2, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

Dreiling’s biggest contributor (\$10,000) is Dale Hornbeck, Vice President at MPX Inc. [\[Dale Hornbeck LinkedIn, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

Claggett and Sykes, a trial lawyer firm based in Las Vegas and Reno, donated \$5,000 to Dreiling’s campaign. [\[Dreiling CE Report #2, accessed 8/19/26\]](#) [\[Claggett & Sykes, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

Ronda Clifton, Former Senior Deputy Attorney General of Nevada and co-founder of Supporting Our Survivors, donated \$5,000 to Dreiling. [\[KTNV News, 1/9/17\]](#) [\[2News, 2/25/25\]](#)

Bradley Drendel & Jeanney, a Reno plaintiffs firm, gave Dreiling \$2,500. A state political records tracker reports \$2,500 in contributions from the Reno plaintiffs' firm Bradley Drendel and Jeanney.

Jensen Oldham Personal Injury Law provided Dreiling with a \$350 in-kind donation in the form of 1 ticket to the NJA Gala. [\[Dreiling CE Report #2, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

Laborers Union International - Local 169 donated \$1,500 to Dreiling in April 2026. [\[Dreiling CE Report #2, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

The Washoe County Sheriff Deputies Association donated \$1,000 to Dreiling’s campaign. [\[Dreiling CE Report #1, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

Contributor	Recipient	Date	Amount	Type
Dale Hornback	Derek Charles Dreiling	2/27/26	\$10,000	Monetary
Claggett & Sykes	Derek Charles Dreiling	6/2/26	\$5,000	Monetary
Ronda Clifton	Derek Charles Dreiling	2/20/26	\$5,000	Monetary
Bradley Drendel & Jeanney	Derek Charles Dreiling	2/20/26	\$2,500	Monetary
Jensen Oldham Personal Injury Law	Derek Charles Dreiling	6/25/26	\$350	In-Kind
Laborers Union International - Local 169	Derek Charles Dreiling	4/1/26	\$1,500	Monetary
Washoe County Sheriff Deputies Association	Derek Charles Dreiling	3/24/26	\$1,000	Monetary

Personal political contributions

Dreiling has made no federal campaign contributions. [\[FEC Filings, accessed 8/19/26\]](#)

Dreiling has donated \$14,709.17 to his own campaign since 2018. [Nevada SoS AURORA Filings, accessed 8/19/26]

WEALTH

Dreiling's most recent financial disclosure (2019) lists his annual salary as \$160,000. [[Annual Financial Disclosure](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Dreiling noted that a household member (Heather Dreiling) receives a salary from the Washoe County Sheriff's Office. [[Annual Financial Disclosure](#), accessed 8/19/26] [[Victim Information](#), accessed 8/19/26]

Dreiling also received a \$117,299 pension payment in 2025 and 2024, as well as a \$56,757 pension payment in 2023. [[Transparent Nevada](#), accessed 8/19/26]

ISSUES

DEMOCRACY & ELECTION STANCES:

2025: Dreiling allowed felony forgery charges against six fake electors to proceed to a higher court, saying the decision was the “hardest call [he’d] had to make in [his] career.” “During the preliminary hearing, Dreiling explained that his role was to determine whether there was at least “slight or marginal evidence” that crimes were committed — enough to make a prosecution theory plausible. Calling it “the hardest call I’ve had to make in my career,” Dreiling ultimately decided the evidence just barely tipped in favor of the state, allowing the case to proceed.” [[Nevada Independent](#), 10/17/25] [[News 4](#), 10/20/25]

IDEOLOGY, RHETORIC & EXTREMISM SIGNALS

No findings of note.

POLITICAL POWER

No findings of note.

GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY & ABUSE OF POWER

2024: Although he was not named a defendant, Dreiling was mentioned in a complaint alleging forgery in the Washoe County justice system. “The complaint goes on to assert that there is what appears to be a forged document in a docket signed by Justice of the Peace Derek Dreiling (not named a defendant), Darby Phelps, Melissa Rosenthal, and Plaintiff's signature, which he claims is coerced.” [Zito v. Sullivan, 2024 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 159276, 3:24-cv-00232-ART-CSD, accessed 8/17/26]

2017: Dreiling was named in a motion to disqualify in a case involving Judge Charles Weller, in which he was accused of impropriety by the defense—although it is unclear whether or not Dreiling actually engaged in improper behavior. [[Reply to Opposition to Motion to Disqualify](#), accessed 8/19/26] “However, a reasonable person would expect a member of the Task Force to be aware of what transpires at Task Force meetings. It is also true that Respondent was not privy to District Attorney office meetings between Mr. Dreiling and Mr. Hahn. Nor was the Prosecuting Officer. An appearance of impropriety exists because a reasonable person would expect a subordinate to report his activities to his direct line supervisor. Further, because Mr. Dreiling serves on the Task Force as a representative of the District Attorney's office, a reasonable person would expect that Assistant District Attorney Hahn would have an interest in the Task Force members being successful in their combined efforts.”

2026: Dreiling self-described himself as receiving 100% retention ratings with the Washoe County Bar Association. “In two independent surveys of the Washoe County Bar Association, he earned a 100% retention rating, reflecting broad confidence in his fairness, preparation, and judicial temperament.” [\[Derek Dreiling Campaign Website\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

CORRUPTION & LEGAL

No findings of note.

GOVERNANCE & COMPETENCE

2003: Dreiling declined to file felony charges against a drunk driver involved in the death of a pedestrian. “Deputy District Attorney Derek Dreiling said after reviewing an investigation by the Nevada Highway Patrol, Conroy will not be charged with drunken driving causing death in Nicole Lemon's death. "What the state has to prove is in addition to the DUI, the driver does an act of neglect of any duty imposed by law while driving. If that act causes a death, then the felony charge is appropriate," Dreiling said. "We couldn't prove beyond a reasonable doubt that (Conroy) violated some other duty. "He was driving and he was drinking -- to some degree, that probably played a small role in his ability to drive and react. But it didn't appear that was enough for a felony charge."” [\[Nevada Appeal\]](#), 9/24/03]

2021: Dreiling accepted a local sheriff’s deputy’s guilty plea after he was involved in a fatal crash. “Judge Derek Dreiling of Reno Justice Court sentenced Deputy Jade Brinson on Tuesday in the death of 74-year-old Joel Edwards of Sparks. Edwards’ family hoped Brinson would get some jail time and were disappointed by the sentence, said family attorney David Houston.” [\[AP News\]](#), 11/4/21]

2023: Dreiling dismissed domestic violence charges against former Nye County Commissioner Leo Blundo, citing prosecutorial neglect and double jeopardy grounds. “The Honorable Derek Dreiling, Reno Justice Court, Department 3, presiding over a jury trial. Appearing for the State is District Attorney Robert Glennen. Appearing for Mr. Blundo is Defense Attorney Paola Armeni. Case No. RCR2023-124588. The Court dismisses all charges on double jeopardy, citing inexcusable prosecutorial neglect.” [\[Our Nevada Judges Inc\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

2026: Blundo is under investigation from the DOJ for COVID-19 relief fraud. [\[DOJ\]](#), accessed 8/19/26]

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

[LinkedIn](#)

[Personal Facebook](#)

[Campaign Facebook](#)

[Campaign Instagram](#)