

Keys to the Candidates

General Election

November 8, 2022



About the Keys

The League of Women Voters of Bloomington-Monroe County has compiled candidates' views on selected issues. They are presented here as a service by the League and *The Herald-Times*.

This printed compilation gives the unedited responses of candidates for national, statewide, and local races with more than one candidate. Several candidates had not responded by press time. Information received since then, responses from uncontested races, and additional information on candidates covered here is available by entering your address in the League's online guide, VOTE411, at:

<https://www.vote411.org>

The League is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government,

works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through advocacy and education.

For information on the November 8, 2022 election, contact Monroe County Election Central at:

<http://monroecountyvoters.us>
812-349-2690

For information on the League of Women Voters go to:

<https://lwv-bmc.org>
812-727-8158

EDITOR'S NOTE: In each race included in the Keys, candidates are listed in alphabetical order by last name. Unopposed candidates are not included. No corrections or changes have made to the responses submitted.

Registering to Vote

Monroe County residents can register to vote or check their registration status by visiting <https://indianavoters.in.gov>.

The deadline to register to vote online is 11:59 pm Oct. 11. Residents will need a valid Indiana driver's license or state-issued ID card if they plan to register or update an existing registration online.

Residents can also submit a paper application that can be obtained from:

<http://monroecountyvoters.us>

The completed application can be mailed or dropped off at Monroe County Election Central, 401 W. Seventh St., before 4 pm on Oct. 11.

Voting by Mail

Some voters are eligible to vote absentee by mail, while others are not. To complete the online application form to vote absentee by mail, voters can visit:

<https://indianavoters.in.gov/>

According to the Indiana Secretary of State's website, to vote absentee by mail, a voter must be able to mark their own ballot, sign their name, and meet one of a list of reasons set by the state to qualify. They include expecting to be out of the county or at work the entire time the polls are open, being 65 or older, or having a disability. For the full list, go to:

<https://in.gov/sos/elections/2402.htm>

Voters can also download the absentee-by-mail application at monroecountyvoters.us, complete it, and either email, hand-deliver, mail, or fax it to local election officials.

The deadline to submit applications online is 11:59 pm Oct. 27.

County election officials must receive the completed absentee-by-mail ballot no later than noon on Election Day, Nov. 8.

According to the Indiana Secretary of State's website, "Postmarks - even if dated on or before the date of election - cannot be considered timely."

Monroe County voters can return ballots received via mail or by hand, delivering them to an election official during business hours at Monroe County Election Central, 401 W. Seventh St. There will be no drop-off slots for ballots to be returned.

Those who can hand-deliver a ballot include the voter, someone who lives in the same household as the voter, a bonded courier, or someone who has power of attorney for the voter. Anyone other than the voter dropping off a ballot will have to sign a form.

Voters can also mail their completed ballot to the office.

Early Voting In-Person

Early voting for the general election will take place from Oct. 12 To Nov. 7 at Election Operations, 302 S. Walnut St.

Oct 12 - 14: 8 am - 6 pm
Oct 17 - 21: 8 am - 6 pm
Oct 24 - 28: 8 am - 6 pm
Oct 29: 9 am - 4 pm
Oct 31 - Nov 4: 8 am - 6 pm
Nov 5: 9 am - 4 pm
Nov 7: 8 am - 12 pm

Voters need to bring a valid photo ID in order to vote absentee in person.

Voting on Election Day

Election Day is Nov. 8 and polls will be open 6 am - 6 pm. Voters must cast ballots at the location for the precinct in which they are registered. Voters will need to show a photo ID that meets state requirements. If not, they can cast a provisional ballot and present such an ID or other documentation to the county election board.

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NATIONAL OFFICE

U.S. Senate

- ◆ Thomas M McDermott, Jr. (D) No response
- ◆ James M Sceniak (L) No response
- ◆ Todd Young (R) No response

U.S. House of Representatives, District 9

- ◆ Matthew Fyfe (D)
- ◆ Erin Houchin (R) No response
- ◆ Tonya L Millis (L)

1. Current federal gun safety laws are sufficient. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain your answer and what, if any, action you would take.

FYFE: Disagree. I support the 2nd amendment and responsible gun owners. I also want our communities to be safe. That's especially important to me as a classroom teacher and father of 3. We currently allow too many violent or irresponsible individuals to obtain firearms without a background check. I support background checks, safe storage, disarming domestic abusers, gun safety education, and other violence intervention programs.

MILLIS: Support. The right of the People to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed. It is very important for women, as well as men, to be able to defend themselves. I would like to see more women exercise their right to carry if they so choose.

2. What, if anything, are you willing to do on the federal level to protect individual privacy rights and bodily autonomy regarding reproductive health?

FYFE: I believe we should codify into law the privacy rights and bodily autonomy regarding reproductive health. I believe we should codify the rights to contraceptives as well. Geography should not determine one's individual privacy rights or healthcare access.

MILLIS: As a Libertarian, I support Medical Freedom for both women and men. I also support the MORE Act

passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, not just to legalize medical cannabis in all 50 states but to legalize marijuana for recreational use. The U.S. needs to stop incarcerating individuals for victimless crimes.

3. Discuss three priorities that you would work on regarding social and racial equity such as affordable health care, homelessness, domestic violence, poverty, and child abuse.

FYFE: Improving our public education system is a top priority, and at the federal level that means working so schools are more equitable. We can provide better funding for special education programs, improve post-secondary success by making colleges affordable and trade programs accessible, and we can stop focusing on narrow standardized tests as outcome measures for school success.

More affordable and accessible healthcare is also a top priority. We can provide better internet access to improve telehealth, allow medicare to negotiate prices, cap certain prescription drug costs, or even allow more/all folks into a proven medicare system.

Good jobs are a priority. Guaranteeing the right to organize will give power back to workers!

MILLIS: The issues of homelessness and violence is best handled at the State and local levels. Big Government (one size fits all) does not work. It's already illegal to discriminate against people on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. The States should be keeping tax dollars to improve the quality of life in those efforts at the state & local level.

4. What actions are needed, if any, on environmental issues and climate change (land use, transportation, energy, etc.)?

FYFE: Clean air, water, and soil are necessary now and in the future. The 9th district is diverse and beautiful (farms, forests, rivers, lakes, etc), and we need to invest in sustainable practices and renewable energies so our kids get to grow up and enjoy the same unique Southern Indiana land-

scapes as we do now. We must modernize our electric grid, plant more trees, train workers for new industry, and invest in research to prevent flooding, drought, heat, fire, and other disasters or changes in our environment. Having the courage and foresight to act now ensures the health and safety of future generations.

MILLIS: We, as humans, are the stewards of this earth and should promote activities and bills that would ensure clean air and clean water without burdensome taxes. The carbon emissions in the United States have been greatly reduced over recent years and the process should be encouraged in other world countries who are failing in this regard. We should protect our nature preserves as well.

5. What commitment, if any, will you make to hear and respond to constituent and community concerns before legislative decisions are made?

FYFE: I commit to holding frequent town halls around the district, allowing survey responses via email, and following up with citizens who have concerns. I also commit to being present in the district at events.

As a teacher, this is one of the reasons I became interested in running for office. I didn't feel educator voices were being heard at the state or federal levels. It is so important to me that our representatives work for the many instead of the few, powerful, and/or rich. I will 100% work for our communities and our neighbors, and ensure all voices are heard!

MILLIS: If elected, I will be 'the Voice' of the people in my district. As their representative, I will speak on their behalf to promote freedom and liberty in a modern society.

