

2018 VOTER GUIDE

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS DULUTH



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NOTE - the following judicial candidates are running unopposed and did not respond to our questionnaire:

Associate Justice - Supreme Court 1 | Candidates: Barry Anderson

Associate Justice - Supreme Court 5 | Candidates: Anne McKeig

Judge - Court of Appeals 4 | Candidate: Tracy Smith

Judge - Court of Appeals 6 | Candidate: Renee L Worke

Judge - Court of Appeals 7 | Candidate: Jill Flaskamp Halbrooks

Judge - Court of Appeals 12 | Candidate: Diane Bratvold

Judge - Court of Appeals 14 | Candidate: James B Florey

Judge - 6th District Court 5 | Candidate: Michelle M Anderson

Judge - 6th District Court 6 | Candidate: Dale O Harris

Judge - 6th District Court 8 | Candidate: Shaun R Floerke

Judge - 6th District Court 10 | Candidate: Mark M Starr

Judge - 6th District Court 16 | Candidate: Jill A Eichenwald

ABOUT THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS:

The League of Women Voters is non-partisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE:

The LWV Duluth Voter Guide is a non-partisan and impartial guide that has been compiled and published following procedures established by the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. The purpose of the Voter Guide is to give area voters the opportunity to understand candidate positions on issues of importance this election.

Every candidate in each race listed in this guide was invited to participate. In accordance with the empty-chair policy of the League of Women Voters, if an invited candidate did not respond or declined to participate, a notation has been made in the guide. Each candidate received the same set of questions and had a specified word limit of 250 words per response. Responses exceeding 250 words have been truncated. Candidate responses have not been edited for content or typographical error.

LWV DULUTH NON-PARTISAN POLICY:

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens of government. The non-partisanship of LWV is the basis of our public credibility and must be carefully maintained. LWV does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. It is political in that it takes position on selected governmental issues after member study and agreement.

QUESTIONS:

If you have questions about this Voter Guide or would like more information about the League of Women Voters Duluth, please email lwvduluth@lwvmn.org or call (218) 724-0132. Visit our website at: www.lwvduluth.org.

2018 VOTING INFORMATION

GENERAL ELECTION:

November 6, 2018

SAMPLE BALLOT

www.duluthmn.gov/city-clerk



Additional Dates to Remember:

September 21, 2018

October 16, 2018

Early Voting Begins

Last Day to Pre-Register

Where is my polling place?

[Polling Place Finder - Secretary of State website](#)

View your sample ballot

[What's on my ballot - Secretary of State website](#)

Election Day Voting Information

[Election Day Voting - Secretary of State website](#)

BALLOT QUESTIONS

In 2018, there will be three School District Questions on the Ballot.

Ballot language and instructions:

Voters will have the following ballot instructions and questions on their ballot on November 6, 2018:

1) RENEWAL OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENDUM REVENUE AUTHORIZATION

The Board of Independent School District No. 709, Duluth Public Schools, has proposed to renew its referendum revenue authorization, which is set to expire in 2018, in an amount equal to \$371.78 per pupil. The revenue would be used to fund school operations. The proposed referendum revenue authorization would be effective for taxes payable in 2019 and be applicable for ten years unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law. Shall the renewal of the revenue proposed by the Board of Independent School District No. 709 be approved?

Yes

No

BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING TO EXTEND AN EXISTING PROPERTY TAX REFERENDUM THAT IS SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE.

2) APPROVAL OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENDUM REVENUE AUTHORIZATION

The Board of Independent School District No. 709 has proposed to increase its general education revenue by \$575.00 per pupil if Ballot Question No. 1 is approved. The proposed referendum revenue authorization would be applicable for ten years unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law. Provided that Ballot Question No. 1 is approved, shall the increase in revenue proposed by the Board of Independent School District No. 709 be approved?

Yes

No

BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE.

3) APPROVAL OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENDUM REVENUE AUTHORIZATION

The Board of Independent School District No. 709 has proposed to increase its general education revenue by \$335.00 per pupil if Ballot Question Nos. 1 and 2 are approved. The proposed referendum revenue authorization would be applicable for ten years unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law. Provided that Ballot Question Nos. 1 and 2 are approved, shall the increase in revenue proposed by the Board of Independent School District No. 709 be approved?

Yes

No

BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE.

US SENATOR

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of United States Senator.

CANDIDATE JIM NEWBERGER:

I am running because there has only been one voice in the U.S. Senate for over a decade. That has been the voice of the Far Progressive Left. Senator Klobuchar has a 90% rubber stamp voting record to prove it. This does not provide a full voice for all 5.5 million Minnesotans. I will bring balance to the Minnesota delegation in the U.S. Senate.

CANDIDATE AMY KLOBUCHAR:

I've been guided by the values I learned growing up in Minnesota. My grandpa worked 1,500 feet underground on the Iron Range. My dad Jim was a newspaperman, and my mom Rose was an elementary school teacher who taught second grade until she was 70. My husband, John, is a native of Mankato, and we have a daughter, Abigail. As Hennepin County Attorney, I headed the largest prosecutor's office in Minnesota. In 2006, I became the first woman elected to the United States Senate in our state's history and the Medill News Service reported I ranked first of 100 senators in sponsoring or cosponsoring bills enacted into law during the last Congress. Serving in the U.S. Senate, my focus is on what's right for Minnesota. That's why I work across the aisle to find ways to strengthen our economy and support Minnesota families, workers, and businesses.

