



For Immediate Release • November 21, 2023

THE OHIO PRESS NETWORK: SHERIFF JONES ENDORSES LAROSE FOR U.S. SENATE

November 21, 2023
Jack Windsor | OPN

Sheriff Richard K. Jones, the long-serving top law enforcement officer in Butler County, endorsed Ohio Secretary Frank LaRose in his bid for U.S. Senate.

In an interview with The Ohio Press Network (OPN) Jones called LaRose the “real deal” who is in touch with local communities, is in the military and understands the world through that experience and has been proactive on issues such as immigration and drug control.

“He's the only one in the race. He's a local guy. He's been to the border. He's in the military. He's got young kids – he's a mom-and-pop guy. He goes to all the little towns, all the villages. He talks to people, and he meets with people. He's done it ever since he's been in office. These other two guys that are running, I don't dislike 'em, but they're very wealthy. They're rich guys. They come around when it's election time,” said Jones.

In an interview with OPN LaRose expressed gratitude for the sheriff's endorsement, highlighted a shared military background and stance on border security. LaRose was a U.S. Special Forces Green Beret and remains active

in the military. Jones served as a combat engineer. Both men view American border security as a top threat and priority.

“[The endorsement] means the world as a fellow Army veteran, and that's how we initially connected. We speak the same language naturally as two guys from different generations, but also two guys that served in the Army. He is the consummate law man. He's a guy that has devoted his life to public safety. We know that he's the tough but fair kind of sheriff that really every county should have. He doesn't take any BS, but he's also a smart leader of his agency and has a lot of good deputies that work for him and really appreciate his style of leadership,” LaRose said.

He continued, “Sheriff Jones has taken a very strong stance on border security, and this is something that's also a passion for mine. We both are people that believe that you can never offer amnesty to people that come here illegally. Of course, there are some who foolishly want to do that.”

LaRose faces Republican contenders State Senator Matt Dolan and businessman Bernie Moreno in the March 2024 primary, with the winner advancing to take on career politician and Democrat Sherrod Brown in the November '24 general election.

“LaRose is the real deal. And look, I've been doing this a long time. I'm the longest sitting sheriff in Butler County, Ohio since 1953. And in Ohio, as far as seniority goes, of 88 sheriffs, I'm like the sixth most senior in Ohio. So, I can tell the real deal, he's the guy I'm supporting,” Jones said.

Jones continued, “Seventy percent of Americans believe the border is the main issue. Look, we're being overrun at the borders and I'm scared to death right now as we speak that the terrorists and other bad people are already here. I know there are terrorist cells. China has safe houses in every state in the United States.”

LaRose told OPN that he has not only visited but served on the U.S.-Mexico border. “A lot of candidates talk; a lot of candidates go down there for a field trip or a photo op and they pose in front of the border wall or whatever. I actually served down there. I volunteered to be part of a counter-narcotics task force, and what I saw was a disaster 22 years ago. We know that it's worse now, and it's the crime and the drugs that are pouring across that border that are killing our fellow Ohioans.”

LaRose said there is a tiny minority that believes we should have an open border and that we shouldn't enforce immigration laws and that the Democrat candidate for U.S. Senate Sherrod Brown is one of them. "Just a few months ago on live national television he said only the far-right cares about border security. Well, Senator, you're wrong and so out of touch."

He continued "If you talk to Democrats and Republicans, Ohioans care about border security because they know that 200 of our fellow Americans are dying a day from fentanyl overdoses. I say it like this: Imagine a fully loaded passenger plane crashing every day. We would ground all the aircraft if that was happening until we figured out what was killing 200 people a day. Well, we don't need to figure out what's happening. We know what's happening. It's precursor chemicals that are coming from China, and I, for one, would hold the Chinese Communist Party accountable for this poison."

LaRose said he'd also work to define as foreign terrorist organizations the cartel groups that are getting drug inputs from China and mixing them together in Mexico to smuggle across the border. "When Brown and his allies in the media are asked about that, they won't answer whether those criminal cartels should be defined as terrorist organizations because they don't want to answer that question."

LaRose said these cartels are the definition of real and present danger and that it is time to use the full force of the federal government against them to stop their killing of Americans.

A poll released by Emerson College last week captured the simulated head-to-head matchup between LaRose and Brown. With results just outside the survey margin of error of 3%, the poll reported Brown leading 41-36 with 24% undecided. Brown was also leading Dolan 41-38 and Moreno 42-32.

Both Jones and LaRose believe the days ahead will result in swings in favor of LaRose, both in the primary and general election.

"I'm not supporting these big money guys. I'm supporting somebody that represents me and the people that I work for in the state. I'm going to do everything I can to campaign for him and work for him," Jones said.

"Conservative talk is cheap. People can say whatever they want. I'm the one who's proven it time and again, stood up on gun rights, stood up on life, stood up to cut taxes. The other candidates in this race can't say this. And by the way, I'm also the only one in this race who's ever been endorsed by

President Trump. There's another candidate out there trying to convince people, through a pretty deceptive series of ads that he's running, that he has Trump's backing. To be very clear, Trump hasn't endorsed anyone in this race. I will tell you what he did. He endorsed me last year when I was running for Secretary of State, and I was the only secretary of state in the country to earn President Trump's endorsement. And I'm confident that if he decides to endorse in this race that I will earn his endorsement because he knows a fighter when he sees one and he wants what we want, and that is to beat Sharon Brown, and I'm the one who can get that done," LaRose told OPN.

Jones was once rumored to be a U.S. Senate candidate. In 2018, after then-GOP nominee Josh Mandel dropped out of the race against Sen. Sherrod Brown, the scuttlebutt was that Jones was asked to take the Republican post, but he declined. The sheriff made national headlines in 2020 when he opposed Gov. Mike DeWine's mask mandate, saying "I'm not going to be the mask police."

Read the full story [here](#).

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Media Contact: Ben Kindel (440) 864-0106 / Ben@FrankLaRose.com