STATE OFFICE

Indiana Secretary of State

- ◆ Jeffrey Maurer (L)
- ◆ Diego Morales (R) No response
- ◆ Destiny Wells (D)

1. What improvements can be made to assist and support the creation of minority owned businesses in Indiana?

MAURER: The Secretary of State has an important role in not only facilitating the administrative licensing of businesses, but to champion innovators and entrepreneurs as they create and build small businesses. As Secretary of State, I'll work to minimize the paperwork burden, streamline the process, and expand customer service hours and capabilities, such as text messaging support. Government should serve businesses, not the other way around. Furthermore, I will champion occupational licensure reform to make it easier for more home bakers, hair stylists, Etsy artists, and others to take full advantage of business tax advantages.

WELLS: The Secretary of State's Office needs to provide metrics as to the performance of new businesses once they are registered through the office. Only when the SOS collects data on new businesses will it begin to reveal possible inequities in the viability of businesses. Additionally, resources for potential minority-owned businesses are found throughout a myriad of programs that are under-utilized and not easily known. If INBiz wants to be a one-stop shop, it needs to be a one-stop shop for everyone, including minority owned businesses. Lastly, the SOS needs to advocate that minority-owned business applications are timely processed by adjacent agencies.

2. What changes, if any, would you make to the way the Office of the Secretary of State carries out its responsibilities?

MAURER: Perhaps the most important responsibility of the Secretary of State is to ensure fair and equal elections, per our Constitution. I will give each voter a printed receipt for his or her vote, so we can each track our votes, just like tracking a package. After each election, I will audit all 92 counties, not just 5, and I will publish the audit report. I will create more training for county clerks and all election workers. I

will take action to implement common-sense solutions to build trust in our elections.

WELLS: The Indiana Secretary of State's Office needs to be more public-facing at the local level. Part of that role should take on the responsibility of working with local partners to increase voter registration turnout. Currently, Indiana is 46th in the country in registered voter turnout. The Indiana SOS should be establishing citizen-led advisory boards with the SOS to explore more opportunities to get Hoosiers civically engaged. For example, a college advisory board could inform the SOS about hurdles in the college voting experience. Additionally, non-profit businesses could be advocates and partners in a pro-democracy mission to register voters and influence Hoosiers to vote.

3. What are your ideas on improving accessibility to voting for all eligible and registered voters?

MAURER: Indiana already offers easy, online voter registration and one of the longest periods of early voting, 28 days, before the election. Many counties offer voting centers in addition to polling locations. I will review which voting places had delays of more than 15 minutes, and on which days, to work with those counties and precincts to identify what must be improved and develop an implementation plan. This may require additional resources, training, or expertise.

WELLS: Voting in Indiana must be accessible to all, no matter where one lives or their physical abilities. One area that must be resolved immediately is for the visually impaired. Indiana has placed a bandaid on its current direct-recording electronic (DRE) voting machines with the addition of the voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT). This method found itself in litigation soon-after because it failed to accommodate the visually-impaired. The VVPAT is not a viable long-term solution to Indiana's antiquated voting infrastructure. This is just one example, but the gravity of the situation reaches

everyone. We should strive toward paper ballot voting systems, with proper accommodations for the disabled, when at all possible.

4. What actions should the Office of the Secretary of State take to ensure incarcerated individuals are fully advised and assisted in exercising their right to vote upon release from prison?

MAURER: By Indiana law, incarcerated individuals are not eligible to vote. However, convicted felons who serve their time and are released from incarceration have their voting rights restored to them. I will work with the existing ecosystem of nonprofits that specialize in assisting people transitioning out of incarceration to ensure that they are encouraged and empowered to use their right to vote.

WELLS: There are multiple ways to better do this: working with Indiana DOC to better educate through post-conviction/re-entry services, running education programs with non-profits that are locally engaged in voter registration, etc. Additionally, layering this education through general voter anti-disinformation programming. Ideally, the Indiana SOS needs to establish an anti-disinformation campaign/program that educates Hoosiers on both their voting rights and the process. Voting upon release from prison would be part of this programming.

5. How and when should voter rolls be maintained for accuracy?

MAURER: Under the Federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, there are extraordinary limitations placed on the State's rights to conduct elections and maintain voter rolls. Within those strict Federal limitations, I will look for solutions to cross-check voter information against more current data like annual state tax filings and the USPS National Change of Address database. I will not seek to automatically disenroll voters, but instead, to create a dialogue to determine how best to update their voter registration.

WELLS: Indiana should follow the

National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) and the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) for a minimum of state action on list maintenance. Voter rolls should be maintained in a uniform and nondiscriminatory manner in compliance with the Voting Rights Act and stop within 90 days of an election. Indiana should maintain its rolls within reason, for example, at the voter's request, due to incarceration, because a voter has moved to an address outside the voter registration agency's jurisdiction, etc. Ideally, a voter-notification system could be established to notify individuals if they were to be dropped from the voter roll.

Indiana State Auditor

- ◆ ZeNai Brooks (D)
- ◆ Tera K Klutz (R) No response
- ◆ John Andrew Schick (L)

1. Name one improvement needed in the State Auditor's Office to increase efficiency and transparency. How would you address this needed improvement?

BROOKS: One improvement needed to improve efficiencies is to ensure communication between the Auditor's office, various agencies and businesses. This would allow for quicker payment processing for invoices and other state bills. One improvement needed to improve transparency is to increase visibility into the impact of state funding decisions. I would work with agencies to ensure accurate collection of metrics in addition to displaying metrics publicly.

SCHICK: The Auditor of State should be independent of the two old political parties that approve spending and create mandates that are imposing costs on the public.

2. Are changes needed in the Hoosier Start Program, the state deferred compensation plan for investment and retirement, to better serve state employees? Explain your response.

BROOKS: The Hoosier State Program appears to be effective. There are a couple things to consider: How often does the state issue RFPs for management, work to allow municipal workers to opt out of the plan upon hiring and offer a way for and also consider assistance to ensure state and municipal employees

SCHICK: From what I understand, the program offers voluntary 457 and 401(a) plans for public employees. I am not aware of any coercive elements to the plan and therefore would not recommend any changes.

3. What skills would you bring to this office that distinguish you from your opponents?

BROOKS: I'm a community advocate and servant leader, in addition to my almost 15 years of business and accounting experience. Coupled with my faith and being a First Lady, these characteristics position me to use my voice on behalf of others. This unique combination showcases me as the best person to advocate on behalf of Hoosier communities to direct funding to communities that need it most. I have experience as an auditor, internal auditor, budget leader, strategist and many more aspects of business that would help determine the best ways to work along side agencies as a partner.

SCHICK: I have an MBA from Indiana University and 25 years of experience with activities like those of the Auditor, such as examining contracts and accounts, improving the transparency of financial information, and evolving databases in reaction to new technology or policies.

4. What's your view of the office's authority and its limits?

BROOKS: This office has the responsibility of the accounting and reporting for the State. That includes; paying state bills and employees, tax distribution, various accounting functions and administering the Hoosier Start Deferred Comp Plan. Also, with the State Board of Finance, this role has the authority to approve transfers between

agencies/funds. This office does not set policy. It does, however, have the opportunity to provide guidance on how money is spent and the impact thereof.

SCHICK: The responsibilities of the office are primarily administrative. However, the Auditor of State also has an important role to keep the legislature and the public informed as to how decisions made by the legislature affect State finances and impose indirect costs on the public.

5. *What improvements could be made to the Indiana Transparency Portal to better serve the Office of the Auditor and the citizens of Indiana?*

BROOKS: The Transparency Portal should include data metrics for the various funding recipients, which can be housed on the portal so Hoosiers can understand how money is spent and the impact and affects on communities.

SCHICK: I have used the IN.gov Transparency Portal for many years and have seen the level of actual Transparency fluctuate dramatically. At the current time it is much improved over where it was 4 years ago. I still find it very cumbersome to link appropriations by the State to Counties and how the Counties are using that money.