CANDIDATE DENNIS SCHULLER:

Hi my name is Dennis Schuller and I am just a regular guy that has the opportunity to speak for a lot of people who are trying to stop Amy Klobuchar and the rest of the government from putting everyone in jail over their misguided views on cannabis prohibition.

CANDIDATE PAULA M OVERBY:

I am an organizer for the independent party movement. I believe a strong 3rd party movement is essential to overcoming political polarization and gridlock in order to shift our priorities away from war spending toward real social and economic investment. I am running for U.S. Senate because a minor party needs 5% in a statewide office to gain major party status and have a voice in our political debate.

QUESTION 2:

Please explain why you do or do not believe that the federal government should ensure that every American has health coverage.

CANDIDATE JIM NEWBERGER:

Universal health care coverage is not part of the U.S. Constitution.

CANDIDATE AMY KLOBUCHAR:

Every American deserves affordable, high-quality health care. Quality and accessible health care is a very personal matter for me and my family. When my daughter was born she was very sick. Due to an insurance company rule, I was forced to leave the hospital just 24 hours after she was born. I went to the state legislature and got one of the first laws passed in the country guaranteeing new moms and their babies a 48-hour hospital stay. That experience led me to run for office and fight for common-sense health care solutions. I've always said that the Affordable Care Act is a beginning, not an end, and changes will need to be made on both the state and federal level. We must make changes to bring down costs and premiums, which include expanding Medicaid, reinsurance and providing cost-sharing reductions, continued delivery system reform, and addressing the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs. At the same time as we advocate for these reforms, we cannot go backwards by repealing key Affordable Care Act protections. The law prohibits abusive practices that previously kept health care out of reach for millions of Americans, like denying coverage to individuals with pre-existing conditions. The law also provides coverage for preventive services, helps seniors pay for prescription drugs by closing the gap in prescription drug coverage known as the "donut hole," and allows young people to stay on their parents' plans until they are 26 years old. It's critical that these consumer protections stay in place.

CANDIDATE DENNIS SCHULLER:

The government shouldn't have to do anything people should be so well off that they don't need help; however they often do need help. In many countries they have single payer healthcare but in America we like options. So I can see an opportunity to have both but the point that everyone has access to medical care in a timely manner is the valid we need to continue to address better.

CANDIDATE PAULA M OVERBY:

They should fund state college education. Education is essential to social mobility and social justice but it is the fastest rising cost in America today. We spend \$45 billion annually on the Afghan war. On top of existing Pell grants, that's enough to provide free tuition at all of our state colleges. They should fund state college education. Education is essential to social mobility and social justice but it is the fastest rising cost in America today. We spend \$45 billion annually on the Afghan war. On top of existing Pell grants, that's enough to provide free tuition at all of our state colleges.

QUESTION 3:

What should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor the middle class and the wealthy, particularly addressing racial and cultural divides?

CANDIDATE JIM NEWBERGER:

Reduce over-bearing regulations. Reduce taxes. Reduce the size of government.

CANDIDATE AMY KLOBUCHAR:

Minnesotans believe in hard work, fair play, and personal responsibility. We believe that no matter where you come from, if you work hard, you can achieve your dreams, give the gift of education to your children, and have security in your later years. That's why I'm committed to working for economic policies that benefit all Americans and give everyone an opportunity to succeed. Of course, opportunities are not evenly distributed

throughout the state or our country. We must address the growing issue of income inequality by making it easier for American families to be able to afford a home, send their kids to college, and pay the bills. That's why I support legislation that would raise the federal minimum wage, make health care and housing more affordable, assist families with child and elder care expenses, allow students to refinance their student loans at lower rates, and promote apprenticeships and training programs – like my bill to use tax-advantaged “529” accounts to save money for technical and vocational education programs in addition to traditional four-year colleges.

CANDIDATE DENNIS SCHULLER:

This is a great point to talk about cannabis because the drug war affects people in all income levels and families in all neighborhoods. By ending prohibition there is less crime this has been proven when alcohol prohibition was repealed.

CANDIDATE PAULA M OVERBY:

Stop spending so much money on war and start investing in health care reform and education. Health care and education are essential to social mobility and social justice but they are the fastest rising costs in America today.

QUESTION 4:

What should the federal government's top priority be in setting a sound energy policy that also addresses the impact of global climate change?

CANDIDATE JIM NEWBERGER:

I believe in an all-of-the-above energy policy. You cannot have green energy without baseload power sources.

CANDIDATE AMY KLOBUCHAR:

We need a comprehensive energy strategy that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote the development of energy efficient technologies and homegrown energy resources without burdening our farmers and small businesses. I support the International Climate Agreement and have pushed the Administration to rejoin that Agreement. I also believe that our nation needs to follow Minnesota's lead by adopting national standards for renewable energy. Minnesota is at the forefront of ethanol, biodiesel, and wind energy production and led the nation in 2007 by adopting a renewable energy standard that requires electric utilities to obtain 25 percent of their electricity from renewable sources like wind, solar, and biomass by the year 2025. This state policy—which should be adopted at the federal level—has helped stimulate renewable development throughout Minnesota, bringing in new investment and opportunities to both rural and urban areas.

