

# What's on Your Ballot?



**CAST YOUR VOTE**  
on important local issues!

Greene County registered voters may  
vote at Missouri State's  
Harrington –Davis Welcome Center

**A Nonpartisan Guide to the  
Greene County Municipal Election**

**FOCUS ON SPRINGFIELD**

**Missouri State**  
UNIVERSITY

# Who Are Paws to the Polls?

Paws to the Polls is a nonpartisan grassroots campus initiative formed to increase voter engagement and voting knowledge at Missouri State University.

Want to get involved? Email us at [pawstothevotes@missouristate.edu](mailto:pawstothevotes@missouristate.edu).

## Voter Guide for April 8<sup>th</sup> Local Election

All candidates for Springfield Mayor and City Council, and Springfield Public Schools Board of Education were contacted by email with a request to submit answers to our questions. The candidate responses are printed *exactly* as submitted. Candidates for each race are listed in alphabetical order. City Council is grouped by zone as well as alphabetical order.

## Why Vote Local?

Local elections make the most direct impact on the lives of voters. Local elections can impact a variety of issues, including public health, infrastructure, education and more, so participating in local elections helps shape your community. With turnout often below 20%, *it has never been more important to have your voice heard!*

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# Registration Information

**Last day to register for April 8 local election: March 12, 2025**

## *Are You Registered to Vote?*

Check your voter registration status, Missouri county and Polling location.



## *Registering to Vote?*

To vote in Missouri, you must be pre-registered before the registration deadline. The last day to register to vote in Missouri for the April 8 election is March 12, 2025.

### **LOCATIONS TO REGISTER ON CAMPUS**

#### **Office of Public Affairs Support**

Plaster Student Union, room 131

Contact: 417-836-8832 or [publicaffairssupport@missouristate.edu](mailto:publicaffairssupport@missouristate.edu)

#### **Paws to the Polls**

Strong Hall, room 463

Contact: [pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu](mailto:pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu)

### **ONLINE REGISTRATION**

Missouri Secretary of State; when registering online, check the option for using a tablet, phone, or other mobile device.



Your residence hall can be used as your address; use actual street address (not hall name) & **add your room number!**

View QR code for MSU hall addresses.

(<https://www.missouristate.edu/ADP/addresses.htm>)



## *Registered Elsewhere?*

Consider changing your registration to vote at Missouri State University, Springfield, Greene County, Missouri.

If you have a current MO Driver's/Non-Driver's license, passport or military ID, you can register to vote in Greene County – the MSU Harrington-Davis Welcome Center is a central polling location for anyone registered to vote in Greene County!

Register to vote use residence hall as your address – see above.

If you change your registration to Greene County while enrolled at school, you may re-register within any County/State in which you move after graduation.

# Voting in Missouri

## VOTER ID

- Current Missouri Driver's license or Non-Driver License
- Passport or Military ID

## ABSENTEE VOTING

Absentee voting for the April 8 election began on February 25, 2025. If you are registered elsewhere in MO and can go home before the election, you can vote ***in-person absentee*** at your local election authority.

(<https://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/goVoteMissouri/howtovote#absentee>)

## Voting FAQs

### *How do I know if I'm registered to vote?*

Check MO Secretary of State's website or call your local county clerk .

### *Where do I vote?*

At the polling location listed on your Voter ID card or on the MO Secretary of State's website -- OR at the campus Central Polling Location if registered to vote in Greene County.

### *Do I have to vote for everything on the ballot?*

No! Vote only for what you're sure about – your ballot will still count!

### *Can I take my notes in with me to vote?*

*Sure! Take your notes or a pre-marked sample ballot with you to vote!*

### *Do I need a photo ID to vote?*

Yes: a Missouri Driver's or Non-Driver's license, passport, or military ID.