Indiana State Treasurer

- ◆ Daniel Elliott (R) No response
- ◆ Jessica McClellan (D)

1. *What changes can be made in the State Treasurers' Office to better serve the residents of Indiana?*

McCLELLAN: As chief investment officer of Monroe County, I have professional experience in the field of public funds management. The State Treasurer's office requires experience to provide oversight to state fiscal policies and programs. The state treasurer should understand and follow the strict safeguards for investing laid out in Indiana Code. As state treasurer and the chair of multiple finance boards, such as the Indian Bond Bank, I will partner with communities to bring funding for projects needed at the local level. I will

work with my bi-partisan colleagues to promote and advocate for legislation and programs that will strengthen economic stability and security for all Hoosiers.

2. *What improvements could be made in the Indiana Education Savings Authority to better serve the families of Indiana seeking higher education through assistance from the education savings programs?*

McCLELLAN: The state treasurer's office needs to simplify college saving. Often families who do not save for college have a misplaced concern that the state's education savings authority will impact their students' financial aid or eligibility for scholarships. Outreach and education are essential to grow our state's college savings program. Underserved areas should be identified and stumbling blocks in the program should be addressed. Benefits such as tax incentives, automatic payroll deductions and portability to other family members should be highlighted.

3. *Are there additional technical security measures needed for the protection of the state treasury?*

McCLELLAN: The state treasurer will be working closely with the Indiana Office of Technology on cybersecurity. The state treasurer is also working closely with their partners in commercial and investment banking to ensure the most sophisticated technology is in place to stop malicious attacks. As a county treasurer, I stay up to date on security measures that are essential to avoiding ransomware attacks, phishing schemes, and e-crime. County funds are protected by dual authentication codes, AP check verification controls, and various input/approver requirements. We have saved the county thousands of dollars by using these controls to catch unwanted activity in our bank accounts.

4. *How would you invest and manage the state's funds to assure an appropriate risk-based return?*

McCLELLAN: Providing safe and responsible growth is essential to de-

livering tax savings to our citizens. As a steward of our public funds, I will ensure that we have the necessary liquidity to meet our daily obligations statewide, while investing remaining funds in only the highest-rated, authorized short and long term investments. As creator of the state's investment policies across various funds, I commit to revising our investment policy to adhere to state law while meeting the programmatic objectives of each agency. Investment policies should be reviewed regularly to see if they continue to meet the highest level of state scrutiny, provide the safest stewardship of our public funds, provide adequate liquidity and meet yield benchmarks.

5. *Are local communities receiving adequate funding for the emergency 9-1-1 system to maintain a quality service?*

McCLELLAN: It will be an honor to chair the Indiana 911 Board, in the only state to have a state treasurer hold that position. It will be my duty to do everything I can to assist in providing 911 services to communities. I am excited to work with our highly experienced and compassionate 911 executive team on finding funding solutions for all Indiana communities. A local dispatch center, where dispatchers answer 911 calls, provide lifesaving assistance, and connect to local emergency personnel, is funded by the 911 phone tax and sometimes a Public Safety Local Income Tax. If a community does not have enough revenue from the states distribution of 911 tax collected from phone companies, special tax options or new legislation must be considered.

Indiana State House, District 46

- ◆ Kurtis J Cummings (D)
- ◆ Bob Heaton (R) No response

1. *What would your priorities be if elected?*

CUMMINGS: Priority 1: Education Priority 1a: Supporting our public schools including educators by rethinking standardized testing and strengthening collective bargaining. Priority 1b: Provide more funding to mental health resources to schools including specialized SEL programs & training Priority 1c: Increasing specialized trades programming & bridge programs to Ivy Tech or trades training to give students real life work experience outside of the standard 4 year educational system.

Priority 2: First Responders & Frontline Healthcare Workers

Priority 2a: Provide state-paid mental healthcare to all Indiana first responders, including volunteer departments. We need to take care of our hometown responders who experience trauma in the field but their departments have no resources to care for them. Priority 2b: Healthcare 3.0 - our healthcare professionals were burnt out prior to COVID, it got exponentially worse due to it. From RTs, RNs, PCT to EVS, we must fix the system now or it will fail.

2. *Indiana is experiencing a teacher shortage which has increased due to the Covid 19 pandemic. What, if any, policy changes would you support to help retain and recruit teachers in Indiana?*

CUMMINGS: Rethinking standardized testing Increasing educator and school staff pay Increasing SEL and in-school mental health resources Bolstering teacher's collective bargaining rights

3. *The issue of accessibility and legality of abortion may become up to each state to decide. What are your thoughts on current and future laws regarding abortion in Indiana?*

CUMMINGS: I believe that it is every woman's right to make that decision based solely on her religious beliefs and moral & ethical code

Listen. No woman plans on having an abortion. It's certainly not on a bucket list somewhere. But with 520 menstrual cycles in her life to navigate that is 520 possible chances to become pregnant. We should focus our time, money and

resources on supporting and streamlining adoption, access to birth control and sex education.

4. *How would you evaluate our voting and election processes in Indiana? What changes, if any, to voting access or security would you propose?*

CUMMINGS: Above average. I consider myself to be a fairly educated person. It was unreasonably and unnecessarily difficult to run for State Representative in this state. I would like to see either a) an easy to understand and annually updated state website that makes the process simple to execute b) the process be changed all together

5. *The upcoming budget session is likely to consider legislation related to the tax structure, the minimum wage, paid leave policies, etc. What policies are you promoting to support Indiana working families?*

CUMMINGS: I am 100% for increasing the minimum wage in Indiana. It's embarrassing and downright ridiculous that the minimum wage still sits at \$7.25/hr, unchanged since 2010. Minimum wage has failed to keep up with inflation, especially in today's (2022) market. The tipped minimum wage for our hospitality workers still sits at \$2.13/hr. This low tipped wage does not guarantee a living wage (non-tipped hours such as opening or closing does not equal living wage hours), sick and vacation days are not the equivalent of fully paid days, and it incentivizes poor family-life scheduling practices (such as the worker must work every Friday/Saturday to make "good money"). I would fully support legislation allowing for paid family time off including both paternal and maternal leave for both adoption, foster, and natural-born children.

Indiana State House, District 60

- ◆ Peggy Mayfield (R) No response
- ◆ Kathy Thorpe (D) No response

Indiana State House, District 62

- ◆ Penny Githens (D)
- ◆ Dave Hall (R) No response

1. *Current state gun safety laws are sufficient. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain your answer and what, if any, action you would take.*

GITHENS: Disagree. We should repeal Indiana's permitless carry legislation. If individuals cannot legally buy alcohol until their 21st birthday, the age to purchase a gun should also be 21. There should be a ban on the sale of assault weapons and large capacity magazines. Background checks should be done on the sale of all guns, including at gun shows. Adults should be held responsible for any crime committed with a gun by their minor children. We need secure storage in cars. I support legislation on such issues.

2. *What, if anything, are you willing to do on the state level to protect individual privacy rights and bodily autonomy regarding reproductive health?*

GITHENS: I testified in the Statehouse against SB-1. I believe no one, not even a fetus, should have the right to use a person's body against their will. The State cannot force people to donate blood, bone marrow or organs, even though individuals on waiting lists die every year. The state cannot harvest someone's organs after they die without their written, pre-death permission. Denying people the right to an abortion means they have less bodily autonomy than a corpse. I will work tirelessly to reverse this bill as I believe in each individual's right to privacy and bodily autonomy.