CANDIDATE DENNIS SCHULLER:

Ending the ban on industrial hemp would be a good start. Almost everything that can be made with plastic can be made with hemp. Processing hemp is less toxic to the environment and also disposing of it is easier because it breaks down easier.

CANDIDATE PAULA M OVERBY:

Since the Oil embargo of the 70's I have had a desire for a national energy policy. If we had done that back in 1969 when climate change first became a hot topic, we wouldn't be facing the difficult climate crisis we are

today. Renewable energy is certainly the top priority and I support expanded investments in research and development. Stopping the subsidy of fossil fuels would be a good start. I'd also note that the U.S. military is the largest institutional consumer of oil in the world. We also need a pathway that is balanced, affordable, and reliable. A comprehensive policy would include conservation and other forms of carbon-free energy. It should define specific actions and measurable achievements. The carbon tax, for example, is a way of measuring the true cost of energy production that incentives more renewable and clean energy solutions.

QUESTION 5:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted?

CANDIDATE JIM NEWBERGER:

Minnesota needs voter ID laws to stop potential abuse and fraud at the polls.

CANDIDATE AMY KLOBUCHAR:

The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy, and we should be doing all we can to make sure people's voices are heard. Minnesota has always enjoyed a reputation for high voter turnout, and for fair and clean elections. As the Ranking Member of the Senate Rules Committee, which has jurisdiction over federal elections, I believe we must follow Minnesota's lead and do more to encourage participation in elections and strengthen the right to vote. That's why I've introduced legislation to make it easier to vote, like the Register America to Vote Act, which would automatically register eligible voters when they turn 18. I have introduced the Same Day Registration Act, modeled after Minnesota law, which would allow individuals to register to vote on the same day as the election, and also support legislation that would update the Voting Rights Act. Finally, pass my Secure Elections Act with Senators James Lankford, Kamala Harris, and Lindsey Graham.

CANDIDATE DENNIS SCHULLER:

I think it is actually a pretty good system just make sure that the process is sound against outside attack. We already have absentee ballots which makes it easier for people. The concerns over gerrymandering are confirmed district need to be decided in a more equitable way, possibly by the courts.

CANDIDATE PAULA M OVERBY:

Denying people the right to vote is the worst form of censorship. Congress needs to re- establish and enhance the voting rights act and allocate the funding to make it happen.

QUESTION 6:

How can the federal government, in collaboration with other levels of government, provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre- K through grade 12?

CANDIDATE JIM NEWBERGER:

Reduce the over-reach of the Federal Department of Education into the day-to-day affairs of the local school districts. Give more control back to parents, teachers and elected school board members.

CANDIDATE AMY KLOBUCHAR:

A good education should be the basic right of every child and Minnesota's belief in the value of education is reflected in the strong support we have given our schools over the years. That is why I am working to ensure that we

strengthen our commitment to our schools. I supported a new federal education law that corrected some of the shortcomings of No Child Left Behind by giving states and local school districts more flexibility to make decisions about how best to meet students' needs. The new education law also included three of my provisions to improve education in Minnesota. My provisions would expand STEM opportunities, improve teacher and principal retention, and reduce chronic absenteeism. To ensure that all Minnesota families have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in the 21st Century economy, we must also reduce the educational achievement gap. I support legislation that requires each state to develop a plan that sets targets to close these gaps. And I support fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which includes specific requirements to ensure that students with disabilities receive the services they need to achieve their educational goals.

CANDIDATE DENNIS SCHULLER:

Some of the flexibility and choice of schools at least in Minnesota through the charter school program make going to school a more personalized experience for the whole family. I think the most important issue is just safety. Everyone any gender should be able to go to the bathroom in peace and not be bullied.

CANDIDATE PAULA M OVERBY:

The federal government creates standards, based on academic performance, such as No Child Left Behind and the Every Student Succeeds act. They emphasize skills most relevant to technological achievements. There is never adequate funding from the federal government to achieve the desired results. The ability to meet those standards is broadly impacted by the individuals socioeconomic status. It becomes a more general issue of addressing poverty. I support more general support measures such as nutrition programs, after-school programs, summer activities and a better funding model. When schools compete for funding i.e. students, they naturally seek to attract wealthy students which leads to a proliferation of extracurricular activities and special amenities. The federal government can create pathways for exceptional students to prestigious institutions and expand the socioeconomic environment so that all students will have access to that opportunity. The investment is well worth the savings from the cost of a poorly educated society. Education is the number one consideration in social stability and social mobility.

QUESTION 7:

How would you reduce the role of money in American elections?

CANDIDATE JIM NEWBERGER:

Allow for more free media time to all candidates.

CANDIDATE AMY KLOBUCHAR:

In 2010, the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision opened the door for corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money on federal election activity. Special interests have had too much influence in our political process for too long, and I believe we must restore the right of individual Americans to have their voices heard. In the meantime, we must push for reasonable reforms to campaign spending laws and increase the transparency of outside spending that seeks to influence the outcome of our elections. We should overturn Citizens United by passing a Senate resolution to advance a constitutional amendment that would restore the authority of Congress and the states to establish reasonable limits on campaign spending. I have also cosponsored a bill that reforms our campaign finance and lobbying laws by requiring organizations spending money in federal elections to disclose major donors, reforming the Federal Elections Commission to ensure greater accountability, and strengthening the prohibition on coordination between SuperPACs and candidates.