## Voting Questions?

### ON CAMPUS CONTACTS

#### Office of Public Affairs Support, PSU 131

417-836-8832 or [publicaffairssupport@missouristate.edu](mailto:publicaffairssupport@missouristate.edu)

#### Paws to the Polls, Strong Hall 463

[pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu](mailto:pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu)

[www.missouristate.edu/ADP/paws-to-the-polls](http://www.missouristate.edu/ADP/paws-to-the-polls)



Check out Paws!

### OFF CAMPUS CONTACTS

- Greene County Clerk, [countyclerk@greencountymo.gov](mailto:countyclerk@greencountymo.gov), 417-868-4055
- Missouri Secretary of State, <https://www.sos.mo.gov>
- League of Women Voters of SWMO, [lwvsouthwestmo@gmail.com](mailto:lwvsouthwestmo@gmail.com)

# Mayor of Springfield

## *What does a Mayor do?*

As the head of a municipal (local) government, mayoral duties vary based upon the local government charter. Primary duties include setting the agenda for the city council and overseeing their meetings, recommending or sometimes vetoing legislation, attending significant city ceremonies, and providing leadership for emergent situations that may arise (such as a pandemic). Mayors often work closely with the city council to secure the welfare and functionality of the city. The mayor is the main spokesperson for a city, and mayoral decisions can affect all Springfield citizens.



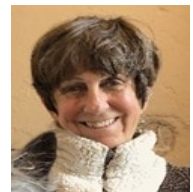
## *Hear from your mayoral candidates:*

The Springfield mayoral candidates were each asked the three questions listed below and given a maximum word count for each question. Candidates were not required to respond.

- 1** *What do you think is the main challenge a mayor of Springfield will face in the upcoming term, and how would you go about dealing with it?*  
(150-word maximum)
- 2** *How would you address issues of importance to young voters?*  
(150-word maximum)
- 3** *As mayor, what would you see as your role in attracting and retaining young talent in Springfield?* (150-word maximum)

## **Mary Collette**

**1** Connecting Springfield neighbors and neighborhoods to their government represents for me the main challenge of our next mayor. Serving this community as an at-large councilperson from 2001-2009 as well as the many times since then representing my neighbors at City Council, has informed my position that our citizens need better ways to communicate with their government. We are blessed with a city government with the knowledge and experience that I believe has already recognized and begun to research and address these issues.



**Mary Collette**

I plan Mayor's "listening posts" to increase sociability, address our transit system and to breathe more life into our neighborhood parks. Safe and fun neighborhoods that feel supported and connected to their government, create a deterrent to crime and an increased livability index. "I have a dream" that corporations will pay us to locate here rather than us fighting to provide the most incentives to do so.

**2** My work on Historic Commercial Street is proof that mixed use districts, blending retail, service and residential, is a formula for creating unique, fun spaces for young families, professionals and entrepreneurs. Businesses like Pizza House did not locate on C-Street by accident; many of our fabulous restaurants were courted and supported through low-interest city loans as well as historic tax credits.

Encouraging more of these intimate and social mixed use nodes like C-Street, Cherry & Pickwick and Galloway, close to available single family housing, creates opportunities and a social environment for young people to thrive. These nodes encourage green spaces and walking from nearby neighbors, reducing the need for vehicles in favor of scooters and bicycles, preserving resources while encouraging social interaction so necessary for our young people. Sociability is the goal and an array of eclectic, mixed use environments creates an exciting community.

**3** As mayor, I will lead an effort to create an environment that is attractive and appealing, exciting and fun, and a government that is accessible and responsive not only to young people of all ages but to empty nesters, seniors and entrepreneurs. Current trends in Smart Cities are moving in an exciting direction called Social Cities where citizens are empowered to create open source apps that track amenities like traffic, roadwork, accidents and even where to see Christmas light displays or local cultural events.

I hope to empower our citizens and neighborhoods in a “bottom up” or what I call “trickle up” approach where conversations center around populations and their concerns through listening posts and other social, democratic processes. Young people hold the key to the technologies of the future as resources that can empower our citizens and create an environment where families and businesses alike can thrive and prosper.