3. *Discuss three priorities that you would work on regarding social and racial equity such as affordable health care, homelessness, domestic violence, poverty, and child abuse.*

GITHENS: Many of the issues revolving around social and racial equity are related to, or the result of, one's income. I have repeatedly stated that I support a living wage for all Hoosiers, along with pay equity and paid family leave. If we can enact legislation that increases incomes ensures pay equity and paid family leave, we should see a decrease in homelessness, poverty, and child abuse, perhaps even a decrease in domestic violence. I also back increased treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders as these are linked to homelessness and children being adjudicated as CHINS.

4. *What actions are needed, if any, on environmental issues and climate change (land use, transportation, energy, etc.)?*

GITHENS: We should do the following: Create a commuter rail system to reduce pollution and reliance on cars. Institute, where possible, HOV lanes on interstate highways. Install electric vehicle charging stations in rest stops and parks. Reinstitute full net metering and provide tax incentives for businesses and individuals that install solar panels. Strengthen laws against pollution and increase fines. Require caps and liners on all coal ash ponds. Stop clear-cut logging in our state forests. Allow local governments to enact ordinances discouraging/prohibiting the use of single-use plastic bags.

5. *What commitment, if any, will you make to hear and respond to constituent and community concerns before legislative decisions are made?*

GITHENS: I will attend community events, read constituent emails, take calls, seek input through polling constituents, attend the legislative updates held by various groups while the legislature is in session, and hold regular constituent meetings. As I sat through the committee meetings on SB-1, I realized that almost all of the legislators who voted on this bill had their minds made up prior to when the vote

was taken. I am currently a county commissioner, and one more than one occasion I have changed my mind on how to vote based upon constituent input.

6. *School curricula on history and human rights should be developed by educators to teach factual, thorough, age appropriate information. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain your answer.*

GITHENS: Support. We need to understand the roots of racism, sexism, elitism, ageism and all other "-isms" so that we do not repeat them. Understanding is also necessary in order to devise ways to overcome the biases we hold and any resultant behavior. I believe in full equality for all. Everyone deserves the opportunity to enjoy what is written in the Declaration of Independence: "... Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

COUNTY OFFICE

Monroe County Recorder

- ◆ Amy Swain (D)
- ◆ Paul White, Sr. (R) No response

1. *What qualities and/or experience make you the best candidate for this office?*

SWAIN: The Recorder's Office is the legal go to for recording of documents, mostly dealing with property but others, too.

I have worked with businesses that use the Recorder's Office. I've led departments of 50 people that provided direct service to the public, handled invoicing and collecting payments. I've done payroll, balanced budgets, hired and trained staff, and worked with other departments to provide services and plan for the future. I have a proven track record with technology.

On my Township Board, I worked with the State Board of Accounts and DLGF.

As Records Archivist, I converted public records with all addenda to digital form.

2. What are your top three priorities for this office, and how would you address them?

SWAIN: 1. For a smooth transition between Recorders, I will communicate with the Auditor about payroll, with IT about backup solutions currently in place, with County Council about vendor contracts. Year-end reports and collections will need to be processed, and internal controls double checked. 2. To ensure a well-trained, knowledgeable staff that's in compliance with all statutory obligations. I will stay up to date on changes, and the 150+ Indiana Codes that pertain to the Recorder will be reviewed regularly. 3. To provide a professional, welcoming atmosphere to everyone who interacts with our office, including the staff members who work there.

3. How would you ensure that information is being reported and secured responsibly?

SWAIN: Simplifile software is used to record documents. Recently, CSC was added which helps with e-filing requirements and works with Simplifile on secure sites.

Doxpop is a secure site used to retrieve records in Indiana.

The Recorder's Office records documents after making sure they meet essential requirements. The Recorder's Office indexes records then validates the indexes. No one should validate their own work. Physical copies are retained according to the Recorder's Retention Schedule.

Software should always include Social Security number redaction.

4. What types of problems in the office might reduce the efficiency of the Recorder's office and how would you address those issues if you faced them?

SWAIN: For a while now, the Recorder's Office hasn't been able to accept credit/debit card payments due to a directive from the state. Technologies exist that may make this problem solvable, and possibly address others. I would investigate those, and see if they're cost effective for the office.

Whenever a document needs to be notarized, currently a person has to go to another office in the courthouse to get that done before going to the Recorder's Office. I checked with Legal, and it should be possible to have that done at the Recorder's Office to save someone a trip upstairs.

My goal is to make the Recorder's Office accessible and efficient.

Monroe County Sheriff

◆ Ruben D Marté (D)

◆ Nathan P Williamson (R) No response

1. What steps should be taken to improve gun safety in our county?

MARTÉ: Champion sensible gun laws that reduce access to people who have a history of violent/dangerous behavior or mental illness.

Establish a culture of gun safety by providing educational programs to firearms dealers and owners.

Safe firearms storage is crucial to preventing unintentional injuries, self-harm and/or access to those who should not possess a firearm.

Community and school based gun violence prevention initiatives. Such as encouraging public investment in programs and policies that work with schools and community stakeholders to reduce access to firearms by youth and individuals who are at risk of harming themselves or others.

2. Racial justice is an important consideration in policing. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain your answer; if you see racial justice as an important consideration in policing, what steps would you take to encourage it?

MARTÉ: Strongly Agree. I have spent 31 years as an officer with the Indiana State Police. I choose a career in law enforcement as a means of improving the relationship between law enforcement and the various communities in which I serve. During my career, I have volunteered on sev-

eral community boards and committees, I have provided hundreds of training programs regarding diversity to police officers and the community alike. I also have the honor of being appointed as the first Equity and Inclusion Officer for ISP.

3. What changes, if any, should be made in the sheriff's office work with ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement)?

MARTÉ: The Sheriff's Office fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against victimization, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the Constitutional rights of all people. Sworn law enforcement officers are those who have taken an oath to support the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Indiana. Sworn officers also have the responsibility to ensure the safety and quality of life of the communities we serve. We do not have the authority to enforce immigration laws enacted by the United States Congress.

4. If elected, what steps would you take to reduce the impact of the illegal use of prescription and nonprescription drugs in Monroe County?

MARTÉ: 1. Reduce the Rate of Recidivism and Reentry in the Justice System

This is possible through:

Providing diversion programs

Working hand-in-hand with social service programs that provide support to individuals who have recently left jail or prison

Education

Training

2. Focus on treatment by working with the Stride Coalition's crisis diversion center by cutting out the criminal justice middleman when possible. Instead of jailing individuals struggling with addiction, officers connect people directly with the treatment and services that can actually help them.

5. How would you promote cooper-

ation with other law enforcement agencies in the county?

MARTÉ: There must first be collaboration before you can perfect cooperation. Interagency collaboration in law enforcement takes a more proactive approach before an emergency occurs. Agencies actively plan for potential situations, share information, discuss potential issues, establish joint protocols and lines of communication. Collaboration happens before an incident occurs. Sometimes it's formalized, such as in interagency committees. Other times it happens more informally, as members of different agencies build relationships, share expertise, and suggest ways for their agencies to work together for the benefit of the communities we serve.

Monroe County Circuit Court Judge, Division 7 Seat 7

◆ Carl Lamb (R)

◆ Emily A Salzmann (D)

1. What life and professional experiences do you bring to this position? How might these experiences influence your work as a judge?

LAMB: I am a US Marine Veteran. After the USMC, I came to Bloomington (44 years ago) to study at IU. I hold 2 degrees - BA, 1981 and JD, 1984. My first legal job was as the Monroe County Attorney. I worked on PCB cases during my tenure. I have practiced law for over 38 years. I have been very involved outside of Court in the local community. I have created nonprofits that have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to cancer research and help. I have been with my wife, Angie, for 31 years. I have 6 children and 8 grandchildren. I am confident that I am ready and prepared for this position. I look forward to serving Monroe County.

