



26 Declaration of Candidacy - Second Vice President Danielle M. Waltz

Formstack Submission For: **2026 DRI Declaration of Candidacy**

Position Sought:

Second Vice President

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

Name:

Danielle M. Waltz

Firm/Company:

WVU Health System

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How long, in years, have you been a member of DRI?:

20

Areas of Practice:

Healthcare, government relations and public policy, construction, and consumer credit protection

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

WVU Health System, Associate Vice President of Government Relations and Associate General Counsel (September 2025-Present)

Dinsmore & Shohl LLP, Partner (August 2024 -September 2025)

Jackson Kelly PLLC
o Partner (January 2018-July 2024)
o Counsel (July 2014—December 2018)

Flaherty Sensabaugh Bonasso PLLC
o Partner (2013-2014)
o Associate (2006-2013)

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.:

Involvement

DRI Board of Directors
-National Director, 2023-2026
-Board Liaison to Women in the Law Committee, 2025-2026
-Board Liaison to Young Lawyers Committee, 2023-2025

DRI Center for Law and Public Policy
- Third-Party Litigation Task Force
• Chair, 2025-Present
• Vice Chair, 2023-2025
- Inaugural Stronger Together: A United Approach for Preventing Legal System Abuse
• Co-Chair, 2026

DRI Membership Committee
-Chair, 2025-2026

- Implemented "Power of One Campaign"
- Created Executive Update Leadership Pilot Programs
- Member, 2023-2025, 2016

DRI Governance Committee
-Vice Chair, 2024-2025

Construction Law Committee
In addition to the leadership roles identified below, during my time as Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, the Committee hosted DRI's first entirely virtual seminar and its first program focused on renewable energy. Additionally, during the pandemic, the Committee developed the DRI Construction Toolbox Talks, which have continuously been successful to this day and led to collaborations with other committees like Workers' Compensation, Employment and ADR. Finally, the Committee won multiple SLC fundraising challenges for NFJE and won the 2023 May Membership challenge.

- Past Chair (2023-2025)
- Inaugural Wind Energy Seminar, Co-Chair (May 2023)
- Chair (2021-2023)
- Vice Chair (2019-2021)
- Long Range Planning Committee
- other steering committee positions (2015-2019)
- Seminar Chair (2014)
- Marketing Chair (2013)
- Social Media Chair (2012)
- Young Lawyer Committee Liaison (2010-2012)

DRI Annual Meeting
□Blockbuster Program Chair, 2025
□Blockbuster Program Vice Chair,

2024

□Task Force, Chair (2019)—this task force was response for making recommendations for the future success of the DRI Annual Meeting

□Annual Meeting, Chair (2018)

□Annual Meeting, Vice Chair (2017)

DRI Nominating Committee

□At Large Member (2019 Annual Meeting)

DRI Cares Committee (2019-2021)

Speaking Engagements

□Moderator, "Mobilizing the Defense Community: Roles, Responsibilities & Opportunities for Engagement, 2026 Stronger Together: A United Approach for Preventing Legal System Abuse (June 15-16, 2026)

□Co-Presenter, "Following the Money: Unpacking the Influence of Litigation Funding on Coverage Litigation and Claims Strategy, 2025 Insurance Coverage and Practice Symposium, New York, New York (December 3-5, 2025)

□Moderator, Attorney General Panel Featuring WV and Alabama Attorneys General, DRI 2025 Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois (October 15-17, 2025)

□Moderator, "When the Client Relationship Goes Too Far (Ethics)," Joint Session with Civil Rights and Governmental Tort Liability Seminar, Construction Law Seminar, and Women in the Law Seminar, DRI, Las Vegas, Nevada (January 23-25, 2023)

□Co-presenter, "Deeper Discovery: Hitting all the Project Nook and Crannies to Uncover Best Evidence," 2021 DRI Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts (Oct. 15, 2021)

□Speaker, "It's a Brave New World —

Potential New Parties/New Theories with AI," DRI/IDC Rise of The Machines: Artificial Intelligence in Construction Virtual Seminar (Feb. 16, 2021)

□Co-speaker, with Sen. Ryan J. Ferns, "Legislative Trends in the Construction Industry," DRI Construction Law Seminar, Las Vegas, Nevada (Sept. 9-11, 2015)

Written Materials

□Author, Construction Law Committee Honors David Wilson II Through Action, The Brief Case: DRI Committee News (March 2022)

□Author, Your 2018 Annual Meeting, Celebrating Diversity, Embracing Technology and Using Leadership to Build a Bridge into the Future, For the Defense (July 2018)