## Jeff Schrag

**1** “We need to be a community where people choose to live, where businesses prefer to locate and where entrepreneurs want to invest and create good jobs. That is our challenge: competing with comparable communities to grow economic opportunities for all who live here. We do this by identifying the elements of the city’s comprehensive plan, Forward SGF, we should prioritize and then determining how we achieve those related objectives. To be successful, we must also lean in to our core strengths in education, health care, outdoor recreation and our entrepreneurial spirit. The city should focus on these areas first and ensure Springfield is a business-friendly community, committed to removing obstacles to starting or expanding businesses and building or renovating property.”



**Jeff Schrag**

**2** “I think you have to engage young voters directly and invite their input. They are often not plugged in to the same channels and organizations as older voters. While every segment of our population should have a voice, city government’s plans and decisions will most affect younger generations in the future so we must be intentional about involving them. As I participated in the city’s process to create the Forward SGF plan, they made a concerted effort to include young professionals and youth through various organizations. The comprehensive plan incorporates the priorities of many younger citizens. It’s been my experience The Network for Springfield’s Young Professionals, affiliated with the Chamber, is a good resource for starting a conversation and seeking feedback. My community volunteer work has also provided me with a strong network that can connect me to younger voices.”

**3**

"The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and the community's economic development partnership, the Springfield Business Development Corporation, are fully invested in and leading an ongoing, multifaceted talent attraction and retention effort. That needs to continue. Our rich educational opportunities position us well in the competition to attract people. Talent retention is often more complex and challenging. Research and experience from other communities can inform our strategies – we must be measured and smart about the amenities we encourage and build. It requires intentional work and resources to help people develop roots in our community. Experience and data also tell us that cities who deliver well on the fundamentals - safe streets and neighborhoods, solid infrastructure and trails, quality job creation, and responsible resource management – build the best foundation for talent retention. A mayor must lead and deliver on those essential building blocks."

## Springfield City Council

### *What does City Council do?*

The City of Springfield is governed by a nine-member, non-partisan City Council. The council chooses the policy vision for the community, and council members act as legislators. Council members serve four-year terms. Responsibilities of the council include investing in city infrastructure, promoting clean and safe neighborhoods, taking advantage of state and federal funding opportunities, reviewing and updating the City Charter when necessary, hiring the city manager, approving the annual budget, establishing tax rates, passing ordinances and resolutions, regulating land use through zoning laws, appointing members to city boards and commissions, and responding to constituent needs and complaints. They meet twice a month— meetings are open to the public.



### *Hear from your City Council candidates:*

The Springfield mayoral candidates were each asked the three questions listed below and given a maximum word count for each question. Candidates were not required to respond.

**1**

*What qualifications do you possess that would make you an effective member of the City Council? (75-word maximum)*

**2**

*How do you plan to address issues important to students and young voters? (150-word maximum)*

**3**

*If elected, what three issues would you prioritize to improve our community? Please explain why you chose these issues. (175-word maximum)*

# City Council Zone 1

## Monica Horton (Incumbent), Unopposed



**Monica Horton**

**1** **Ten years of combined non-profit and civic leadership** has made me an effective member of city council and hopefully as mayor pro tem this April. My professional knowledge of collective impact and engagement were key to my city council appointment in 2022. As the Zone 1 city councilmember, sponsoring and voting for bills that: (1) improve housing quality/diversity, (2) promote economic vitality through incremental redevelopment, and (3) elevate functional/aesthetic design of our streets and neighborhoods.

**2** Students and young voters want good paying jobs with benefits, so therefore **city council works with city staff to attract employers who can offer higher pay and benefits.** Secondly, young voters want a seat at the decision-making table, therefore, city council could **entertain opportunities for youth and young professionals to assist and engage meaningfully with city council members.** Lastly, young voters value leisure and recreation after a productive week of performing professional duties at work, therefore, **the city has the ability to design, maintain, and coordinate public common areas such as public amenities maintained by the Springfield-Greene County Park Board but also attract entrepreneurs seeking to launch, maintain, and expand lucrative businesses designed for entertainment, leisure, and connection.**

**3** (1) **I would prioritize a rental property inspection program paid for by landlord licensing fees.** Many owners (especially absentee property owners) have little incentive to improve their residential properties. As a result, some owners rent their properties in poor condition or leave them sitting vacant causing public health/safety problems in our neighborhoods impacting owner-occupied property values. As a solution, a Council committee is considering a rental property inspection program and hopefully an ordinance is forthcoming to the full Council.

