



Board Brief

JUNE



Message from the President

Chaos, Care, and Commitment

We are living in an unforgettable, uncomfortable era: the coronavirus and its wide-reaching ramifications, demonstrations, protests, violence, destruction separating us in undeniable

ways. Every segment of society seems to be in chaos, hurting, and damaged. It is painful. When matters get out of control or are falling apart, we try to come up with causes, and then answers.

All solutions require a review of the basics to better deal with various crises, such as what can a government do or not do during a pandemic, what are appropriate police procedures and policies, what are our perceived inequities and how do we cure them, what can citizens can say or do publicly, or ---- you fill in the blank. And the rule of law, which we lawyers are sworn to uphold, must prevail, always.

Fortunately, our Ohio Constitution guides us by guaranteeing fundamental rights. We start with 1.01 **Inalienable Rights** (1851) - "all men are, by nature, free and independent, and have certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and seeking and obtaining happiness and safety."

We easily can see the relevance of 1.11 **Freedom of speech; of the press; of libels** (1851) that in part states "every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of the right; and no law shall be passed to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech, or of the press."

Our **Right to Assemble** 1.03 (1851) states that "the people have the right to assemble together, in a *peaceable* manner, to consult for their common good; to instruct their representatives; and to petition the general assembly for the redress of grievances".

We have the **Right of Victims of Crime** 1.10a (2018), the **Rights of conscience; education; the necessity of religion and knowledge** 1.07 (1851), and the **Preservation of the freedom to choose health care and health care coverage** 1.21 (2017).

People must better understand their basic rights. This knowledge and education is most relevant. These rules of society are designed to help us achieve our ever-evolving view of justice. They are particularly instructive during traumatic times. As Lori sets out - and it bears repeating - our mission is to "promote the pursuit of justice and the public understanding of the rule of law." Your Board cares deeply and passionately about what is happening in 2020. As a result, we're fully committed to fulfilling our charge in a powerful, unique way. So, stay tuned to what we are going to do. We will continue to effectuate a positive difference for many Ohioans.

In fellowship with gratitude,

First, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Many of us moved from a shared office to working at home, practically overnight. We practice social distancing. In public places, we wear masks that cover welcoming smiles. Grandparents cannot hug their grandchildren. Life milestones we treasure –prom, high school graduation, competitive sports – all canceled. The playdates and extracurricular activities that usually fill families’ weekly calendars suddenly stop. Everyone is dealing with the uncertainty of what will keep us “safe” and how long it will be until the pandemic will end.

And then, George Floyd died at the hands of a police officer. An unbearably long, heart-wrenching video that makes it nearly impossible to look the other way. A police precinct fire, flames consuming the government building aside a cheering crowd, without firefighters or police officers on the scene. Minneapolis, Washington, DC, Columbus, and more than 350 other cities across the United States, have seen thousands gathered to protest. Some include destruction of private businesses and government buildings. We hear reports about uncomfortable, sometimes violent, encounters between protestors and police.

Lawyers’ groups send out emails to their members, calling for justice and action, featuring quotes from Martin Luther King, Bishop Desmond Tutu, and Maya Angelou that speak to how our efforts, up to this point, have fallen short of our ideals. Beautiful, heartfelt murals painted that capture the hope of what can be.

All of this leading to a tipping point for our country, urging us to take a hard look at race relations between citizens of color and law enforcement.

We are living a crisis within a crisis. The Ohio State Bar Foundation’s mission is to promote the pursuit of justice and the public understanding of the rule of law. How may we use our voice to meaningfully contribute to the broader conversation?

As Executive Director of the OSBF, I wish we could say that we have a fool-proof plan ready to go that addresses our crises head-on and in an effective way. What I can report is that at a recent Special Meeting of the Board, Trustees expressed how important it is to respond to these crises rather than continue just as we always have before. We are working on action steps that we, as an organization charged with building a better justice system, can take. Although we don’t know the guaranteed best way forward with any kind of certainty, we realize we cannot simply sit on the sidelines.