CANDIDATE DENNIS SCHULLER:

Candidates should get a some agreed upon amount as a campaign fund and have limits to the amount they can spend. I also think the system of parties makes the system contentious there should be know parties just independent candidates.

CANDIDATE PAULA M OVERBY:

By establishing a strong grassroots 3rd party movement. I respect the efforts of groups like Move to Amend and American promise to educate the public about Citizens United and money in politics, but the effects of money in politics is far more pervasive than political campaigns. I'm not even listed in the Star Tribune voter guide. Minnesota Public Radio would not include me in their state fair debate between Amy Klobuchar and Jim Neuberger. In a recent MinnPost article, Angie Craig states that I am the reason she lost in 2016... I refute that claim... Independent votes come from both sides of the political divide, and from disenfranchised voters who would otherwise... not vote. MinnPost will not print that response. The false narrative of spoiler prevails. Independent voters... have no voice in the political discussion. The government should provide public access for political campaigns. Local community groups should host their own forums. We need to break down the barriers between the public and politics which is wrought by 501c status; and IRS, FCC, and FEC regulations.

QUESTION 8:

In your opinion what is the most important challenge facing our country and how do you propose to address this challenge?

CANDIDATE JIM NEWBERGER:

We must continue to work with our industries to ensure a better economic future for all people. We must allow for the expansion of Poly Met mining and the building of the Enbridge 3 Line on the Iron Range.

CANDIDATE AMY KLOBUCHAR:

One of the greatest challenges we face is that not enough is getting done because of gridlock, grandstanding, and the grip big interests have on Washington. I have responded—and will continue to respond—to that challenge by working across the aisle to find ways to strengthen our economy and support Minnesota families, workers, and businesses. The Medill News Service reported I ranked first of 100 senators in sponsoring or cosponsoring bills enacted into law during the last Congress. I've gotten things done by putting partisanship aside and working with Democrats and Republicans to find common ground and support Minnesotans.

CANDIDATE DENNIS SCHULLER:

Ending Cannabis probation is so important because it is ninety years overdue and it affects so many people and is a real driver of fear of the government.

CANDIDATE PAULA M OVERBY:

The migration of wealth and the subsequent breakdown of nearly all of our social and public institutions. I am addressing it through grassroots organizing to challenge our representation to be more responsive to the people and less responsive to lobbyists and campaign funds. At the ballot box is the only place where the public has real impact. Our vote is the most powerful tool we have.

US SENATOR SPECIAL ELECTION

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of United States Senator.

CANDIDATE KARIN HOUSLEY:

no response received

CANDIDATE TINA SMITH:

I'm honored to represent Minnesota in the U.S. Senate where I work to ensure Minnesotans have the freedom and opportunity to build the kind of lives they want. I came to Minnesota 34 years ago with my husband Archie to work at General Mills. We have two sons and two wonderful daughters-in-law, and we all call Minnesota home. I got involved in politics by volunteering on local campaigns while I was a small business owner. When I was Lt. Governor of Minnesota, I started visiting people all over Minnesota. In the Senate, I've continued to travel across the state meeting with Minnesotans in their communities. Over the past eight months, I've held more than 110 meetings because my focus has always been bringing people together to talk, listening to everyone—even if we disagree—and turning those conversations into results for Minnesota. I'm working to make health care more affordable by lowering the cost of prescription drugs, I'm working across the aisle to expand our rural economy in Minnesota, and I'm working to give young people the education and skills they need to succeed. That's why I'm running to keep this Senate seat -- to take on big issues, and work across the aisle to get things done for Minnesotans.

CANDIDATE SARAH WELLINGTON:

I am Sarah Wellington and I am running for senator to be amplify the voices of so many who are ignored in bi-partisan politics and end the failed prohibition of cannabis. I have been a public school teacher for almost 20 years and with that many years of public service I am ready for a new challenge.

CANDIDATE JERRY TROOIJEN:

My name is Jerry Trooijen and I am running for the US Senate special election seat (formally Franken held). I am running as a pure independent meaning not as Republican, Democrat or Independence Party. I am Independent of party. Please go to our website, (**link omitted - Voter Guide policy**) and see very in-depth positions on issues and why I am running. Our website has significantly more information on issues than the opponents. I am running because I love the responsibilities, the duties of the office and the challenge that includes. I have always loved thinking about America including its foundational principals and the ideals of freedom and liberty. With each passing day my gratitude grows for the privilege of being born in Minnesota and America. This is not to say other spots on the globe are less worthy. It is to say I feel lucky and thankful. Democracy is not easy-America's ideals are not easy. This is tough stuff and there are no gimmicks or clichés to get us through our difficult issues. Today the Democratic Party and the Republican party have us in a race to the bottom. There intentional degrading of each other is more than a philosophical concern. How we interact with each other matters. How our Senators interact with each other matters. A good end cannot be achieved without using good means to get there. How many of you reading this believe the parties will

change on their own? I didn't think so. Today a truly independent thinking strong willed person is an absolute necessity in government. With all due humility, I qualify.

QUESTION 2:

Please explain why you do or do not believe that the federal government should ensure that every American has health coverage.