(2) Our city government generates revenue primarily from sales taxes. And I'm interested in **fortifying our financial position as a city** through fiscally and environmentally sustainable incremental redevelopment since progressive taxation is currently unattainable.

(3) **Supporting sustainable redevelopment of our city** entails multimodal, alternative transportation methods including public transit. It promotes mixed-use commercial development, meaning designing/constructing buildings for residential/retail/office uses (higher density urban design). It also prioritizes green infrastructure for better water and air quality, and a more efficient solid waste disposal system that emphasizes recycling accessibility to extend the life cycle of our landfill.



# City Council Zone 4

## Bruce Adib-Yazdi



**Bruce  
Adib-Yazdi**

**1** I have been a resident in the city of Springfield for 35 years with my office either downtown or on Commercial Street the entire time and I have participated in numerous boards and organizations. My background in architecture and development brings a unique perspective, professional abilities, and experiences that will aid the council in making decisions that retain and attract a vibrant populace. I have trained my entire career to be in this position.

**2** We must ask young voters what they want. The more I talk with this demographic, the more convinced I become that we need to create unique urban environments, opportunities to live without car ownership, and with neighborhood services within a short walk or bike ride. I have specific real-world examples of how they have demonstrated their desire. Ask me about the 2023 We Create Workshop put on by Better Block SGF.

The good news is that our new Comprehensive Plan guides us in that direction. The proposed Land Development Code updates will change the way we develop land. We need to start thinking more like small city than a large town. My professional experience positions me well to address these issues on City Council. The next mayor and city manager will also be important vacancies to fill.

**3** Neighborhoods. Strong neighborhoods are the core of our community. Neighborhoods are being impacted by development when there is no long-range plan in place. Rountree and Midtown have developed Urban Conservation Districts. *Every neighborhood should have similar plans in place.*

Underutilized urban land along our arterial corridors. We need to take stock in the vast sea of parking that exists in our community. We also need to think about how to create a more vibrant street frontage and opportunity for multiple modes of transportation. *Think more like a small city than a big town.*

Turn the tide on perceptions and realities regarding rental homes, homeless population, crime and parking downtown. We need to advocate for both attainable and affordable housing. Including making sure all rental housing is safe. We need to find ways to attract talent not only for our short-staffed police force, but in general. We need to reframe the perception that there is ‘no parking downtown’ when in fact only 24% of public parking is being utilized. We need more demand, not more parking.

Bonus Priority: Collaboration with our surrounding communities on how we work together to continue the steady growth we have enjoyed over the last several decades. We need to be prepared for influx of people migrating to the Ozarks.

## Zone 4 cont.

### Matthew Simpson (Incumbent)

**1** I have served Springfield on City Council since 2018. During that time I have taken on key roles including serving as Mayor Pro Tem, Chair of the ARPA Review and Finance & Administration Committees, and Council liaison to groups including the Police Fire Pension Board and the Citizens Commission on Community Investment. My work at Ozarks Tech supporting data informed decisions helps me bring the same approach to my work on Council.



**Matthew  
Simpson**

**2** The availability of quality, affordable housing is a key issue for our City's future. Everyone deserves to have a good home and housing availability is critical to decisions on where to live. With the demand for homes in Springfield vastly exceeding our current supply we have seen prices increase putting home ownership out of reach for many and adding burden to renters. I have consistently and strongly supported policies that support home building and adopting creative approaches to close the housing gap. That also includes investing in programs like Restore SGF and the Springfield Community Land Trust to support first-time homebuyers. In addition to housing, we also need to make sure that we have a community that is safe, offers quality jobs with benefits, and has quality of place amenities for all residents. We have to focus on initiatives that invest in our next generations and build a better future.

