

**Robert Harding:**

Good evening and welcome to tonight's live Q & A with Cayuga County District Attorney Jon Budelmann. The Q & A will begin at 7 p.m. Start submitting your questions now. We may not be able to get to every question, but we will try our best.



**Robert Harding:**

Good evening to everyone. We do have Jon Budelmann online and ready to answer your questions. We'll get started with the first question.



**gusty:**

the last thing that Strods said last week was: The current ADA who handles DWI has had DWI both misdemeanor and felony cases dismissed because of speedy trial issues, (they did not prosecute in a timely fashion.) That will never happen with me as DA! How many DWI cases have been dismissed on your watch and what are you doing about it?

**jon budelmann:**

In my four years as District Attorney no DWI's have been dismissed for Speedy trial violations. Unlike my opponent, I take DWI cases very seriously because every one could turn into a fatality. The fact that the entire law enforcement community has endorsed me refutes my opponent's false claim. If the police agencies' hard work investigating cases were being wasted (because cases were being dismissed), they wouldn't be endorsing me. It's common sense.

**guest 99:**

Has anyone endorsed you for District Attorney? And why should we pay any attention to endorsements?

**jon budelmann:**

Endorsed by entire local Law Enforcement Community: the Auburn Police Officers, Cayuga County Sheriff's Deputies Association, Cayuga County Sheriff's Employees Association, Auburn Correctional Facility NYSCOPBA. As well as the Auburn Firefighters, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Republican, Conservative and Independence Parties. Their support means we're doing a good job prosecuting crime and protecting our community.

**Guest:**

Your opponent is claiming he will be fiscally responsible and that you are wasting taxpayer money. Do you and the lawyers in your office get paid by the hour? Do lawyers in your office get overtime?



**jon budelmann:**

My opponent's claim is disingenuous. Unlike the assigned counsel defense attorneys, who are paid \$75 an hour for work on felony cases, the Assistant District Attorneys are

all salaried. Like myself, they do not get any extra money for additional court appearances. They do not get any additional pay for working nights and weekends preparing cases for trial and appearing in local criminal (night) courts.

Jonis Strods overcharged Cayuga County taxpayers \$4,000 on his only felony jury trial (his client was found guilty). The Judge cut his bill/voucher by \$4,000. Recently, on a felony case (Jason Colon) Jonis Strods failed to appear in County Court when scheduled. As a result, the Corrections Deputies, prosecutor, Judge, Court personnel, and his own client waited 45 minutes. The case had to be adjourned. The next day, the case had to be adjourned again as he was not prepared. The taxpayers had to pay for all of that time. The defendant fired Strods and hired Norm Chirco.

**TT:**

There has been much rhetoric regarding the efficiency of the DA's office. One of points raised is the strict use of indictments via the Grand Jury verses having preliminary hearings to adjudicate many cases. Briefly state your philosophy on management of felony cases and why you channel them as you do.



**jon budelmann:**

Well this is a very technical question. Let me briefly explain. A preliminary felony hearing is done within five/six days of arrest to justify holding a defendant in custody. There is cross-examination of the victims, and officers. The Grand Jury is a protection for the defendant. In a confidential proceeding, not subject to cross-examination, a group of 23 citizens hear evidence and witnesses and must determine whether reasonable cause exists to warrant holding the defendant over for trial by voting an indictment.

Even if our office proceeds with the prompt felony hearing, we would still then need to present the case to the grand jury to move it forward. So it would require the victim and witnesses to testify twice and would be far less efficient than proceeding directly to grand jury. So whenever possible, we proceed directly to the grand jury.

**owasco owl:**

Of all the cases that you have prosecuted, which one has meant the most to you and why? In what way do you feel you can advocate for victims of crime more than your opponent?



**jon budelmann:**

I am proud every time I get justice for a victim. That is why I went into prosecution. Of the recent cases, I would say the Brian Hutchings case. This involved a police officer abusing his authority and position and endangering innocent citizens. The Emmett Baker trial where I convicted a serial child molester who was abusing 4 young boys, luring them in with Microd race cars. He was sentenced to a 22 year prison term.

I am very proud of the talented and experienced staff I have working for me. These dedicated professionals work tirelessly for the taxpayers, getting justice for hundreds of victims every year. I have been advocating for victims of crime for nineteen years. My

opponent has never prosecuted a single case and has never sought justice on behalf of a single crime victim.

**Guest:**

Last evening during the debate Mr. Strods mentioned several cases that were dismissed for speedy trial issues. Most were very serious charges. Why were so many cases dismissed because of speedy trial issues while you have been DA?



**jon budelmann:**

The District Attorney's Office prosecutes literally thousands of cases every single year, including felonies, misdemeanors, petty offenses, traffic and appeals. In my four years as District Attorney we have prosecuted about ten thousand cases. Of that, I believe only two cases have been dismissed for a speedy trial violation. So by citing only two cases, none of which were my opponent's, he has demonstrated our outstanding track record and the reason the police endorsed me.

19:52

**east end:**

hello jon; can you tell us some of the things you are involved with while not practicing law



**jon budelmann:**

I have been teaching at CCC in the Criminal Justice Curriculum since 1998. I was on the Board of Neighborhood House for four years, the Board of the United Way of CC for six years, the CC Council of the Boy Scouts, Owasco Camp Association as well as a member of the CC Child Advocacy Center's Multi-Disciplinary Team, and a seventeen year member of the Domestic Violence Coalition. I have been a CYO Basketball Coach for my children and assisted in coaching my daughter's softball team. What I enjoy most is spending time with my wife and children.



**Nate Robson:**

Combination of email and submitted questions: What is your involvement in local municipal courts and how to you schedule that while balancing county court?



**jon budelmann:**

There are approximately 24 local criminal courts in the Towns and Villages in which my Office appear in and prosecutes cases every month. Auburn City Court and Cayuga County Court have criminal calendars almost every day of the week. All of these courts are important. Each and every victim deserves to have his or her case fairly prosecuted. I could not handle the huge volume of cases by myself. My staff has proven their ability to manage the caseload and has achieved a high conviction rate and a proven track record.

I spend the majority of my time in Court at the County Court level handling the 250-280 most serious cases a year that we prosecute as felonies. I enjoyed my time working in the Justice Courts which are the courts closest to the People. However, limitations on my time frequently preclude it now. When I am not in Court, I consult with the police agencies, appear before the grand jury or work on the administration of the District Attorney's Office. I delegate a great amount of the important work we handle to my talented and experienced staff and they frequently wish to consult with me on cases. I need to be available to assist them. My days are always full and no two are the same.



**Nate Robson:**

That is all the time we have for questions tonight. Would you like to make a closing statement Jon?



**jon budelmann:**

Thank you, Nate. Yes, I would. First of all I wish to thank all of the citizens who have taken the time to join us tonight on-line and/or who have submitted questions. I would also like to thank the Cayuga County voters who have demonstrated the effort to become informed about this important election. In closing, it has been an honor representing the People of Cayuga County these past 17 years. I have been especially proud to be your District Attorney these last four years. We've built a tremendous staff of experienced professionals who help me protect our community. In my opinion we are doing an outstanding job of prosecuting criminals and obtaining justice for the citizens of our County. There is more work to be done and so on Tuesday, November 8th I would respectfully request your vote for District Attorney so I may continue as your District Attorney.



**jon budelmann:**

Are we all set Nate, Robert? If so, thank you both for the opportunity to participate in this event.



**Nate Robson:**

Thank you for your time tonight Jon. That is all the time we have to night. The Citizen will continue to provide coverage and other races as the Nov. 8 elections approach.