SALZMANN: I bring diverse cultural and judicial experience. I was enrolled in kindergarten at a Spanish language immersion school. My class-

mates and I were taught and spoke only Spanish. At this age, I understood and appreciated other communities as if my own. I majored in Criminal Justice and Spanish. Interning at an immigration law firm allowed me to help non-citizens with immigration concerns in their own language. I also bring judicial experience to my candidacy. For 47 days, I have been appointed to be a judge pro tempore for unavailable judges. As a judge pro tem, I have shown a respectful judicial temperament and made sound, impartial decisions.

2. *How could the court system be assessed for unintentional racial bias? What should be done if evidence of bias is discovered?*

LAMB: Judges are the visible leaders of the judicial system and play a key role in eliminating bias. The Code of Judicial Conduct calls on judges to establish, maintain, observe, and enforce high standards of conduct to preserve the integrity of the judiciary. If there is "evidence" of bias, depending upon the stage of the proceedings, it should be immediately addressed. How I would address it would depend upon the status of the case at that time. If discovered, I would immediately take the corrective action permitted by the law, to include granting a new trial if that was warranted.

SALZMANN: I recognize systemic racial bias, whether implicit or overt, exists in our country's courts.

I endorse the National Center for State Court's initiative: identify, address, facilitate conversations about implicit bias; further evidence-based practices in throughout the justice system, especially sentencing; increase racial and ethnic diversity in the bench, support and professional staff and the Bar; collect and report court data about race and ethnicity to identify and remedy racial disparities. I would also take advantage of all judicial education on this topic to heighten the sensitivity of judges and other stake holders.

3. *What types of actions would you pursue as a judge in your courtroom to*

make sure that all parties can be heard and that they perceive the proceedings as fair?

LAMB: The Courtroom mandates respect from all involved - parties, attorneys, staff and the Judge. We have a very diverse city, with individuals from all walks of life and around the world. Any perception of "favoritism" should be eliminated. Respect and proper decorum should be maintained at all times. I would use Case Management Plans (with timelines and deadlines to follow). I would move cases quickly, but allow sufficient time for cases to be presented. Finally, "perception is reality" for people. The "fairness" of the proceedings starts first and foremost with the Judge. I will base decisions upon facts and law.

SALZMANN: A timely hearing on issues and a fair application of law is always a Judge's responsibility. I would ensure parties have sufficient opportunity to present evidence and make argument. A proper ruling would not be perceived as fair if this is not done. The use of technology for those who cannot come to court provides a means for them to be meaningfully present. Appointment of counsel and translators to assist indigent defendants is another tool courts use. When a defendant is able to hire their own counsel but unable to pay certain expenses, the court can provide funds for investigators, experts or depositions to ensure fairness.

4. *What reforms, if any, could improve fairness in bail proceedings for low income defendants?*

LAMB: Instead of just looking at a Bond Schedule based upon a crime alleged, I would look to the ability of the person "to post bond." I would make for sure individuals would have an expedited bond reduction hearing, for those who cannot bond out immediately. Right now, too many people are at a low income, who have trouble bonding out. The bondsman fee is like a "poor tax." It should not be.

We must find ways to allow people to be "free" pending their trials -- however, the more serious offenders need to be reviewed in a different context, as more serious crimes carry more serious risks to society as a whole. "OR" and "In-Home" review first.

SALZMANN: Arrestees should not be detained because of an inability to pay supervision or program fees.

In 2017, the Indiana Supreme Court adopted Criminal Rule 26 providing for pre-trial release instead of cash bail. An evidence-based pre-trial release risk assessment tool is utilized to answer two statutory questions: whether the defendant will appear for court proceedings or will pose a threat to the safety of the community or the alleged victim. Full and fair hearings are essential to answer these questions and to determine if an arrestee is indigent and should not be required to pay fees for participation, supervision or programming.

5. *What alternatives to incarceration, if any, could be considered for nonviolent crimes?*

LAMB: I would use the following: 1) Own Recognizance; 2) In-Home Detention; 3) Community Services, to include "Day Reporting," 4) Referral to specialized Courts, such as Drug Court, Domestic Violence, etc.; 5) Half-Way Houses; 6) Facilities to assist, such as mental health facilities and drug treatment facilities. I would look for non-Jail and non-Prison for "nonviolent offenders." However, I would be ready to recognize when the options are not applicable in certain cases. I feel that Jail and Prison should be left for the serious offenders in our society, where alternative options have been reviewed and tried, but are no longer successful.

SALZMANN: Drug, reentry, mental health and veterans' courts are highly effective and significantly reduce recidivism. I support treatment courts.

Judges' sentences must be based in part upon the defendant's character

and the offenses' nature. Using reliable risk assessment tools to identify critical factors is essential to well-reasoned sentences. Adequate time for evidence to be presented is also key. Familiarity with corrections research is necessary. Research shows that low-risk offenders are more likely to reoffend if receiving unnecessary services. Other alternatives include work release, home detention and inpatient/outpatient treatment.

Monroe County Commissioner, District 1

- ◆ Elizabeth (Lee) Jones (D) No response
- ◆ Perry B Robinson (R) No response

Monroe County Council, District 1

- ◆ Jim Allen (R) No response
- ◆ Peter J Iversen (D)

1. *Please identify three key county challenges that require action by our local officials. What are your plans for addressing these?*

IVERSEN: The three key challenges that can be addressed by the Monroe County Council are lack of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, insufficient investment in fighting Climate Change and Resiliency, and continuing to invest in meaningful ways in Public Health. These three items are detailed at <http://PeterIversen.org/issues>.

2. *What measures, if any, would you support to address climate change and related environmental concerns?*

IVERSEN: Moving forward there are two areas of focus. First, the County should join the upcoming cohort through the Environmental Resilience Institute. This will allow Monroe County to not only make substantive plans but also have resources by which to design and implement them.

Second, the County should be intentional about Federal funding. There are plans to use American Recovery Fund dollars to invest in a substantial in-

crease in solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations at municipal buildings. Moreover, the resources made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act will be available in the future.

3. *What are your priorities for improving health care and public health for Monroe County residents?*

IVERSEN: Moving forward, we have a new Health Administrator, and she needs to be supported in her role to do the following:

Continue to work with the Indiana Department of Health to offer COVID-19 resources for all residents.

Be nimble to address health challenges, such as monkeypox or sexually transmitted infections.

Continue to offer evidence-based harm reduction programs to address barriers to care for individuals with substance use disorder, as well as an intentional investment of Opioid Settlement funds.

Promote and invest in housing first initiatives to provide wrap-around care for individuals experiencing homelessness.

4. *What is your position on the proposed annexation of unincorporated areas into the city of Bloomington? What is your response to the city's lawsuit challenging the remonstrance?*

IVERSEN: District 1 represents essentially the eastern third of Monroe County. Some areas were included in the annexation while others weren't. There are a multitude of opinions that have been expressed to me from this district.

While there is existing litigation, I am hesitant to offer additional comments.

5. *How would you cooperate with other concerned parties to ensure that good, affordable housing and public transportation are available in the county?*

IVERSEN: In terms of housing, a housing-first approach is vital to provide solutions to those experiencing homelessness. I worked on writing this plan and it is being ably implemented through the United Way. In terms of the

housing stock, it is clear that there is a shortage.

The Monroe County plan for use of American Recovery Plan dollars includes proposed funding for transportation. One of the challenges in the rural context is that there is no population base to justify a fixed route. The challenges exist to make transportation systems robust enough to service the entire County efficiently. Moreover, hiring and retaining drivers is a challenge.