**3** One of my top priorities is a continued focus on meeting the housing needs of our community. A quality, affordable home is essential for all residents of Springfield but the shortage of homes relative to demand are leading to significant price increases for both home buyers and renters. We need to encourage home building, adopt creative solutions that have proven to be effective in other communities, and support first time home buyers.

Another top priority is public safety. That includes continuing to support investments in our Police and Fire first responders to ensure they have the staffing and resources needed, as well as upstream solutions including mental health, substance abuse prevention, and programs for young residents.

A third top priority is keeping our promises to voters with the SPRING Forward tax approved in November. It represents one of the best opportunities in the history of our City to make transformative investments that make Springfield an even better place to live for all residents and support the creation of more quality jobs.

**ALL CANDIDATE RESPONSES ARE PRINTED AS SUBMITTED AND ARE UNEDITED**

# Springfield Council General Seat A

## Heather Hardinger (Incumbent)

**1** As a current City Councilmember, I have worked to balance responsible development with neighborhood needs, strengthen economic opportunities, and invest in public safety. My background in workforce development, economic strategy, and patient advocacy at CoxHealth has equipped me with the experience to address complex challenges. I believe in collaboration, transparency, and strategic planning to create lasting solutions for Springfield.



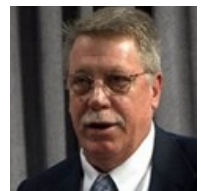
**Heather Hardinger**

**2** Springfield's future depends on retaining and attracting young talent. I support policies that expand access to affordable housing, invest in public transportation, and create more job opportunities for young professionals. Strengthening partnerships between the City, Drury University, Evangel University, Missouri State University, OTC and other institutions can enhance workforce pipelines, entrepreneurship, and community engagement. Additionally, I advocate for vibrant public spaces, cultural initiatives, and entertainment options that make Springfield a more appealing place for students and young voters to live, work, and stay long-term.

- 3**
- 1. Public Safety & Community Well-Being**  
Investing in law enforcement recruitment, mental health crisis response, and neighborhood safety initiatives will help create a safer Springfield for all residents. Public safety remains a top priority as we work to foster a city where people feel safe, supported, and connected to their community.
  - 2. Housing & Development**  
Ensuring responsible growth that balances affordability with neighborhood preservation is critical for our city's future.
  - 3. Economic Development & Workforce Growth**  
Supporting local businesses and expanding workforce initiatives will strengthen Springfield's economy and create more high-quality jobs for Springfield and for our regional neighbors.

## Eric Pauly

**1** Engagement. As a native of Springfield, I have lived in all four zones. This has allowed me to experience each areas uniqueness. My 6 years as the President of a neighborhood association has taught me the most effective way to get concerns resolved. As a Planning and Zoning Commissioner for the last 3 years, I have done the deep dive on issues before they reach City Council. A tested community leader.



**Eric Pauly**

**2** Encouraging diverse employment opportunities with our local infrastructure as well as outside vendors. Springfield has the opportunity to be an economic hub for southwest Missouri by working with the communities in our area and grow ourself much like northwest Arkansas. We need to provide housing options so those who wish to

own a home and begin to build wealth have that opportunity like generations before. Too many are shut out by the limited availability of housing stock. Broaden our scope on development and adaptive use of existing structures. As we grow, we need to ensure our growth is intelligent for its use today and flexible for the needs of tomorrow. Create a city that people crave to be involved in by way of our amenities, vision, inclusion, and opportunities. We have the building blocks to do this, will we seize it.

**3** Community involvement. To strengthen the community bonds, everyone needs a seat at the table. Community leaders must listen to those they represent. While we may not always agree, its through civil discussions that we find a better path forward. Housing. This is a broad arc which includes our unsheltered citizens, rental, and home ownership. We are fortunate to have many organizations which help those in need. Its important that these organizations are supported and encourage to work as a cohesive unit. Rental inspections are something that we need to address so all have a safe and secure place to lay their head. Home ownership. This is an outstanding way to build financial security for today and the possibility for generational wealth for tomorrow.

