



Declaration of Candidacy

Candidates for election as Second Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, or Director Elected Nationally must complete this form and submit it to the Chief Executive Officer at the principal headquarters of DRI by 5:00 PM (CDT) on July 1st of the year in which the election is held.

National Director Requirements - Directors Elected Nationally or by Region must be Individual Members of the Corporation admitted to the practice of law. Each such director must meet the following qualifications at the time of election:

(a) The candidate shall have been a DRI member for a total of at least five (5) years **(CBT)** and

(b) The candidate shall have been a member of at least one DRI substantive law committee for at least three (3) years **(CBT)**, and

(c) The candidate must have registered for and attended at least one (1) DRI Annual Meeting within the previous three (3) years **(CBT)**, and,

(d) within the three (3) years prior to the final day of the Annual Meeting, the candidate must have 1) registered for and attended at least two (2) DRI seminars **(CBT)**, or 2) registered for and attended one (1) DRI seminar and one (1) DRI Regional Meeting. **My initials reflect compliance with the requirements.**

Please also see the DRI Board of Director and Officer Competencies, attached.

Position sought:

Second Vice President* Secretary- Treasurer National Director

*If you have declared your candidacy for Second Vice President and are not the successful candidate, will you consider the Secretary - Treasurer Officer position?

Yes No

Name: Chris Turney

Firm/Company: Turney LG- Midwest Litigators

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How long have you been a member of DRI? **More than 10 years total; consecutively since 2016.**

Areas of practice: **Product Liability, Medical Liability, Professional Liability, Civil Litigation. While my practice generally involves handling catastrophic injury claims, I have broadened my client base to take on lower value cases in an attempt to train the next generation of attorneys. My goal over the next 3 years is to grow to 4-5 attorneys who will commit to the defense and forge into the future as innovators and leaders.**

Please provide your employment history in chronological order beginning with the current position.

Legal career:

**Turney LG- Midwest Litigators (Kansas City, Missouri) (2021-present)
Van Osdol, P.C. (Kansas City, Missouri) (2017-2020)
Rasmussen, Dickey, Moore (Kansas City, Missouri) (2004-2017)
16th Judicial Circuit; Jackson County, Missouri (2003-2004)
Law Offices of Peter Juras (Fairway, Kansas) (2002)**

Other career:

Risk Control Services (Houston, Texas) (1997-1999)

Please describe your previous involvement in DRI, including but not limited to, leadership positions held, projects contributed to, committee memberships, presentations given, and written materials authored. Special accomplishments should also be noted.

While I have registered for and attended several other conferences (e.g., Trucking, Medical Liability), my leadership has centered on the Litigation Skills Committee and the Center for Law and Public Policy.

Leadership:

**2023-2024: Center for Law and Public Policy; Social Inflation Task Force Chair
2022-2024: Litigation Skills (Chair)
2021-2022: Litigation Skills (Vice Chair)
2019-2020: Litigation Skills (Publications Chair)
2017-2019: Litigation Skills (Publications Committee)**



Projects:

As Chair of the Social Inflation Task Force, my primary goal was assembling a skillful and innovative team to focus on solutions as much as focusing on

problems. Our monthly meetings are well attended, and multiple people present about various important topics. As part of the Task Force, we published a white paper and have presented about Social Inflation strategies on more than 7 occasions in the past year. Our most impactful contribution to date appears to be the quadrants of contributors (pasted below) to Social Inflation, which has been the subject of many presentations to date. In addition, we launched a verdict reporting system that is gaining traction. This system allows DRI to gather verdict information from attorneys nationwide, including the last offer made, last demand presented, and other critical information. This allows The Center an opportunity to bring value to DRI members; the verdict tracking system, the utilization of which is still being explored with an eye toward expansion, is intended to inform both defense counsel and clients about strategic case valuation. This is becoming increasingly important in light of the drivers and contributors of Social Inflation that our team continues to identify. We plan to coordinate a major publication to address these quadrants in the coming year.

Contributors and Drivers		Direct	Indirect	
	Intentional	Anchoring Safetyism Exploitation Edge/Reptile B & A Witnesses MOE/MOI Life Care Plan Abuse Lien – Based Treaters	Verdict Shaming Attorney Advertising TPLF “Bad Faith” Abuse Selling Fear (To Defense) “Running with the Bulls” AI Manipulation	
	Unintentional	Witness Crumbling Trial Counsel Mistakes Lack of Appellate Support Jury Pool Make-Up Defendant’s Bad Conduct “Spike Valuations”	Bridled Defense Counsel Fear-Focused Media Divisive Culture Speed of Opinions Silence of Defense Bar Absorbing the Fear Magnifying the Problem Feeding the Problem Anti-Corporate Sentiment Safetyism Culture	

As Chair of the Litigation Skills Committee, I focused on rebuilding a core leadership team to propel substantial contributions in the future. The defense bar needs leaders that will forge paths into the future. In furthering that goal, the Litigation Skills Committee (the entire team) successfully:

- Began a new initiative called the .1 Series.
- Increased its seminar membership year after year.
- Hosted a panel counsel meeting at the 2024 seminar.
- Hosted monthly conference calls for the first time since 2020.