SCHOOL BOARD

Monroe County Community School Corporation, Dist. 1

- ◆ Tabettha L Crouch No Response
- ◆ Byron Turner No response
- ◆ Erin B Wyatt

1. *What do you see as the top three priorities to help students and school personnel adjust to learning and teaching through the still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic? How will you approach these challenges?*

WYATT: 1) Protect students and teachers from infection by providing better access to items such as hand sanitizer, tissues, and masks.

2) Remain mindful that case numbers could again rise, and infections could again become severe. Assess current data and not hesitate to make difficult decisions for the public good when community health is truly at risk.

3) Have preparedness plans with clear communication and guidance for teachers & parents for the following situations: a rapid transition to online learning becomes necessary, a student contracts an illness and has extended absence, or accommodations are needed for families with no or poor wi-fi.

2. *Some school districts have limited the discussion of the history and consequences of racism and other controversial topics. Our district*

should adopt such a policy. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain how the district should handle teaching controversial topics.

WYATT: Strongly disagree. As a nurse educator who regularly discusses sensitive issues in class, I use strategies to ensure all students feel respected during discussions over possibly controversial topics. Something I find successful is establishing classroom norms, agreed upon by all, that outline the expected behaviors of all participants during difficult conversations. We are lucky to have local experts who facilitate discussions on topics like racism who could advise how to best serve our students.

3. *Our schools should place greater emphasis on equity – so that all students receive the resources they need to graduate prepared for success. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain your answer and how you would address equity in access to education.*

WYATT: Strongly Agree. I commit to support Equity Goals 1-4 outlined in MCCSC's 5 Yr. Strategic Plan.

I was pleased to learn about the Student Equity Ambassador program. We should leverage that resource. I hope these student leaders feel safe to share their experiences and suggestions on equity, and we fully listen with open minds.

Local resources are worth investigating. Collaboration with departments at IU, such as CITL, who have tools and advice on creating accessible, equitable classrooms should be explored.

4. *Some parents have demanded that certain books be restricted or removed from school libraries. Do you agree? If so, what kinds of books?*

WYATT: I trust that school librarians have been educated and have experience curating school libraries. I see them as subject matter experts on age-appropriate literature. By and large, I do not feel that books should be restricted or removed from school libraries. Obvious exceptions would

be banning books that contain pornographic content or instruct readers on how to destroy property, commit acts of violence, or conduct terrorist attacks.

5. *Last year, the MCCSC school board removed guns from its school resource officers. Do you agree with that decision? Why or why not?*

WYATT: I support this decision. A study published in 2021 that reviewed 133 school shootings stated the presence of an armed guard did not significantly reduce injury rates, and the rate of casualties in school shootings was higher in the schools where an armed guard was on site. I have not performed an in-depth literature review on SROs, but have read several scholarly articles on the complications associated with the presence of SROs such as: overly aggressive policing practices, the disproportionate targeting of minority students, and the worsening of the school to prison pipeline. Formal training and clear job expectations is a must for SROs.

Monroe County Community School Corporation, Dist. 3

- ◆ Jon D Hays No response
- ◆ Daniel O'Neill
- ◆ Ashley Pirani

1. *What do you see as the top three priorities to help students and school personnel adjust to learning and teaching through the still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic? How will you approach these challenges?*

O'NEILL: I was appointed Anatomy Chair at Ivy Tech in 2020 and confronted the challenges of Covid head on. We were forced to make a radical change and taught online for over a year. We made mistakes but learned in the process. Ideally, in person education should be prioritized because online is not an adequate substitute, though a good alternative in emergencies. We must also resist reducing academic rigor as this often results in the appearance of short term "success" but comes at the

expense of long-term achievement. In class or online, students at all levels benefit from clear expectations that are concisely communicated and consistently applied.

PIRANI: First, I would advocate for assessing interrupted learning and determining how it impacted students in the district. Second, I would continue to coordinate with our Health Department to keep our finger on the pulse of a rise in cases, new strains, and updated safety practices. And finally, I would advocate for being flexible with our teachers, students, and staff. As Board members, the best we can do is listen and learn. We need to listen to the experts and implement what we learn. We also need to hear what concerns our district staff and family members have and address those accordingly.

2. Some school districts have limited the discussion of the history and consequences of racism and other controversial topics. Our district should adopt such a policy. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain how the district should handle teaching controversial topics.

O'NEILL: Strongly disagree. Noted psychologist Jerome Bruner argued that any topic can be taught in an "intellectually honest" but "developmentally appropriate" manner. Learning American history, including our moral failures, is critical to understanding the present challenges we face; it's not about shame but responsibility. Martin Luther King stated, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." we should illustrate his wisdom by honestly teaching about our progress toward a more perfect union.

PIRANI: Strongly disagree. The topics themselves aren't controversial. Misunderstanding of the programs or intentions often fuel the controversy. MCCSC currently partners with the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center to provide grade appropriate training that is in line with the standards set by the Indiana Department of Education. It is also imperative that we pro-

vide our teachers and staff the tools to discuss these topics by providing robust and on-going training, which includes access to experts and resources.

3. Our schools should place greater emphasis on equity – so that all students receive the resources they need to graduate prepared for success. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain your answer and how you would address equity in access to education.

O'NEILL: Strongly Agree. A quality education is the single most powerful vehicle for acquiring both life skills and job skills, for securing a decent life and becoming a responsible citizen. Public schools are uniquely positioned to provide this to every child in contrast to private and charter schools. It is critical for our economy, our community, and our democracy that ALL students receive the benefit of a rigorous and comprehensive education, not simply minimal instruction.

PIRANI: Strongly Agree. First, we must assess our school boundary lines. It's been decades since they were last looked at and our population has grown. Second, we need to expand teacher retention programs to all schools with higher priority populations. This would include extensive meetings with administration, staff, and teachers in those schools to better understand what their unique needs are. Finally, we need more consistency of care for our BIPOC students, LGBTQ+ students and students with disabilities.

4. Some parents have demanded that certain books be restricted or removed from school libraries. Do you agree? If so, what kinds of books?

O'NEILL: Selecting developmentally appropriate books for children and adolescents requires extensive training and professional judgement and should be delegated to our school librarians and educators. It is important to provide a broad selection of

literature and non-fiction that reflects and celebrates the diversity of the community and provides students with access to many viewpoints. Parents and the community at large should be part of this conversation. We should provide a proper venue to listen and welcome their input. Regardless of the outcome, everyone should feel they were heard and respected.

PIRANI: No, I do not agree with banning books. When books are banned, it usually means certain demographics then do not see themselves represented in books, which creates a lack of inclusivity. Representation matters. Book bans limit representation, stifle expression, take away rights, and censor thought. These things combine to create a narrow worldview. Books can be a gateway to learning and understanding on a wide range of topics. It's what makes our students well-rounded. I trust in our teachers and librarians to provide our children with a vast array of topics that will get their brains engaged in meaningful ways.

5. Last year, the MCCSC school board removed guns from its school resource officers. Do you agree with that decision? Why or why not?

O'NEILL: That decision should be revisited given the growth of violence in schools. Wishing guns away will be no more effective than thoughts and prayers. We know students have brought concealed weapons into our schools. Arming regular school personnel is not the answer and is far more likely to exacerbate the danger due to accidents and poor crisis judgement. Armed, highly trained police should never be involved in routine discipline, but their quick response to an incident could save many lives. I would support reopening this question with input from both the community and security experts. It's a difficult conversation, but a necessary one.

PIRANI: Yes, I agreed with the decision to disarm SROs. Studies show that an armed SRO does not

make students, teachers, and staff safer from the threat of gun violence. JAMA Network studied mass school shootings from 1980-2019 and found armed SROs were not a deterrent of a mass shooting. 70% of school shooters were current students and knew of a weapon inside the school but still chose to act. The study also suggests that having an armed SRO was the biggest factor for increased deaths. As a district, we must continue to follow evidence-based practices to keep our teachers, students, and staff as safe as we can.