Support of neighborhoods. Too often our development is short sighted which leads to the loss and destruction of our history and our housing which forces residents to flee out of the city limits of Springfield. By pushing people further out, we lose our sense of community which creates the donut hole effect.

## **Springfield Council General Seat B**

### **Craig Hosmer (Incumbent), Unopposed**

**1** I have served on Springfield City Council for 12 years. Prior to my service on City Council, I served in the Missouri House of Representatives for 12 years representing a portion of Springfield. In Jefferson City I was chairman of the Criminal Law Committee and worked closely with law enforcement to help on public safety issues.



**Craig Hosmer**

I graduated from the University of Missouri in Columbia with a B.A. in political science and attended and graduated from The George Washington University National Law Center in Washington, D.C., where I got my law degree in 1986. I have practiced law in Greene County for over 35 years. While on Council, I have worked on issues dealing with public safety, broad-based economic development, housing and economic vitality here in the city of Springfield and wish to continue work on these and other issues.

**2** I believe that most young people share the same values and concerns as other residents of the city of Springfield. They want to have vibrant, safe communities where they can work and enjoy the quality of life that Springfield and southwest Missouri offers. I have worked to make housing more affordable in Springfield, to make housing more energy efficient, to make public safety more effective and to make our streets safer. I will also continue to work to bring better paying jobs to Springfield and to deal with the chronic problems Springfield has with housing shortages, over representation of renters to homeowners, poverty and homelessness. All of these issues are important, and Springfield needs to do a better job of addressing the core causes of these chronic problems.

**3** The three issues I will continue to work on are public safety. Springfield continues to be short in the number of police officers that we have in the city. I will work to expand the use of technology and mental health and alcohol and drug services to combat the problems we have with chronic crime. I believe that we have a housing problem in the city and need clean, affordable housing and opportunities for people to purchase homes, as homeownership is one of the builders of generational wealth. We need to facilitate and encourage more single-family home construction in Springfield and protect the vitality of neighborhoods from speculative developers. We also need to make sure that our housing stock is maintained and efficient so that people do not pay large amounts on utility bills. We need to have broad-based economic development which includes amenities that help all businesses and all people living in the city of Springfield.

## **Springfield Public School Board of Education**

### ***What does a School Board do?***

The Board of Education is elected by the registered voters of the Springfield School District. The school board establishes policies and regulations by which their schools are governed, in compliance with state and federal laws. The school board also develops the annual budget to run the school system and its facilities, and hires and evaluates the superintendent.



### ***Hear from your School Board candidates:***

The Springfield Public School Board candidates were each asked the three questions listed below and given a maximum word count for each question. Candidates were not required to respond.

**1** *What are your priorities for Springfield Public Schools and how will you plan to implement them, especially given the polarized environment?*  
(150-word maximum)

**2** How will you ensure that all students feel safe and supported in Springfield Public Schools? (150-word maximum)

**3** Why is it important for college and university students to vote in school board elections, and how do school board elections affect college and university campus communities? (150-word maximum)

**IN THIS ELECTION, YOU WILL VOTE FOR  
TWO OF THE FOUR SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES**

## School Board cont.

### Kelly Byrne (Incumbent)



**Kelly Byrne**

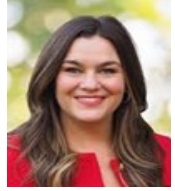
**1** I'm the only incumbent running. I'm a local business owner, employer, and SPS parent, the only SPS parent on the board. My priority has been and will continue to be the mission of the district, which is to create high quality academic opportunities for EACH student. The reason for the "polarized environment" is due to 15 years of declining academic performance in SPS prior to my first term. We had things we needed to improve upon in the district and that led to honest discussion in the boardroom about how to address those things. Leadership involves disagreement and working through that professionally and productively. We have now seen 2 consecutive years of academic improvement for the first time in 20 years. I'll continue to focus on areas of improvement to benefit all 24,000 students in the district to ensure we are providing the highest quality education for each of them.