CANDIDATE KARIN HOUSLEY:

no response received

CANDIDATE TINA SMITH:

Every Minnesota family deserves access to high-quality health care they can afford because no one should have to choose between paying for their health care and putting food on the table. The number one thing I hear about from Minnesotans is the rising cost of health care, including the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs. That's why the first thing I did when I got to the Senate was take on the big pharmaceutical companies to help lower the cost of prescription drugs. I've also worked on a bill to combat the opioid crisis which recently passed the Senate with strong bipartisan support, and introduced legislation allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower prescription prices and allowing for safe importation of cheaper drugs from other countries, like Canada, while penalizing drug companies for spiking drug prices.

CANDIDATE SARAH WELLINGTON:

Healthcare is a right that all people should have. People should not be strapped to jobs they hate because they or a family member need the insurance that job provides. We should not have a huge percentage of our population a major illness away from bankruptcy. That is a tragic result of 'not for profit' insurance companies making millions while sick people lose their houses, jobs and sometimes their lives for lack of quality healthcare. The federal government has the funds to ensure we all have quality insurance but it won't happen until people stop getting wealthy off of others' illnesses.

CANDIDATE JERRY TROOIJEN:

I don't think saying that the federal government should ensure that every American has health coverage would be the hard thing to say. Many politicians simply say go ahead and provide it. The hard question is how do we pay for it and the even more difficult question is what is an individual's responsibility for their own health habits? 2/3 of the federal budget is currently mandated or the cake is baked if you will. Current federal revenues leave little wiggle room for adding anything else to the budget. Healthcare has become what Warren Buffett has called "the tapeworm of the American economy." It is approaching 20% of our GDP. Just describing the issue of healthcare as difficult is not enough. We can't stand by and watch our fellow citizens go untreated. As Buffet also says, "people have to be helped too." The short answer to improving the healthcare situation is by 1.) improving our health. It is interesting that a recent Surgeon General when asked what the biggest health problem in America was responded by say "isolation" or "loneliness." It is what leads to other health problems including chronic disease. Chronic diseases cost \$8 to \$10 of normal healthcare. Chronic disease is caused largely by smoking, obesity and lack of exercise. Improving our health is the biggest key. I don't think we should be ridiculous in our thinking about this. Everyone does not have to do triathlons. We can and must do better with our health including starting in schools with direct curriculums on health and eating.

Candidate response truncated due to 250-word limit.

QUESTION 3:

What should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor the middle class and the wealthy, particularly addressing racial and cultural divides?

CANDIDATE KARIN HOUSLEY:

no response received

CANDIDATE TINA SMITH:

I believe that people should have the freedom and opportunity to live the kind of lives they want. That means we need to invest in a diverse economy – manufacturing, technology and small businesses – so businesses can grow and workers can get better pay and better jobs. At the same time, we need to acknowledge and address economic disparities and implicit biases, because too many people, especially people of color and women are not getting equal pay for equal work. That's wrong, and that's why I am working to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act to help close the longstanding pay gap between men and women. We also need to increase paid family and medical leave so people can take the time they need to care for their families without the worry of losing a paycheck. And, it is critically important that we invest in our young people so that they can see a future for themselves. That means making college more affordable, but it also means making sure that every young person, even if they don't want to go to college, has the opportunity to get the skills and credentials they need to build a career and have a good-paying job. In the Senate, I'm working to allow students to refinance their student loans and I passed a law to expand career and skills training.

CANDIDATE SARAH WELLINGTON:

The federal government must make direct, concise and intentional action to repair the economic disparities caused by structural racism practices such as red-lining that reduced African Americans access to home wealth. We must have hard conversations that make us really uncomfortable to make real change.

CANDIDATE JERRY TROOIJEN:

Disparity in economic terms occur when there is disparity in skills and educational tools between people. The challenge is helping people acquire the new skills and tools needed to compete. Education is key. Please read our extensive coverage of education and jobs and the economy on our website

QUESTION 4:

What should the federal government's top priority be in setting a sound energy policy that also addresses the impact of global climate change?

CANDIDATE KARIN HOUSLEY:

no response received

CANDIDATE TINA SMITH:

The overwhelming scientific consensus is that our climate is getting warmer because of human activity. But the good news is that we know how to slow the problem down, and we need Minnesota's clean energy to do it. That means that the federal government should take an active role in leading efforts to expand renewable

energy programs that benefit Minnesota and the nation as a whole. As Lt. Governor, I led a bipartisan effort to increase Minnesota's Renewable Energy Standard from 25 percent by 2025 to 50 percent by 2030. In the Senate, I serve on the Energy Committee where I've introduced a bill to protect our nation's renewable fuel standard, because I believe we need to continue to build our efforts to produce clean energies like the ones we make here in Minnesota. These standards have already reduced emissions and saved Minnesota drivers more than half a billion dollars. I also cosponsored a bill to remove limits on E15, and championed renewable energy initiatives in the Senate Farm Bill that would provide millions of dollars in energy grants and loans to rural communities. The federal government should work to support innovation that leads to an affordable clean energy future. That means creating an even playing field in the market for fossil fuels and renewables, creating federal policy that encourages clean energy innovation at the state level while setting a national floor for the amount of clean energy produced, and strengthening the Renewable Fuel and Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards.