□Contributor as part of Center for Law and Public Policy's Third-Party Litigation Funding Task Force, Third-Party Litigation Funding: Civil Justice and the Need for Transparency (2018)

□Co-author, Construction Law 2017 Legislative Update, In House Defense Quarterly (2017)

□Author, WV Becomes 26th Right to Work State, The Critical Path (July 2016)

□Author, DRI Membership—It's Personal, For the Defense (July 2016)

□Author, WV Portion of the DRI Construction Law Desk Reference (2009)

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

WVU College of Law

□Chair of the Visiting Committee (2023-Present)

□Member of Dean Search Committee (2025 -Present)

Defense Trial Counsel of WV Member 2006—Present)

□Chair of Legislative Committee
(January 2026-Present)
□Government Relations
Representative (January 2013-August
2025)
□Multiple speaking engagements at
Annual Meeting

International Association of Defense
Counsel (Member 2019-Present)
□Member, Civil Justice Reform,
Construction and Cybersecurity
Committees
□Co-Speaker, "Diminishing Judicial
Deference to Federal Agency Decision
Making: The Upsides and Downsides
for Your Clients, 2024 Annual Meeting,
Vancouver, British Columbia (July
2024)

Federation of Defense & Corporate
Counsel (Member March 2026 -
Present)
□Member, Corporate Counsel
Committee
□Co-Speaker, "Ethical Leadership in
Challenging Political Times," FDCC
Corporate Counsel Symposium, New
Orleans, Louisiana (September 27-29,
2026)

**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?:**

I am seeking to serve as an officer of
DRI because I am deeply committed
to the organization and its members,
demonstrated by 20 years of active
engagement. I have been a member
of DRI as long as I have been engaged
in the practice of law and credit the
organization significantly for both my
professional and leadership
development.

Having served in multiple leadership
roles across the organization, I bring
both institutional knowledge and a
forward-looking perspective on how

DRI can continue to grow, innovate, and deliver value. By continuing to build on the foundation forged by many outstanding leaders and volunteers, I am truly excited about DRI's future.

Throughout my service, I have demonstrated accountability—to the organization, its mission, and most importantly, its members. I understand the responsibilities that come with leadership at this level and have a proven history of thoughtful governance, strategic decision-making, and leadership. I can navigate complex issues, contribute meaningfully to long-term strategies, and help ensure that DRI remains responsive to the evolving needs of its membership.

With respect to the Board competencies, I am an innovator, a connector, and a promoter. As an innovator, I seek out fresh ideas and approaches to enhance programming, engagement, and member value. I continuously identify opportunities for improvement and translate them into action. As a connector, I actively build relationships across practice areas and leadership interests. As a promoter, I tell DRI's story, working to elevate its visibility, expand its reach, and reinforce its position as a leading voice in the defense bar.

In alignment with the Board of Director and Officer Competencies, I bring strong leadership, strategic thinking, and communication skills, as well as a demonstrated ability to work collaboratively. I am committed to transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership, and I approach

every role with a focus on how forward thinking, collective action can help make DRI better.

My goal as an officer would be to build on what DRI has done and continues to do best while helping to position DRI for the future—ensuring that DRI innovates, connects, and delivers meaningful value to its members. I am ready to bring my experience, energy, and dedication to an officer role and to continue serving DRI at the highest level.

What suggestions would you make to move the organization forward?:

To move DRI forward, we must strengthen member engagement, foster innovation in programming and leverage DRI's national network to expand its influence in education and advocacy.

First, we have an opportunity to further develop and enhance membership initiatives in ways that broaden and diversify our pipeline. Building on existing efforts, we should continue to expand and grow our government sector, while exploring other opportunities, such as a law professor membership. We also should continue to explore and expand relationships with law firms who have not traditionally joined DRI, as well as consider approaching attorneys for national industry groups about potential membership and collaboration. At the same time, we should continue to evaluate how we attract, retain, and engage members at all stages of their careers, ensuring that DRI remains relevant no matter what stage an attorney is at in his or her career.

Finally, DRI should take the voice of

DRI beyond just our seminars, by hosting smaller, informal events around the country like we hosted this year in Boston, Louisville, and Washington, DC. Members want to feel connected to the organization and one another and this is an excellent way to do so.

Second, DRI is well-positioned to continue to deliver innovative, timely, and creative programming. I recommend creating a more structured and transparent mechanism for proposing new initiatives—so that committees clearly understand expectations, submission requirements, and decision timelines. A defined process will encourage more ideas, improve coordination, and allow DRI to respond more quickly to developments affecting our members and their clients. In doing so, we can empower our committees while also maintaining consistency and strategic alignment across the organization and make sure our staff are prepared and equipped to handle any new programming requests.