Richland Bean Blossom School Corporation, Richland District

- ◆ Karl R Boehm No response
- ◆ Dana Robert Kerr No response

TOWNSHIP

Benton Township Trustee

- ◆ Michelle Bright (D)
- ◆ Josh Dodds (R)

1. What qualities and/or experience make you the best candidate for this office?

BRIGHT: I have 10 years of experience in this office with a proven track records of fiscal responsibility, transparency, and accountability. I am comfortable with the immense amount of reporting and deadlines with various federal, state, and local agencies that is required, along with budgeting and forecasting government funding. I'm dedicated to the responsibilities of this office and continue to work tirelessly for the residents of Benton Township. I care very much for this amazing community, and will continue to be available day, evening, and nights to help in a time of need.

DODDS: When I tell the story of my life, it is as a part of this local community and Benton Township. I not only call Benton Township home but its where my kids are growing up, where they go to school and where I volunteer

my time. I am currently a 4 year board member at Danny Smith Park and have coached and volunteered at the park now for 10+ years.

I currently work supporting under served seniors as the Senior Administrator at Evergreen Village at Bloomington an affordable assisted living community. The connections I have made both professionally through supporting seniors and coaching young minds are great leadership qualities I hope to use.

2. What are the top three priorities for your township and how will you address them?

BRIGHT: My first priority is to continue to increase accessibility, marketing, and outreach about our township assistance programs. I previously used social media to spread the word but it did not get good reach. I would like to research which platforms are best. My second priority is to continue to collect information about the history of the four cemeteries that we take care of - we had no records when I started. My third priority is to continue to offer grants to community organizations such as Danny Smith Memorial Park and the Unionville Senior Center for their programs.

DODDS: Our first priority must be to operate a conservative and financially responsible budget. Our goal being transparency in our services so that anyone who makes a reasonable request for assistance can get it and get it quickly.

Our second priority will be to ensure the residents of Benton Township know about the services we offer. Spreading the word, increasing our reach and making our programs accessible to those that need them.

My third priority will be to hear from the township where we can make improvements. Community grants, more support/ a voice in our local government, cemetery care, township projects, or growing our township funds.

3. How will you ensure the efficient use of township resources?

BRIGHT: During my time in office, I have always been respectful and reverent of the taxpayer funds that have been

entrusted to me to fund township operations. Our board and trustee salaries are the lowest that we can allow by Indiana law, and our part-time caseworker (a Benton Township resident) is paid a competitive wage. I generally do not purchase anything we do not need, and we get multiple estimates for items that we can, or shop IU Surplus for good deals on the item we need.

DODDS: My current role serving seniors in a healthcare setting requires efficient use of time, energy, resources, and man power. I look forward to bringing that experience to the township.

I plan to focus on operating a conservative financially responsible budget that will ensure funds are available to those who need assistance. I plan on gaining community interest in any projects, working together with non-profits and using my vast network of resources to ensure our township resources are used to their fullest.

We must increase our efficiency and transparency to gain the trust of our township, government has failed many of us of late, we owe it.

4. What steps will you take to improve services to township residents?

BRIGHT: Since we consolidated our fire services with the District, our primary focus is serving our residents through Township Assistance program which provides help with rent, utilities, food, clothing, medical or funeral services. I will continue to expand outreach to let people know that we are here to help, and to connect them with other resources in the community. I will continue to work with local partners/private donors to make sure that our Food Pantry is well-stocked with healthy nutritious food. I will continue to advocate for our residents regarding issues such as transportation, childcare, access to medical services, and housing costs.

DODDS: I want to continue to improve services by giving our township

a new voice in local government. I want to meet with leaders of the county council, city council as well as other local leaders to voice our needs for improved service. Transportation programs, medical services and the ability to find affordable housing.

I believe expanding our outreach within the township, and operating financially responsible will ensure services are available for all of those who need assistance with rent, utilities, food, clothing and more.

I again plan to work with my business network to connect the dots that will support those in our township.

5. How will you stay informed about the priorities of all of the township residents and help them to view you as a resource?

BRIGHT: Regarding important issues, I've had many wonderful opportunities to create and maintain relationships with my neighbors in the 26 years that I've called Benton Township my home. I've been involved in various activities such as Boy/Girl Scouts, Unionville PTO, various youth sports, the North band program, Area 10 Agency on Aging, and the Unionville Cemetery Association. I read different local news sources and various social media sites on a daily basis; and have friends in various circles in the Township. As for resources, we are on 2-1-1 as a provider agency, have a website with contact information, and hold open office hours regularly.

DODDS: In my goal to be a new voice and new vision for Benton Township, I believe staying informed is about relationships. I believe supporting residents is about relationships. I believe being a solid resource is about creating long lasting relationships. Our goal must be to build that connection through stronger relationships with common people.

Meet and greets, open forums, community volunteer days, being involved with Unionville School or Danny Smith Park I will always have an ear

for the people of Benton Township.

I believe the voters will see I am genuine in my want to better support and serve them. I plan to use my knowledge and ability to.

Benton Township Board *(Vote for up to three candidates)*

- ◆ Jake Dodds (R)
- ◆ Joseph G Husk (D)
- ◆ Hans Kelson No response
- ◆ Sean McInerney No response

1. What qualities and/or experience make you the best candidate for this office?

DODDS: I have spent a great deal of my life a resident of Benton Township. From getting on the school bus at my great grandparents' home to now living in that very same home since college graduation for close to 15 years and I love my community. As a self-employed musician I take on many roles. CEO, marketing, accounting, planning, scheduling and being creative. I often work with my own employees, other businesses/entities, and the public all at once to complete a job. All things I feel would be a benefit in my role as a Benton Township board member.

HUSK: In 2016, my wife Malinda and I moved to Benton Township from Perry Township. A few months after attending our first Benton Township meeting, I joined the board. I've always been a strong listener and someone who wants to give back to the community.

2. What are the top three priorities for your township and how will you address them?

DODDS: The top priority for Benton Township should be to operate on a reasonable and transparent budget. The objective being to make sure all residents who may need assistance with utilities, food, shelter, or other assistance provided, know that they can ask for help and if the need for assistance is met, that help is received as quickly and efficiently as possible.

A focus on transparency, efficiency and job quality when handling the maintenance and upkeep of the township is important. We should always maintain a healthy treasury so that the township can perform its duties, without holding on to an excess of tax money.

HUSK: The priorities of the Benton Township board include adopting the annual budget, serving as a board of finance, and approving township contracts. As a board member, I will continue to hold these priorities to a high standard and rigorous review.

3. *How will you ensure the efficient use of township resources?*

DODDS: Efficiency is one the most important things I believe most feel government lacks. Sometimes a simple common-sense approach is all that is needed. Being self-employed in a career that requires a great deal of travel. I am always trying to do my best to solve problems in the most efficient use of both time spent and money. While still reaching the desired goal.

HUSK: As a Benton Township board member, it's my responsibility to ensure that the limited resources available are used appropriately. It's important to review all opportunities so the township gets the most out of these finite resources, while also being mindful to save for a rainy day.

4. *What steps will you take to improve services to township residents?*

DODDS: I have long been interested in politics, however like many I find the politics we see today disgusting. It seems that almost no one is on the side of the people, regardless of party. When I was approached about running for township board, I felt it would be a great opportunity to try and make positive change in our community. I look forward to being a part of the process and working open mindedly with my fellow members and trustee to use common sense to better our township services. I do not feel this is a political roll. Just a an important role of for the township residents.