CANDIDATE SARAH WELLINGTON:

A sound energy policy will only come when it is profitable to design and implement that model. Minnesota should be inundating the market with new ideas to create a sustainable energy model that addresses climate change. One component to addressing climate change is the research and development around industrial hemp. The products that are derivatives of hemp number in the thousands. Some of those solutions could lead to a reduction in energy and production of sustainable bio-fuel from the remains of hemp after processing. We also must immediately rejoin the Paris accords and ensure that the EPA standards that may have been subject to change or non-enforcement are reinstated immediately.

CANDIDATE JERRY TROOEN:

We need to evolve out of carbon-based energy plain and simple. We don't want to tank our economy in the process and don't have to. Our national security has to be respected but here again we can do both.

QUESTION 5:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted?

CANDIDATE KARIN HOUSLEY:

no response received

CANDIDATE TINA SMITH:

We need to work to ensure our right to vote because our vote is our voice in America's democracy. And it is only powerful, but only if we use it. That's why we need to reverse the recent actions of the Supreme Court that gutted protections for voters. In Minnesota, we are lucky to have strong voting rights, safe and secure elections and consistently have one of the highest voter turnouts in the country. That's because Minnesotans stood up and defeated the attempt to discriminate against people without a driver's license, and instead encouraged one another to vote. In fact, no-excuse early voting is already underway and Minnesota has same-day registration, so remember to use your voice and vote.

CANDIDATE SARAH WELLINGTON:

With the success of absentee voting in Minnesota, I think that can be used more widely to ensure that each vote can count in all elections. I don't believe the electoral college serves a need in our nation today. Voting should be made a national holiday with business closed, schools closed and the nation's efforts focused on our democracy in action. I was lucky to be present in Costa Rica during a presidential election. Nearly 98%

of eligible voters vote. We should strive to match that.

CANDIDATE JERRY TROOEN:

Regulate properly the voting process. My understanding is Minnesota does this pretty well.

QUESTION 6:

How can the federal government, in collaboration with other levels of government, provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12?

CANDIDATE KARIN HOUSLEY:

no response received

CANDIDATE TINA SMITH:

That's why I fought as Lt. Governor for free all-day kindergarten for every Minnesota family, and worked to expand affordable pre-k education. In the Senate, I serve on the Education Committee where I am committed to addressing the teacher shortage and making sure that school environments are safe and accepting of every student. I'm also working to ensure that every young person, whether they plan to go to a four-year college or not, sees a future for themselves with a good paying career. That's why as Lt. Governor I worked to freeze tuition at Minnesota's Colleges and Universities, and it's why I cosponsored legislation that would allow students to refinance their student loans to lower, more affordable rates. But with equal importance we need to expand career and technical training opportunities and resources, which is why I worked on the Perkins Bill which was recently signed into law. Education is the engine of opportunity and it ought to be available to all of our kids, not just some.

CANDIDATE SARAH WELLINGTON:

The federal government needs to choose their mandates of local school districts carefully and fund them fully. Having worked in public schools I can list wastes of money all day long. It is time to listen to teachers, students and families in making decisions and allocating money. I think we can easily fund two years beyond high school graduation, whether that is trade school, apprenticeships, art school, military service or so many other possible programs while young people decide what to do and before they take on student loan debt. This can be through, health and human services, military branches, elder and youth care...it really is endless.

CANDIDATE JERRY TROOEN:

Well, the federal government can't provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through 12. That is the task of the State and even more so local school districts. Of course the federal government should work and collaborate with other levels of government but realistically it can't have in-depth relationships with every school district in America.

QUESTION 7:

How would you reduce the role of money in American elections?

CANDIDATE KARIN HOUSLEY:

no response received

CANDIDATE TINA SMITH:

We need to end the influence of corporate special interests and secret money on politicians by limiting the amount of money they can spend on political campaigns. I believe we will only be able to build an economy that works for everyone if we reform this broken system. That's why I support reversing the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision that allowed unlimited amounts of dark money into our elections and I supports legislation to make organizations buying ads online disclose who they are and who funded them. I also co-sponsored legislation to end campaign contributions by foreign-controlled corporations and I support legislation for changing the way Senate elections are financed. I'm proud to be endorsed by the advocacy group End Citizens United.

CANDIDATE SARAH WELLINGTON:

Money in American elections is the downfall of American politics. One way to reduce this is to have each candidate receive a certain amount of air time on radio, cable, tv etc as well the right to send out only a certain number of pieces of mail, etc. So other than the \$50 or \$100 campaign contributions from individual donors to political parties, candidates have to run on an equal financial platform.

CANDIDATE JERRY TROOEN:

By making the PAC money be immediately identified by the candidates as to where it came from

QUESTION 8:

In your opinion what is the most important challenge facing our country and how do you propose to address this challenge?

CANDIDATE KARIN HOUSLEY:

no response received

CANDIDATE TINA SMITH:

One thing I hear all across Minnesota is that people are sick and tired of the partisan divide in Washington. I will work with anyone – even if we disagree – to do get things done for Minnesotans. That's why I fought for a spot on the Agriculture committee and worked with Democrats and Republicans to pass a Senate Farm Bill that will help Minnesota's farmers grow and thrive by including help for younger farmers to get started, expanded broadband in rural areas and strengthened crop insurance. It's also why I worked to pass a bill to combat the opioid epidemic out of the Senate with strong bipartisan support. It would provide resources for addiction prevention, treatment and recovery programs, and includes one of my biggest priorities that I worked on with Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski to include resources for students to access mental health services in their schools and communities, to name a few.

