



Amicus Curiae Committee — Frequently Asked Questions

What is the *Amicus Curiae* Committee?

The mission of the *Amicus Curiae* Committee is to file briefs in the appellate courts to support cases that are important to the plaintiff bar. Through the Committee, the Pennsylvania Association for Justice strives to maintain a high profile in the Commonwealth and federal courts by promoting, through advocacy, the rights of individuals and the goals of its membership. The Committee decides which cases to support through a fairly complex voting process.

How do I request *Amicus Curiae* support?

A request for assistance is made by an individual lawyer who contacts the PAJ office, or occasionally by the Committee itself. PAJ will participate as *amicus curiae* only in those cases on appeal (or have been granted an allowance for appeal) that significantly affect our clients' rights or the practice of law.

The requesting party must submit all materials relevant to the case to *Amicus Curiae* Coordinator Faith Fogle (ffogle@pajjustice.org) along with a completed Request for Assistance form, which may be [downloaded online](#). The case materials will then be circulated to the Committee for their vote on whether or not to participate.

What if PAJ cannot submit its brief by the deadline?

PAJ's *Amicus Curiae* Committee can file a [Motion For An Extension Of Time](#).

How does the *Amicus Curiae* Committee Voting Process work?

The case will be assigned an *Allocatur* Clerk, who is a member of the *Amicus Curiae* Committee selected on a rotating basis or by area of expertise. The *Allocatur* Clerk will review all materials relevant to the case and prepare a memorandum on whether PAJ should participate as *amicus curiae*. The *Allocatur* Clerk's memo is confidential and will not be released to anyone outside of the Committee absent express permission of the *Allocatur* Clerk and the Committee Chair.

The remaining members of the Committee will receive the *Allocatur* Clerk's memo and a copy of the contested opinion. Committee members must submit their votes to the *Amicus Curiae* Coordinator. The entire voting process takes a few days.

If the Committee votes to participate, a brief writer is selected and it will then be the brief writer's duty prepare and file brief. If the Committee votes not to participate, the allocatur clerk may be asked to contact the requesting attorney to discuss the case. The file will then be closed.

How can I become a member of the *Amicus Curiae* Committee?

First, you must be a member of PAJ. Second, you must submit a representative brief to the *Amicus Curiae* Coordinator. The brief will then be circulated to the *Amicus Curiae* Committee and they will vote on whether or not to accept you into the Committee.

What is the George F. Douglas, Jr. *Amicus Curiae* Award?

The George F. Douglas, Jr. *Amicus Curiae* Award was created in 1995 to recognize a Committee member's outstanding and industrious appellate advocacy on behalf of the Pennsylvania Association for Justice. The Award ceremony takes place at PAJ's Annual Retreat.

What is the Award Selection Procedure?

The *Amicus Curiae* Coordinator will solicit nominations for the award from the committee members. A Nominating Committee consisting of the *Amicus Curiae* Chair, Vice Chair, and a third member to be selected by the Chair and Vice Chair (usually a past Award winner) will select a recommended recipient for the award. The *Amicus Curiae* Coordinator will issue to the members of the committee, in writing, a list of all nominees. The *Amicus Curiae* Committee will vote. The winner is announced at the Spring Board of Governors meeting. The ceremony takes place at PAJ's Annual Retreat.

What are the Award Criteria?

The recipient of the George F. Douglas *Amicus Curiae* Award must meet the following minimum criteria:

Service on the member of the *Amicus Curiae* Committee for at least one year with a minimum voting record on 80% of the cases presented to the Committee. If the recipient was a member of the *Amicus Curiae* Committee for more than one year then he or she must still maintain an 80% voting record on average.

Willingness to write appellate briefs when called on to do so and having written at least two appellate briefs for the Committee.

The briefs must be of such a quality as to represent superior standards of appellate advocacy.

Leadership positions on the *Amicus* Committee, contributions to the administration of the Committee, and attendance at Committee meetings should be given consideration in selecting the Award recipient.

While extraordinary service in a single year may justify the selection of the recipient, the Award is intended to promote and reward long-term service to the Committee and PAJ's appellate advocacy program.

Committee Chair Barbara Axelrod, Esq. The Beasley Firm LLC.
barbara.axelrod@beasleyfirm.com

Committee Co-Chair Daryl Christopher, Esq. SchmidtKramer
dchristopher@schmidt-kramer.com

For more information, please email Faith Fogle, *Amicus Curiae* Coordinator at ffogle@pajustice.org