**2** Physical safety is an absolute must. We have invested \$7MM+ in safety improvements across our district in my first term. I've advocated for increasing School Resource Officer positions in a time of district cutbacks. I've also pushed hard on the administration to provide better and more transparent student data privacy and safe practices on the internet. Bullying should always be disciplined appropriately regardless of the reason. Every student should not just feel safe, but be safe in our buildings across the district. We must improve our discipline practices and procedures to ensure that unsafe students either correct their behavior or won't be allowed to make other students/teachers unsafe in the classroom.

**3** If we're not effective in providing a robust K-12 public education our students will either enter college or the workforce unprepared to succeed. Good schools also lead to the overall success of the community through economic and cultural growth. At whatever stage each of us are in our lives, we all stand to benefit from stronger schools and a stronger community. Voting is an important part of our responsibility as citizens in our local, state, and national society. School board elections usually have less than 15% turnout compared to November where the turnout was 80%+ yet local elections often have a greater impact on our individual lives. It's important to be informed and come to your own conclusions about who is best suited to lead. More information can be found about my priorities at [Kelly4SPS.info](http://Kelly4SPS.info).

**ALL CANDIDATE RESPONSES ARE PRINTED AS SUBMITTED AND ARE UNEDITED**

## Sarah Hough



**Sarah Hough**

**1** I am committed to protecting students and teachers, advancing student achievement, and making thoughtful, fiscally responsible decisions that strengthen our schools. Every student deserves access to excellent education, dedicated educators, and a school environment where they can learn and thrive.

To make that happen, I believe in collaboration over conflict. I'll focus on data-driven decisions, transparency, and listening to all stakeholders—students, parents, teachers, and the community. The best solutions come from working together, not division. At the end of the day, we all want the same thing: strong public schools that prepare students for success. It will take us all supporting our schools for our students to achieve at their full potential.

**2** I will advocate for policies that create a safe and welcoming learning environment for every student. Safety is more than just locked doors and security measures—it's about making sure every student can focus on learning without distractions or disruptions. That starts with clear and fair discipline policies, mental health resources, and practical measures like manageable class sizes so teachers can focus on learning, not just behavior management.

We also need strong community partnerships that provide meaningful opportunities for students to explore their passions. Supporting choice programs allows students to pursue a learning path that aligns with their goals, interests, and unique learning styles, setting them up for long-term success. By offering diverse educational pathways, we empower students to take ownership of their education. If we want students to thrive, we must ensure they have the resources, guidance, and opportunities to chart a future that excites and motivates them.

**3** School board elections don't just affect K-12 students—they impact the whole community, including college students. The quality of local schools shapes the future workforce, the local economy, and even teacher training programs for those studying education.

If you care about strong public schools, responsible use of tax dollars, and the future of education, your vote matters. Plus, good schools make a city more attractive to businesses and young professionals, which affects job opportunities after graduation.

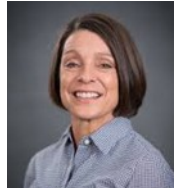
Local elections often have lower voter turnout, but they directly impact our community. Whether it's shaping curriculum, funding decisions, or policies that affect the next generation of students, school boards play a vital role in the overall education system. By voting in school board elections, college students help ensure that schools remain strong. The choices we make today shape the opportunities available for years to come.

## David Myers

Candidate did not submit answers to questions.

# School Board cont.

## Gail Smart



**Gail Smart**

**1** **Ensuring Student Success:** We must provide every student in every school tools needed to succeed while in our schools and after graduation. This includes hiring and retaining the best educators as well as creating a culture where their work is valued and rewarded and engaging families and supporting students with different learning strengths. Public education must be for everyone.