Finally, through the Center for Law and Public Policy, DRI has a distinct advantage as a true national network connected to state and local defense organizations. DRI should continue to leverage that network to position itself as the leader in education and advocacy at the state level. By working in coordination with State and Local Defense Organizations (SLDOs), State Representatives, and our sister defense organizations, we can amplify our impact, share resources and expertise, and provide meaningful support on issues affecting the civil justice systems

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

across the country. This coordinated approach can strengthen DRI's voice and ensure it continues to play a leading role in shaping the legal landscape. The interest and enthusiasm at the Center's "Stronger Together—Preventing Legal System Abuse" and AI Seminars are good indicators that there is great opportunity for growth and enhancement in this area.

Taken together, these efforts—expanding membership initiatives, encouraging innovation in programming, and leveraging our national network for education and advocacy—will help ensure that DRI continues to grow, adapt, and deliver meaningful value to its members in a rapidly changing legal environment.

One of the most defining experiences in my professional life was my work as part of a broad coalition to establish the Intermediate Court of Appeals in West Virginia. This effort brought together a unique group of stakeholders, including the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, DTCWV, the Manufacturers Association, and members of the criminal defense and family law bars. It also required thoughtful and sustained negotiation with the plaintiffs' bar, including AAJ.

What made this experience truly transformational was not just the outcome, but the process. This was not a quick win. Rather, it was an effort that took years of persistence, refinement, and recommitment. Early attempts did not succeed, and we had to step back, reassess, and find new ways to build consensus and address

concerns. Through that process, I learned the importance of resilience and patience in advancing meaningful change and often success can be hindered by the fight against the unknown.

I also gained invaluable experience in coalition-building, bringing together groups with different priorities, perspectives, and sometimes competing interests, and aligning them around a shared goal. That required listening as much as advocating, finding common ground, and helping others see the long-term benefits of collaboration. Just as importantly, I learned how to navigate complex negotiations, particularly when working with groups that maintained very different positions.

Ultimately, this experience reinforced that meaningful change often requires time, adaptability, and trust. It sharpened my ability to lead through complexity, refocus strategy after setbacks, and stay focused on the broader objective. These lessons continue to shape how I approach leadership, problem-solving, and collaboration today.

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

While DRI's challenges are not unique, they are urgent. Engagement in volunteer organizations is more difficult than ever as demands on our members' time continue to grow. At the same time, rising travel costs are forcing people to be more selective, which means DRI must consistently deliver a strong value proposition.

That said, these challenges create real opportunity. As stated above, DRI should position itself to lean into

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?:

education and advocacy in a more visible and coordinated way, particularly through its national network and the Center for Law and Public Policy. Additionally, DRI should continue to be at the forefront of cutting-edge programming—whether it's AI, emerging risks, or initiatives like Stronger Together—delivered in ways that meet members where they are.

Finally, DRI has an opportunity to take a more focused, intentional approach to leadership development. If DRI invests in building and supporting the next generation of leaders now, we strengthen everything DRI does going forward. DRI can do this by providing micro-training on nonprofit board membership, parliamentary procedure, and law firm leadership to name a few.

In short, DRI must continue to be more relevant, more responsive, and more intentional.

My commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is grounded in action and sustained engagement, both within my professional role and through service in the broader community.

As a former legislative representative for the YWCA—a mission-driven organization dedicated to eliminating racism and empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all—I was directly involved in advocacy efforts aimed at advancing equity and addressing systemic barriers.

I have also supported efforts through community leadership, including

service with the Childhood Language Learning Center, which focuses on expanding access to critical services for children and families, and through organizations of law firm initiatives such as diversity speaker series designed to elevate different voices and perspectives. In addition, my involvement in fundraising efforts, including raising over \$80,000 through Dancing with the Stars for United Way of Central West Virginia, reflects my commitment to supporting organizations that strengthen and uplift communities who need it the most.

Within DRI, my approach has been to lead through participation, collaboration, and accountability during my Board service and other leadership roles. In these roles, I have tried to ensure that diverse perspectives are included and that initiatives reflect the needs of a broad and evolving membership.

Equally important, I bring a distinct perspective as in-house counsel. That vantage point allows me to contribute a practical, business-oriented perspective to discussions about inclusion, engagement, and value. I understand how diversity of thought, background, and experience strengthens decision-making and drive better outcomes—not only within DRI, but for the clients and communities we serve.

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

DRI has truly shaped who I am as a lawyer and leader, and it would mean a great deal to me to continue serving an organization that has given me so much.

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