CANDIDATE SARAH WELLINGTON:

Poverty. Poverty and wealth disparity and the rate at which the poor are falling even faster into deeper

depths of poverty. The cost of living is rising fast. My older neighbors are struggling, people who worked 40 years, did the 'right' things and still are thankful for food shelves to round out their SS and retirement checks. My neighbors who have or want a family are nervous about job security and the rising cost of gas and city services. We need to raising all ships by raising the sea level in which we sail. "We all do better when we all do better.

CANDIDATE JERRY TROOIJEN:

Our biggest challenge as a country mirror our biggest challenges as individual people. That is to say, how is my spirit, how is my outlook, how is my attitude, how is my resolve, how is my commitment, how is my determination, how strong is my belief? If not this what else could it be? The answer to these questions is the answer to how we will face all challenges. Yes, spirit matters. The how to achieve spirit is a longer answer.

US REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 8

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of United States Representative.

CANDIDATE PETE STAUBER:

no response received

CANDIDATE JOE RADINOVICH:

I am a 4th Generation Cuyuna Iron Ranger, raised in a family of miners, electricians, and health care workers. I've dealt with personal tragedy, including losing my mother to gun violence - an experience that has taught and instilled in me the importance of community, public education, and strengthening the middle class in hard times and economic uncertainty. I am running for the office of United States Representative to champion policies that equip working families to thrive in times of economic changes and personal challenges. First, this means protecting retirement security in the form of Social Security, Medicare, pensions, and the unions that fought for them. Second, this means investing in the people and places of this country by building border to border broadband access, providing early childhood scholarships to reduce the cost burden of child care on working parents, and adopting a system of universal healthcare through a Medicare-for-All approach. Finally, this means changing the way we do politics in this country by removing the corrosive influence of dark money flowing into our elections. This system makes elected officials more accountable to millionaires and billionaires, instead of focusing on the voters who elect them. I think that's wrong, and I'm fighting to take back our government from special interests.

CANDIDATE RAY SKIP SANDMAN:

I am Ray "Skip" Sandman I was born in Toledo, Ohio in 1953. My family moved to Brookston, MN in 1960. I served 2 tours of duty in Vietnam. The bulk of my working life I was employed as a corrections officer at the North East Regional Corrections Center and retired after 29 years there.

I have been married to Babette for almost 30 years, we have 6 children, 16 grandchildren and one great-grandchild on the way. I am an enrolled member of the Fond du Lac Band of Ojibwe. I have been employed as both a traditional healer and spiritual advisor for FDL and also for the Mille Lacs Band and the greater Native Community. My experiences as a veteran, a guard, a husband, father, and grandfather as well as the cultural benefits of the Native American traditions lead me to believe that everyone has value, and that our Natural Environment should be protected to allow us to be nurtured by it. I am also appalled by the still-growing gap of wealth inequality between the richest one percent and the rest of Americans. These are just some of the reasons of why I am running for US Representative.

QUESTION 2:

Please explain why you do or do not believe that the federal government should ensure that every American has health coverage.

CANDIDATE PETE STAUBER:

no response received

CANDIDATE JOE RADINOVICH:

I strongly believe that the federal government should do more to ensure that every American has health coverage for themselves and their families. In my view, health care is a right. A broken arm shouldn't bankrupt you and you shouldn't have to choose between preventative care and paying your electric bill. I support universal, single-payer Medicare for All that keeps us and our families healthy and working. This is a system that benefits all Americans, whether they've been self-employed, run a small business, or have bargained collectively for healthcare benefits. Too many of our healthcare dollars are going to middlemen and special interests when they should go to caring for our families and neighbors.

CANDIDATE RAY SKIP SANDMAN:

First, I think we can all agree that the healthcare system paid for by insurance is not working for the vast majority of the American people. For many of those that have health insurance it is expensive, high deductibles and co pays discourage using health care. 27 million Americans have almost no access to healthcare because they cannot afford the premiums. Our health care system is, however, working very well for the Insurance companies. 30% of our insurance premiums are skimmed off by insurance companies for advertising, executive salaries, stockholder dividends and insurance billing. For example, if your annual premiums are \$10,000 only \$7000 goes for actual healthcare. We need to remove insurance companies from the health care cookie jar. The United States health care system costs over \$9,000 per person. Canada, which has a single-payer Health care system paid for by taxes to the government, only costs \$4,500 per person. Yet, in spite of paying only half as much for healthcare, Canadians live 4 years longer than Americans! A single-payer health care system is the beginning of the work toward a just and sustainable society. Health care is a human right! As your US Representative in Congress, I will not be bought, I will fight for single payer.

QUESTION 3:

What should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor the middle class and the wealthy, particularly addressing racial and cultural divides?

CANDIDATE PETE STAUBER:

no response received

CANDIDATE JOE RADINOVICH:

We need to do more to reduce economic disparities and lift more Americans into the middle class. One way to reduce the wealth gap and expand the middle class is addressing the issue of tax fairness. Unfortunately, the 2017 federal tax reform changed our tax structure in the wrong way. My opponent wholeheartedly supports his party's plan that gives 83 percent of the benefits to the top 1% while ultimately raising taxes on middle class Minnesotans and adding \$1.9 trillion dollars to the national debt. I have opposed it, primarily because of the damage it will cause to our retirement security programs like Social Security, Medicare and pensions, and the lack of benefits that have failed to trickle down to the middle class. We need to restore important tax benefits that allowed construction workers like my brother and cousin to deduct their travel expenses, while simultaneously ending tax benefits for the super-rich and well-connected who can still deduct the cost of a corporate jet. I will strongly oppose any efforts to cut Social Security and Medicare in order to pay for tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires if elected to Congress.