**Investing in School Safety:** Every parent wants their child to be safe at school, and I agree. Ensuring everyone is working and learning in a safe environment is of the utmost importance. Strengthening discipline procedures and mental health services for children and families are top concerns.

**Promoting Financial Discipline:** When difficult budget decisions arise, I will prioritize student success and direct funding the impacts the classroom when allocating scarce resources. As I have with every board I have been a part of, I will bring a collaborative spirit to the board and work with other board members to come to shared solutions.

**2** **Investing in School Safety** is one of my top priorities. We must look at strategies and practices aimed at maintaining order, promoting positive behavior, and ensuring a safe and quality learning environment. SPS is currently implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in all its buildings. This strategy focuses on proactive approaches and rewards positive behavior.

Effective discipline teaches students respect, responsibility, and accountability. There should be a balance with fairness and support for students who face emotional or behavioral challenges. But, students who continually struggle to follow directions or who are violent should be moved to an alternative program/site offered by the district.

As our community and schools become more diverse, it is important we equip teachers with the opportunity for training on these topics. Academic interventions—tutoring and summer school programs so learning is not disrupted are important. Ensuring all students have access to necessary technology, internet connections, and inclusive extracurricular activities that foster a sense of community and belonging are critical.

**3** All school board candidates are not equal. They have different values and experiences and support different policies. This is why it is crucial to vote for local leaders who align closely with your views and values. And to take time to educate yourself of a candidate's priorities and character. You send a message to your community about what matters most to you and the kind of community you want to be a part of which directly influences the quality of life in our community.

A thriving public school district is important to a thriving community. Businesses and families make decisions regarding whether to locate in certain communities based on the quality of the school system. SPS is deeply connected to local community university partners—MSU, OTC, Drury, Evangel—from its choice programs, teacher educator programs, to students exploring career pathways.



# Learn more about the candidates!

## Local Election Candidate Forums

**Location:** Missouri State University

**Sponsored by:** MSU Paws to the Polls and the Office of Public Affairs Support

**Contact:** 417-836-8832

*Free and open to the public!*



### March 26

#### SPS School Board Candidate Forum

Missouri State University

Karls Hall 101

4:00—5:00 pm

### April 2

#### City Council & Mayoral Candidate Forum

Missouri State University

PSU Theater

5:30—7:30 pm

(Partnering with the Neighborhood Advisory Council)

**Informed Voter Coalition  
interviews posted on KSMU.**

Check availability at [KSMU.org](http://KSMU.org)





Join a nonpartisan MSU campus initiative created to engage college students in our democracy!

Meets Thursdays @ 4:30 pm,  
Strong Hall rm. 458

## Be Informed Through These Nonpartisan Sources

POLITIFACT

FACTCHECK.ORG

Science Feedback

*Unbiased sources of political information:*



Vote Smart at [votesmart.org](https://votesmart.org) provides unbiased information on candidates via various categories information.



ActiVote at [www.activote.net](https://www.activote.net) is an App that is a one-stop shop for all things political: elected officials, candidates, current legislation, plus daily surveys and results

**Voter Guide produced by Missouri State University's  
Paws to the Polls and Office of Public Affairs Support**

# A SPECIAL THANK YOU

The education fund of the Missouri League of Women Voters provided significant funding for the printing of this nonpartisan voters guide.

## Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. We empower voters and defend democracy through advocacy, education, and litigation, at the local, state, and national levels.



[PublicAffairs.MissouriState.edu/PTTP](https://PublicAffairs.MissouriState.edu/PTTP)



# Vote April 8th!

Thank you to our contributing organizations!



The logo for the NAACP, consisting of the letters 'NAACP' in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font on a black rectangular background.



Questions? Contact us:  
[pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu](mailto:pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu)



Paws to the Polls is a nonpartisan grassroots campus initiative formed to increase voter engagement and voting knowledge at Missouri State University. Want to get Involved? Email us at: [pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu](mailto:pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu)

Visit us at: <https://publicaffairs.missouristate.edu/PTTP/default.htm>