McDONALD CARANO
YOUR NEVADA LAW FIRM SINCE 1949

Joshua J. Hicks, Partner

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Areas of Practice

Government Affairs & Advocacy
Tax Law
Real Estate & Land Use
Business Relocation to Nevada

Bar Admissions

Nevada, California

Education

- J.D., Santa Clara University School of Law, 1998
- B.A., Santa Clara University, History, 1995

A veteran lawyer with deep roots in Nevada, Josh focuses his practice on four main areas.

Government Affairs

Josh serves as Chair of McDonald Carano's Government Affairs and Advocacy Group. He leads a statewide team of lawyers and lobbyists representing clients before the Nevada Legislature, local governments, and state government agencies. The team's clients include builders, contractors, developers, tech companies, trade associations, professional sports organizations, renewable energy providers, healthcare providers and professionals, education providers, and relocating and expanding businesses, among others.

State and Local Taxation

Josh represents clients on issues ranging from litigated tax disputes to advanced tax planning on a variety of state and local tax issues, including property tax, sales and use tax, live entertainment tax, transient lodging tax, gaming tax, commerce tax, modified business tax, tax abatements and incentives, and business license fees.

Real Estate and Land Use

Josh represents property owners, developers, and investors on all types of real estate projects, including residential and commercial/industrial projects, entitlements, and zoning issues. Josh's background as a lawyer and a government affairs professional provides a unique skill set that focuses on a practical and pragmatic path to success for clients.

Election and Campaign Finance

As a former state attorney for the Secretary of State, Josh works with clients on a variety of issues in the electoral arena, including the drafting and defending of ballot petitions and advising on compliance with Nevada election and campaign finance laws.

Background

Before joining McDonald Carano, Josh served as General Counsel and Chief of Staff (two years) to Governor Jim Gibbons. Prior to his work in the Governor's Office, Josh was a Senior Deputy Attorney General (four years) for Attorney Generals Frankie Sue Del Papa, Brian Sandoval and George Chanos, representing the Nevada Department of Taxation, the Nevada Tax Commission, and the Nevada Secretary of State. Upon graduation from law school, Josh served as a law clerk to the Nevada Supreme Court (one year) and the United States District Court for the District of Nevada (one year). Within the firm, Josh serves as the Co-Chair of the Marketing Committee and a member of the Compensation Committee. A fourth-generation Nevadan, Josh, and his family reside in Reno.

Representative Matters

Josh has argued cases in front of various Nevada District Courts, the Nevada Supreme Court, the United States District Court for the District of Nevada, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Nevada, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He has been lead counsel on several published cases and numerous unpublished cases.

Published cases include:

- *Malecon Tobacco v. Department of Taxation*, 118 Nev. 837 (2002)
- *Meridian Gold v. Department of Taxation*, 119 Nev. 630 (2003)
- *Department of Taxation v. DaimlerChrysler*, 121 Nev. 541 (2005)
- *Herbst Gaming v. Heller*, 122 Nev. 877 (2006)
- *Nevadans for the Protection of Property Rights v. Heller*, 122 Nev. 894 (2006)
- *Nevadans for Nevada v. Beers*, 122 Nev. 930 (2006)
- *The Education Initiative PAC v. Committee to Protect Nevada Jobs,* 129 Nev.Adv.Op. 5 (Jan. 31, 2013)

Awards and Recognition

- *The Best Lawyers in America* – "Lawyer of the Year" in Government Relations (2027, 2025)
- *The Best Lawyers in America* – "Lawyer of the Year" in Tax Law (2027)
- *The Best Lawyers in America* – Government Relations (2018-2027)
- *The Best Lawyers in America* – Tax Litigation and Tax Controversy (2024-2027)
- *The Best Lawyers in America* – Real Estate Law (2024-2027)
- *The Best Lawyers in America* – Tax Law (2025-2027)
- *The Best Lawyers in America* – Economic Development Law (2027)
- *Northern Nevada Business Weekly,* Best In Business awards – "Influential Leader" (2023)
- *Mountain States Super Lawyers Magazine* – Rising Star (2012)
- *Nevada Business Magazine* – Legal Elite/Top Rank Attorneys (2016)

Interviews – *Nevada Newsmakers*

- February 22, 2024
- April 7, 2022
- May 14, 2021
- December 30, 2020
- August 8, 2019

Publications and Presentations

- Co-Author, "Results of the Nevada Legislature's 36th Special Session," *McDonald Carano Government Affairs & Advocacy Group Report*, November 21, 2025
- Quoted, "Nevada housing 'dodged a bullet' with two bills, stakeholders say," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 19, 2025
- Co-Author, "Results of Nevada's 83rd Legislative Session (2025)," *McDonald Carano Government Affairs & Advocacy Group Report*, June 2025
- Quoted, "Grand Sierra Resort quietly seeks public financing, legislative help for basketball arena," *The Nevada Independent*, March 30, 2025
- Feature Story, "The Hicks Dynasty: A Legacy of Legal Excellence," *Attorney at Law*, February 2025
- Author, "Nevada Experiences Property Tax Inequality," *Western Real Estate Business*, October 2024
- Author, "Litigating the Constitutional Right to File an Initiative Petition," *Nevada Lawyer*, October 2024
- Quoted: "Prominent Nevada law firm looks back on 75 years of operations," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 9, 2024
- Quoted: "Homebuilders fared well in legislative session," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 15, 2023
- Presenter: "Nevada Legislature's 2023 Session: New Laws and Regulations Impacting In-House Counsel," Association of Corporate Counsel, June 29, 2023
- Co-Author: 2022 Nevada Primary Election Results Guide, *McDonald Carano Government Affairs & Advocacy Group Report*
- Co-Author: "Do's and Don'ts for Employers Encouraging Employees to Vote," Retail Association of Nevada newsletter, September 2021
- Co-Author: "Nevada Legislative Session 2021: What You Need to Know," *McDonald Carano Government Affairs & Advocacy Group Report*
- Co-Author: American Bar Association Property Tax Deskbook – Nevada Chapter
- Co-Author: American Bar Association Sales Tax Deskbook – Nevada Chapter

Professional Affiliations and Community Engagement

- Gubernatorial Appointee, Task Force on Corporate Ownership of Residential Housing, February – November, 2026
- Gubernatorial Appointee, Public Records Task Force, Nov. 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027
- Member, 10+ years on Board of Directors and Executive Committee, Nevada Taxpayers Association, including 2023 Chairman of the Board

- President, Catamount Fund
- Board of Directors, Tahoe Fund
- Youth Mentor, Maison T. Ortiz Youth Outdoor Skills Camp
- Manager, Reno National Little League