



Happy to support my long time friend and former office mate/trial partner Carlos Barraza for Judge of the Chester County Court of Common Pleas.

In my view, Carlos would be a tremendous asset to the bench. Over the last 15 years I've witnessed first hand his dedication as a career public servant. First as his office mate when I was first starting out as a prosecutor and later as his trial partner.

As a defense attorney, I had many cases with him over the years. We faced off three times in jury trials. We split the first two fights with him winning the rubber match. He won the series but I believe he would agree I scored the only knockout in those battles. In order to win against him, you had to have your A game every moment of each day of trial. His dedication to securing justice on behalf of the citizens he served, wouldn't allow him to bring anything less. In each of those cases, he always did it the right way. No games. No trickery. I never had to worry that he was trying to hide evidence or delay turning over evidence for strategic advantage. He did his job with the highest integrity. If that wasn't good enough to win, so be it.

Prosecutors unlike any other attorney make semi judicial decisions everyday. Whether to charge someone with a crime, what type of crime, what grading of crime, what punishment to agree to. All of these are at the sole discretion of a prosecutor. Carlos has always handled this role with fairness. In one of my first cases as a defense attorney, I was representing a young African American man who had just recently obtained his college degree. Never committed a crime in his life except for one day in the heat of passion he made a poor decision and ended up with a felony charge and facing jail. Nothing I could do on my part other than hope for a reasonable prosecutor. The case was airtight. Fortunately for my client, Carlos was assigned the case. I was able to convince him that this was an aberration and not a pattern. He agreed to lower the charges to a misdemeanor with probation. Carlos's judgement was sound. The client is a friend of mine now who I see every so often around town. He is doing well and prospering. If there had been another prosecutor on the case, it may not have ended the same way. It was Carlos's judgement and discretion that saved the day for my client. He would bring that type of judgment and discretion to the bench as a Judge.

Carlos would also bring some much needed diversity to the bench. Chester County lags far behind our neighboring counties when it comes to diversity. My entire legal career, there have been zero (0) minorities on the bench. No minority defendant in the last 15 years has had the experience of being sentenced by someone that looks like them or shares similar life experiences. Diversity is very important in the justice system. People need to feel that the system can work for everybody for the system to actually work and have legitimacy. Having someone from a diverse background on the bench is a step towards achieving that goal.

Becoming a judge is the next logical step for someone who has dedicated their life to being a career public servant. Carlos has had many opportunities to leave the public sphere for greener pastures and more money but his drive to help the common good led him to continuously serve the public for the last 18 years. On his behalf, I ask for your support in helping him to continue to serve the public as one the next Chester County Judges.

Steve Jarmon, Partner Lamb McErlane PC, Phoenixville Area Democrats Committee Person