- Created a systematic approach to engaging new committee members.
- Navigated the infamous Austin ice storm that interrupted our 2023 seminar.
- Earned stellar reviews from the last seminar and had numerous client-side members at the table.

Publications:

In addition to leading these committees, I have published three times in DRI publications:

2017: *The Descriptive Opening*, DRI Newsletter

2018: *Breaking News: Navigating the Court of Public Opinion*, DRI Newsletter.

2023: *Sunshine and Storms*, Letter from the Chair in For the Defense.

2023: *Social Inflation: Observations and Solutions to Support the Right to Fair and Impartial Dispute Resolution*, White Paper (with several co-authors).

2023: *Update and New Guidance from the Social Inflation Task Force*, The Voice.

DRI Presentations:

I encourage defense counsel nationally to share information to improve the way we defend and represent business. My favorite way to embolden the defense bar is through speaking at seminars and conferences. Beyond that, I particularly enjoy involving other colleagues in those presentations to build ownership in solutions. For example, I presented and contributed to the following presentations for DRI:

2024 DRI Webinar: *The Pushback: Contributors and Drivers of Social Inflation*.

Thanks to our great panel, the registration for this webinar was groundbreaking.

2024 Litigation Skills Seminar: *The Pushback: Strategies for Countering Plaintiff Tactics in Inflated Valuations and Verdicts*. This panel opened the highly attended Litigation Skills Seminar.

2022 Litigation Skills and Medical Liability Seminar: *Pro-tips: Game Time Principles for Trial Players from a Sports Counselor's Point of View*.

2022 Litigation Skills and Medical Liability Seminar: *Pro-tips: Professional Athlete Principles for Pretrial Preparation*.

2021 Litigation Skills Seminar: *Corporate Representative Depositions*. For this presentation, I served as corporate representative for Michael Gross.

SLDO Presentations:

During the last two years, I also presented the following seminars for state defense organizations:

2024 (August): Wisconsin Defense Counsel; Wisconsin Dells. *Re-setting the Anchor: Securing Reasonable Outcomes*. (Co-presenting with Amy Wilkinson of Secura Insurance).

2024 (August): Arkansas Association of Defense Counsel; Branson, Missouri. *The Pushback: Strategies for Countering Plaintiff Tactics in Inflated Valuations and Verdicts.*

2024: Oklahoma Association of Defense Counsel; Santa Fe, New Mexico. *The Pushback: Strategies for Countering Plaintiff Tactics in Inflated Valuations and Verdicts.*

2023: Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers Webinar: *Cross-Examining the Life Care Planner.* This presentation was borne of a request for information on the list serve about an expert life care planner I cross-examined in a jury trial. When I responded with helpful information about the expert, I received numerous requests for information. As a result, I suggested to MODL leadership that we host a webinar, and I pulled in three other attorneys who had experience with this expert. Thanks to the work we put into the presentation, the webinar was the most widely attended webinar for MODL.

2022: Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers Annual Meeting; Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. *Pro-tips: Game Time Principles for Trial Players from a Sports Counselor's Point of View.*

Other Presentations:

Beyond DRI and its sister organizations, I have presented about various legal issues throughout my career. I tend to incorporate DRI-related information in the presentations, even those given outside of this organization, because of my passion for the work of DRI and the value it adds to its membership and with the goal of encouraging attorneys to get involved in state and national attorney organizations. This organization has aided my career, and I know it can do the same for others.

2024 Legal System Abuse Symposium (March): *Attorney Advertising and Its Impact on Litigation.*

2024 University of Missouri – Kansas City Continuing Legal Education Program: *Litigation Update.*

2023 University of Missouri – Kansas City Continuing Legal Education Program: *Litigation Update.*

2021 University of Missouri – Kansas City Continuing Legal Education Program: *Litigation Update.*

2020 University of Missouri – Kansas City Continuing Legal Education Program: *Litigation Update.*

2019 University of Missouri – Kansas City Continuing Legal Education Program: *Litigation Update.*

2018 University of Missouri – Kansas City Continuing Legal Education Program: *Litigation Update.*

2017 University of Missouri – Kansas City Continuing Legal Education Program: *Litigation Update.*

2016 University of Missouri – Kansas City Continuing Legal Education Program: *Litigation Update.*

2015 University of Missouri – Kansas City Continuing Legal Education Program: *Litigation Update*.

2015 Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association: *Practical Evidence for Civil Litigators*.