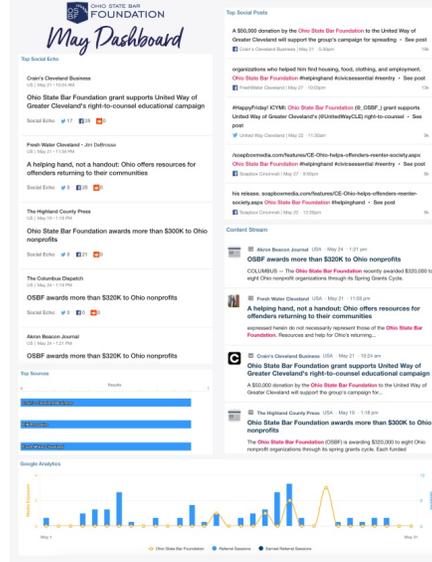
This may mean we forgo some of the things we as a Foundation routinely do during a typical calendar year and use our staff and volunteer resources in other ways. This may also mean trying to have, facilitate, or promote difficult conversations, realizing that just because they may be difficult does not mean they are not necessary. That has been part of the problem – many of us don’t acknowledge the extent of the difficulties that we are living in and that we have created as a society.

I encourage you to remain engaged with us and in the greater conversation. Share with us your ideas, and we will move forward together.



Check out OSBF media mentions during the month of May.

MAY DASHBOARD



Grantee HIGHLIGHT

Issue Media Group, our strategic grantee, is launching the [Civics Essential Virtual Game Event](#) this month.

Last year, IMG hosted trivia events at local libraries around the state. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements, they had to get creative and think of a new way to hold these events. The result? The Civics Essential Virtual Game Event, a fast, free, and fact-filled Jeopardy game through Zoom.

When: June 10 at 7 PM, June 11 at 7 PM, June 17 at 7 PM, and June 18 at 7 PM.

Where: Register for one or more of the games on [Eventbrite](#). Once registered, participants will receive a link to attend the game via Zoom.

REGISTER NOW

Staff Update



OSBF's Fellows Relationship and Events Coordinator Lisa Ray and Fellows Outreach Coordinator Bev Graves have been hard at work as the staff liaisons for our Fellows. Unique this year, they're working with the 2020 Fellows Class *and* the 2019 Class - at the same time.

Usually, one class wraps up when a new class begins. However, due to COVID-19, our 2019 Class wasn't able to launch the first-ever Fellows Week of Service and complete their plans for the class year. During the week, the 2019 Fellows planned to highlight the alarming number of foster children who fall victim to human trafficking through an event at the Ohio Statehouse with Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, former Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown, human trafficking survivors, and others, through presentations, and by collecting items for foster youth.

COVID-19 might have put a wrench in the planning, but it hasn't stopped our 2019 Fellows. Lisa and Bev are continuing to work with the class to brainstorm ways to host the Fellows Week of Service virtually. They're also busy helping the 2020 Class determine the *topic* they would like to highlight for their Fellows Week of Service.

Stay tuned to find out when our 2019 Fellows Class will be launching the Fellows Week of Service and for updates on what our 2020 Fellows Class is up to.



Can we count on you to do your part? At the end of each issue of the Brief, we will ask you to partake in an activity (we promise it will be easy!) to help us spread the word on the great work the Foundation is doing throughout Ohio.

Help us spread the word on our 2020 spring grantees! Click the link to open our special graphic, save it, and share it on your social media channels or through email. You can send people to the OSBF website (OSBF.org/2020SpringGrantees) to learn more about each grant, too.

When you give, we give.

All donations to the OSBF go directly to our grantmaking efforts.

[Give Now](#)

Ohio State Bar Foundation | OSBF@OSBF.net | 614-487-4444 | OSBF.org

See what's happening on our social media sites:

