

By

- [Brent Larkin, cleveland.com](#)

On her 1994 [application to be certified as a physician in Ohio](#), question No. 15 asked Amy Acton if she had ever received outpatient treatment for “emotional or mental illness, drug addiction or abuse, or an alcohol problem?”

Acton, the Democratic nominee for governor, whose name at the time was Amy Beech, told the truth. She checked the box marked “YES” and subsequently met the requirement that her “treating physician” provide the State Medical Board of Ohio with a letter explaining the reason for her treatment.

That reason involved the emotional trauma of growing up in an environment of neglect, the product of a dysfunctional, abusive and dirt-poor family in Youngstown.

Nevertheless, Acton not only persevered, she thrived. Her life story is inspirational.

Acton went to college, then medical school. When Gov. Mike DeWine took office in 2019, the Republican governor made this Democratic doctor his health director. For her work when COVID-19 arrived in Ohio in March 2000, DeWine [would call Acton, “a good, compassionate and honorable person” who has “worked nonstop to save lives and protect her fellow citizens.”](#)

Acton had legions of fans, but many others thought the state’s COVID lockdown strategies went too far. On at least three occasions in the spring of 2020, [small groups of protesters paraded in front of her Bexley home](#). A few classy folks carried weapons to ward off all the dangerous criminals who regularly roam the streets of this well-off suburb.

But the warm feeling many Ohioans have for Acton poses a significant problem for Vivek Ramaswamy, her Republican opponent in this year’s election for governor. Ramaswamy may be the most unlikeable major party candidate for governor in Ohio history. He’s talented. He’s smart. He knows almost nothing about state government. And, above all, he oozes arrogance.

Ramaswamy campaign strategists first tried to change all that by spending millions on advertising designed to make him likable. It didn’t work. The race against Acton in red-state Ohio remained tied.

Another tactic involved an attempt to make Acton the face of COVID-19 shutdowns. But the truth is rarely Ramaswamy’s friend. Multiple news organizations have conclusively shown that, at the time of Ohio’s lockdowns, Ramaswamy [advocated arguably tougher COVID restrictions](#) than were implemented by DeWine.

There is as yet no evidence the COVID attack line has worked for Ramaswamy, either. So the [billionaires who seem to be running his campaign, including Elon Musk](#), the world's richest and creepiest man, have teamed with the repugnant folks at the state GOP to attack Acton with one of the most vile and repulsive lies ever told in an Ohio campaign for governor.

They are using question No. 15 from Acton's 1994 application, in which she honestly acknowledged being treated for emotional problems related to her horrible childhood, and suggesting her checking that "Yes" box was also an admission that she was a drug addict [and a drunk](#).

They are doing it on social media. They are doing it in television commercials costing millions. And they are doing it with a slanderous word-of-mouth campaign. These are sick and twisted people, willing to peddle any lie necessary to keep control of an office Republicans have held for all but four of the past 36 years.

Another section of Acton's application with the state medical board included outstanding reviews from those involved in her medical education. When she was a first-year resident (first-year residents are also known as interns), Acton began a 12-month program at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine in the Bronx. But the married Acton was pregnant, so she decided to leave the program and return home, completing only four months of the 12-month internship.

In those four months, Acton trained under Dr. Steven Shelov, a widely respected pediatrician. Shelov gave Acton high marks on a survey he submitted to the Ohio Medical Board but explained that, on the survey, she received an "insufficient" skills grade only because she spent just four months in the program. When Acton completed the yearlong internship in Ohio, she again received excellent evaluations.

Attempts to contact Dr. Shelov for this column were unsuccessful.

Acton soon finished the one-year internship in Ohio and was granted a license to practice medicine in June 1994.