2014 Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association: *Practical Evidence for Civil Litigators*.

2013 Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association: *Steppin' Up and Steppin' Out* (presentation for new lawyers).

2012 Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association: *Steppin' Up and Steppin' Out* (presentation for new lawyers).

List any significant leadership commitment and involvement within the legal field other than DRI, including but not limited to other legal organizations.

My leadership commitment within the legal field is focused on DRI. I am a member of MODL (Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers) and KADC (Kansas Association of Defense Counsel). I have presented a webinar and a live presentation for MODL.

Outside of the legal field, I invest time every year as Founder, Chair, and C.E.O. of Wings 4 Water, Inc. This is a non-profit organization that started on my patio and over the past 7 years has turned into a metro-KC area event. In short, we turn chicken wings into purified water for global neighbors. From a small cook-off between a friend and me, we branded the concept and marketed the event that started with 150 attendees; in just seven years the event grew to over 5,000 attendees. We have grown from buying wings at Costco for the first event to global companies donating to support the event. Last year, Tyson Foods hauled in over 26,000 chicken wings on their semi-truck. In our first year, we had 8 individual competitors, and last year wings were served by over 50 corporate sponsored competitors. Since 2017, we estimate over 8,000 people now have access to clean water because a couple knuckleheads got together to see who had the best wings. For more information, see the following links:



<https://fox4kc.com/video/wings-4-water-eat-wings-raise-money-for-clean-water/6962839/Wings-4-Water-2022-Event-Reel-youtube.com>
[Wings 4 Water](#)

In my role as Chair of Wings 4 Water, Inc., I govern a Board of 8 members and a 10+ person Steering Committee. The Committee is tasked with planning and executing the annual event, which is the center of the organization's fundraising activities. Serving in this role is not only gratifying from a fundraising and community-building perspective but also keeps my leadership skills honed outside of the litigation world.

In addition to Wings 4 Water, I also serve on the Board for Fellowship of Christian Athletes for the East Kansas City Region. My role on the Board primarily hinges around community and team building. Relying on an active network in the Kansas City area through Chambers of Commerce and other business associations, I build bridges in this role between FCA and community leaders who are willing to help execute the organization's goals.

Why do you wish to join the board of directors or become an officer and what skills, abilities and attributes identified in the Board of Director/Officer Competencies can you bring to the role?

As seen by the quick growth of the Social Inflation Task Force and the steady re-engagement of the Litigation Skills Committee, one of my leadership qualities is building bridges with the right people to charge into battle. Specifically, I am labeled under Culture Index as a persuader. I admittedly have a different outlook on problems, accompanied by unusual solutions (think turning chicken wings into purified water). A friend of off-the-wall ideas, I have been successful in gaining early traction to inspire a team to creatively analyze and strategically execute a plan. I work with passion toward developing and executing a vision, alongside teams inspired to strive with me.

Most importantly, I reclaimed my non-billable life in 2017 with the goal of making a bigger difference within the defense bar. While I gained tremendous experience as a national trial attorney in asbestos litigation for 14 years, I wanted to alter my career path to be more of a mentor to next gen lawyers. As such, I intentionally poured into DRI during the past 7 years and hope to continue momentum for the coming generations of defense counsel.

What suggestions would you make to move the organization forward?

At this point, I have a small view of the large organization, so I hesitate to speak out of turn. However, the key to leading an organization with a momentum toward success is first learning fully where the organization is. With this said, through my involvement within the lower-level of DRI, I witnessed an early decline with building momentum, which seemed to be largely impacted by the billable hour expectations on fabulous attorneys.

The key to building momentum is defining a creative vision, selling it, building bridges to the right people, putting those people in the right seats, then rolling.

Then rolling more.

In order to build that momentum among volunteering billable hour defense attorneys, we must define the legitimate and serious threats that must be addressed. Then, we must find the creative and strategic plan and sell the

problem – and solution – to the key stakeholders. In our case, those stakeholders are generally trial attorneys, general counsel, and insurers. Inviting all stakeholders to the table (like we did with the Social Inflation Task Force) generates not only the appropriate problem list, but also the most brilliant solutions.