HUSK: Over the past few years, the

Benton Township trustee and board have worked diligently to provide adequate fire protection to township residents. Ultimately, these efforts resulted in Benton Township joining the Monroe Fire Protection District. We also partnered with Stonehugger Cemetery Restoration for restored headstones and with Danny Smith Park for improved lighting. I will continue these and similar efforts to improve services to township residents.

5. *How will you stay informed about the priorities of all of the township residents and help them to view you as a resource?*

DODDS: To stay informed with the townships priorities I would keep an ear to the ground and establish an email where residents could contact me directly to express ideas and concerns within Benton Township. I don't know that many residents our aware of the activities of the township board. With busy lives the work can certainly go unnoticed. It would be great to see the township use both its website but also modern social media tools for staying connected with our citizens looking for more information on township happenings and resources.

HUSK: I believe that one of the best ways to engage residents is by attending the township events sponsored by the Monroe Fire Protection District (originally hosted by the Benton Township Volunteer Fire Department). These events, and others like them, help foster relationships and build stronger communities.

Clear Creek Township Board (Vote for up to three candidates)

- ◆ Frank Calabrese (D)
- ◆ Steven A Hinds (R) No response
- ◆ Randy May (R) No response
- ◆ Randy R Thacker (R) No response

1. *What qualities and/or experience make you the best candidate for this office?*

CALABRESE: I have been fortunate to serve in leadership positions throughout my life. First, as president of my college fraternity, as a manager in my career with Pfizer, board member of Boys and Girls Club, various church committees, president of a league and coach of Bloomington Little League, Babe Ruth league in Bloomington and president of the Smithville Diamonds little league and softball.

2. *What are the top three priorities for your township and how will you address them?*

CALABRESE: 1. Serving the interests of our constituents by listening to, understanding and addressing their concerns.

2. Prioritizing issues that are of greatest concern by being involved with the planning and implementing of the needs as required.

3. Being involved in our community affording the opportunity to stay current and flexible as required with conditions as they change.

3. *How will you ensure the efficient use of township resources?*

CALABRESE: By fully understanding and familiarizing myself with resources available by looking at past appropriations of those resources to determine the effectiveness of how they have been used and how they might be used in the future.

4. *What steps will you take to improve services to township residents?*

CALABRESE: Reviewing the services provided in the past and understanding the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness and reevaluating the appropriations made when necessary.

5. *How will you stay informed about the priorities of all of the township residents and help them to view you as a resource?*

CALABRESE: By introducing myself throughout the township so the constituents realize I am an open-minded listener and will take their issues seriously and will assure them I will do my best to address their concerns.

Van Buren Township Board (Vote for up to three candidates)

- ◆ Theresa Oatman (R)
- ◆ Ronnie Pursell (R) No response
- ◆ William (Will) E Smith III (D)
- ◆ John Wilson (R)

1. *What qualities and/or experience make you the best candidate for this office?*

OATMAN: Born and raised a Hoosier, my priorities are God, family, community and church, serving as a church organist since high school. I have sons who served in the US Army and Navy and currently have a grandson and granddaughter serving in the US Navy. I'm now retired from a 40 year career in corporate finance.

SMITH: I am completing my first term as a Township Board member and, to date, have not missed a single Board meeting. I am known for asking good questions and working in a collaborative, constructive way with other people. I am also inquisitive and willing to explore and learn new topics and try to see things from a variety of angles. I readily recognize that good ideas and questions can come from anyone, and keep my ear to ground for these insights. By being open-minded in these ways, I think I can help contribute to our Township government and aid it in being the best it can be for the residents.

WILSON: 12 year member Van Buren Advisory Board

2. *What are the top three priorities for your township and how will you address them?*

OATMAN: Fiscally sound decisions that benefit our community.

Educating and providing appropriate training for those in need, not simply giving them a handout.

Always making decisions that will leave our community a better place for my grandchildren and future generations.

SMITH: To help Van Buren Township thrive, I want to focus on the following three areas if reelected: building

community infrastructure, helping people in need, and fostering responsive government. For community infrastructure, I am particularly aware of the limited amount of public space in the Township. So I want to see us build, for example, a community center to help meet this civic need. I want to help people, for example, supporting appropriate increases to rent assistance. I seek to foster responsive government, for example, by continuing to advocate on behalf of Township residents to other units of government.

WILSON: Continue information availability regarding annexation.

Continue availability of Advisory Board thru regular meetings and web resources.

3. How will you ensure the efficient use of township resources?

OATMAN: By engaging deeply and asking questions.

SMITH: I am very conscious of the limits to our budget. I am also on the lookout for ways we can serve our residents better. When the Trustee proposed a representative payee program in collaboration with Adult Protective Services, I saw this as a moment we could do both and supported its adoption. This program allows the Trustee to ensure a qualified individual's income does not get misused when there are no other responsible adults available. This means often there is reduced demand on Township Assistance. If reelected, I'll continue to look for and support such win-win ideas.

WILSON: Continue close monitoring of the balance between needs and wants.

4. What steps will you take to improve services to township residents?

OATMAN: I plan to listen to all perspectives

SMITH: We can always improve. By working closely with the Trustee, my fellow Board members, and other local officials, I helped in our successful effort to get the Township more and better paid firefighters through merging

the Township's fire department with the Monroe Fire Protection District. As another example, when we got a new township website, I asked if we could add an online weed complaint form so residents didn't have to come to the Township Office to file a form. Now residents can complete this form from their own home or on their phone! If reelected to a second term, I will continue to look for ways the Township can work better.

WILSON: I believe current levels of service meet the Township needs.

5. How will you stay informed about the priorities of all of the township residents and help them to view you as a resource?

OATMAN: By actively participating in meetings and community events

SMITH: I have been sharing my email address widely to Van Buren residents since 2018. I am also available via Facebook and NextDoor. I like hearing from my constituents. Van Buren residents have contacted me about a wide range of issues from weed complaints to trash problems to a damaged mailbox. Even if the issue does not fall under the Township's jurisdiction, I try to get the person connected to the right office or official and provide helpful information. Sometimes this is even about non-governmental concerns. One man, for example, was worried about a karst formation on his property and I found the Indiana Geological & Water Survey for him.

WILSON: Remain accessible thru meetings and constituent request.

Washington Township Board Member (Vote for up to three candidates)

- ◆ Jerry W Ayers (R) No response
- ◆ Kenny L Bryant (R) No response
- ◆ Patricia Slabach (D)
- ◆ Andy Spriggs (R) No response

1. What qualities and/or experience make you the best candidate for this office?

SLABACH: As an IT and business consultant, I have experience in project management, website management and communications. I have lived in Indiana and Monroe County for many years and currently own property and a home in Washington township. I also am active in a local church and in an arts organization.

2. What are the top three priorities for your township and how will you address them?

SLABACH: 1- Fire and emergency services - want to get a fire station in built to service our residents

2 - Poor relief and hunger - support the local food pantries

3. Communications - keep residents informed of local work by the township officials and others

3. How will you ensure the efficient use of township resources?

SLABACH: Oversight of budget and understanding of our tax liabilities. Keep informed of trustee activities and issues.

4. What steps will you take to improve services to township residents?

SLABACH: I will help facilitate whatever is in the power of the township to aid residents, when there is a need.

5. How will you stay informed about the priorities of all of the township residents and help them to view you as a resource?

SLABACH: I update residents via Washington Township group Facebook page. I also designed and continue to maintain washtownship-in.org website where residents can get contact information and forms for assistance.

NOVEMBER 8, 2022

GETTING YOUR VOTING INFORMATION

REGISTER BY OCTOBER 11, 2022

Voter Registration
Visit My
Voter
Portal



Find Your
Polling
Place



Get a
Sample
Ballot



Check out
Vote411.org
for more
voting
information



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF BLOOMINGTON-MONROE COUNTY