The fields of solutions to legitimate and serious threats are fertile and need to be tilled. In considering these threats with an eye toward resolution, I believe the following are threats to the defense bar:

- **Increasing pressure on our clients to reduce legal spend as a quick fix for painful loss ratios (which is a short-term solution leading to tragic results).**
- **Decreasing motivation of younger attorneys to involve themselves in legal associations at the expense of outside interests, family, and hobbies.**
- **Decreasing interest in attending live seminars, given the abundance of online CLE opportunities.**
- **A reluctance to share ideas that will improve the nationwide defense bar.**
- **The aging trial attorney with no succession plan in place.**
- **A lack of innovation in trial techniques.**

As I frequently remind the Social Inflation Task Force, we should not simply complain about problems. Identifying problems can be easy – yet fruitless. As such, I am fighting against the problems listed above by:

- **Presenting to clients about the tragic results produced from their long-term decisions (3 such presentations in 2024).**
- **Paying for my associates to attend national seminars and requiring 100 tracked hours of professional development and networking.**
- **Engaging young attorneys about the joy that derives from having a national network, and the difficulty of building that network without in-person seminars.**
- **Preaching (yes, preaching) in every seminar about the value of sharing ideas and the long-term benefits of doing so.**
- **Pouring into my associates through engaging them in trials and key depositions. I also offer to buy coffee or lunch to any new lawyer who approaches me for advice.**
- **Educating myself on the Plaintiff bar’s tactics and regularly training defense counsel how to “Pushback” on them.**

DRI is well positioned to continue developing solutions on a much larger scale than I can do alone, and I truly appreciate the passion with which DRI wants to pursue and execute these solutions. I want to help DRI grow in these areas and look forward to working with others to accomplish organizational goals.

Describe one transformational/defining experience in your professional life you have been involved with and what you learned from that experience.

My most glaring defining experience came in 2017 when I chose to sacrifice the billable hour requirements of the firm in which I was a member. The decision was hard and came with severe financial impact. However, by pruning my career at that time, I learned that I could continue having a great impact for my clients in the courtroom while expanding my impact outside the courtroom. Indeed, my impact was afforded the opportunity to impact worlds outside of the legal profession. Not coincidentally, Wings 4 Water was born in 2017.

We often gain much when we sacrifice what is not actually sacred.

Describe the greatest challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for DRI over the next five+ years.

My suspicion is we will have to find a strategic solution to engage next gen attorneys. DRI is not just competing with other legal organizations. It competes with the billable hour, other demands of the legal field, an increased emphasis on non-legal interests, and even the plaintiff's bar poaching our best young attorneys.

To combat these real threats, we must communicate the strong impact our most active members are having on the defense side. The Verdict Report brought to life by the Center and the Social Inflation Task Force is a step in the right direction in achieving this goal. The strength of this approach then lies in leveraging the impact of our most active members to inspire others to do the same. One of our greatest resources is the network of nationwide attorneys who are already members of this powerful organization.

As the defense bar becomes more emboldened, it will become more engaged. I believe DRI will fully capture these opportunities as it leans on its leaders in the trenches to communicate where DRI's map is not fitting the territory of litigation. As one example, Georgia defendants are under attack with a couple of appellate decisions that require insurance carriers to take extreme measures to settle cases that years ago would have been without merit. DRI can leverage its national network of attorneys to prepare for the Georgia attacks in other jurisdictions to get ahead of the tactic.

DRI strives to be governed by a diverse board of directors—in terms of race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, location, and/or professional level, and other facts that enhance diversity and inclusion --- who can and will help advance DRI's goals through the power of collaboration. In what ways have you demonstrated a commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in your work, and how will your DE&I experience inform your contributions as a Board member?

I understand and appreciate that in DRI's mind, DE&I goes beyond societal classifications. Each individual's personal background is unique, and I authentically enjoy engaging with our community, regardless of societal and political differences. While I will not engage in conversation about who I have hired and why I hired them (out of professional respect), I

strongly suspect any of my prior employees would communicate positively about my openness to alternative ideas, and my equity in respecting personal differences.

My personal view about DEI begins with my dad, who lost his dad before he was a teenager. His being raised with three siblings on my Grandma Zula's rural Arkansas teacher's salary has blessed me to appreciate very deeply the opportunities I gained from her trailblazing work and grit. I recognize that every other person on this earth is one generation of grit away from having a legacy of opportunity. This recognition inspires me to pour into every person who wants to impact our world's next generation more profoundly than the last.

My tendency to collaborate is best reflected by looking back through my presentation history with DRI. I constantly strive to include others in my presentations to elevate them and better relate to the audience. This also earns buy-in for solutions we present. Instead of simply presenting as the Chair of the Social Inflation Task Force, I constantly ask others from the Task Force to participate in presentations. When planning the MODL webinar, I opted to include other strong attorneys to provide multiple viewpoints of an attack plan. Because I do not hold all the answers to tackle a problem, I tend toward locating the individuals with the right skill set (i.e., the Pro-tips series with the sports counselor) to present solutions. In other words, just because I am not the best person to fix a situation doesn't mean I lack responsibility to contribute to the solution. If my God-given ability is to connect with and engage the right people, then my contribution will be just that.

Is there anything else you would like to add that has not already been previously stated?

If there is a sense that my tendencies and skill sets can be impactful for DRI, I would love to serve on the Board. I am willing and eager to serve this organization and am committed to the duties of leadership. Thank you for your consideration.

~ cbt