CANDIDATE RAY SKIP SANDMAN:

Three of my four top issues are Single-Payer Healthcare, raise the federal minimum wage to \$15/ hr. and provide at least two years of tuition free college / technical education. All of these are designed to address economic disparities. I believe wealth inequality is the greatest threat to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in America. 327,000 Americans, the richest .1%, control as much wealth as 294 million Americans (90%). We have 43 million Americans living in poverty. Those numbers are disproportionately women, children and our communities of color. Since 1963, the wealth of the richest 1% has increased seven-fold. Coincidentally, in 1960, the highest tax rate was 91% now it is 39%, prior to the tax plan that was passed this year by the Republican Congress and signed by Donald Trump. How many times must we implement a trickle-down economy to find out, once again, that it does not work? There is no justification for a tax cut for the wealthiest 10%. In Congress, I will oppose all Reverse-Robin Hood Tax plans and vote to have the wealthy assume more of the tax burden. I will also search for ways to ensure that all cultures are included in government programs. Too often, grant money and program availability are unknown to those who need it the most, and are sucked up by those who need it the least.

QUESTION 4:

What should the federal government's top priority be in setting a sound energy policy that also addresses the impact of global climate change?

CANDIDATE PETE STAUBER:

no response received

CANDIDATE JOE RADINOVICH:

As the Congress works to craft our national energy policies, I believe our primary focus must be to develop clean and renewable energy supplies and technologies right here in America that reduce our contribution to climate change and create good, middle class jobs. As part of this, we need to have a transition period that keeps our blue-collar and union workforce employed as part of that move to more renewable and reliable energy sources. The federal government can do its part to promote homegrown energy by reauthorizing and expanding popular programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF takes in annual royalties oil and gas companies pay to drill on the Outer Continental Shelf - and invests that money to expand access to public lands for hunting and recreation, conserve natural habitat, build and repair local parks and playgrounds, and acquire historic sites.

CANDIDATE RAY SKIP SANDMAN:

Worldwide, the fossil fuel industry is subsidized directly and indirectly by \$5 trillion dollars each year. These subsidies are corporate taxes on the people and the planet! Governments need to mandate the use of green energy technologies over fossil fuels to begin the long process of reversing climate change. Also, we need to disincentivize fossil fuel usage. The Federal Gas Tax was last raised in 1993. A lack of a realistic gasoline tax discourages the investment in electric vehicles, mass transit, and light rail like the Northern Lights Express. I support increasing the federal gas tax 5 cents per gallon per year and dedicating this revenue to infrastructure maintenance. This will help incentivize a green energy economy and the millions of American jobs that will follow. Allowing Enbridge to leave the old line 3 in the ground is an indirect subsidy to them and tacit approval of the policies that began climate change. It should not take an act of Congress to get pipeline companies to clean up after themselves, but if I am elected I will author legislation to ensure that pipeline companies are required to remove unused pipelines. Eighty percent of America's electrical needs can be met by renewable

sources. I would call for and support a massive public investment in renewable energy and electrical infrastructure to handle it. We can fund this by redirecting part of the military budget.

QUESTION 5:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted?

CANDIDATE PETE STAUBER:

no response received

CANDIDATE JOE RADINOVICH:

The right to vote is fundamental to citizens of the United States but it is under assault, as it was here in Minnesota in 2012. More states across the country are making it harder, sometimes near impossible, for eligible citizens to exercise their right. Moreover, many areas of our current electoral system are outdated and in desperate need of modernization. I support increasing funding for the federal Election Assistance Commission in order to help state and local election officials upgrade outdated election technology, address vulnerabilities in voting and registration infrastructure, and prevent future intrusions by Russia and other foreign and domestic entities determined to undermine the integrity of the U.S. election system.

CANDIDATE RAY SKIP SANDMAN:

I think that many of us in Minnesota take voting for granted because we make it relatively easy. Same day voter registration, early voting, paper ballots, and a minimal ID required help make our voting experience hassle free and us confident that our votes are being counted. I would say that I would like to see more states adopt the voting systems we use. Same day registration in every state would lead to less voter purging. To make the vote even more fair, I would support allowing everyone who is not in prison have the right to vote. I would also like to see the electoral college be disbanded.

QUESTION 6:

How can the federal government, in collaboration with other levels of government, provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre- K through grade 12?

CANDIDATE PETE STAUBER:

no response received

CANDIDATE JOE RADINOVICH:

I got involved in politics because of cuts to rural schools, like Crosby-Ironton. Since then I have been on the frontlines fighting for public education and better pay and benefits for working families. Every child has a right to a good education, no matter what zip code they grew up in. I successfully fought to increase funding for education while I was in the state legislature, and I will continue to do that in Congress. I believe in debt-free two-year community and technical colleges for everyone, and support Minnesota's Occupational Grant Pilot Program, which covers the cost of tuition and fees for many high-demand two-year programs at MnSCU

campuses. We know that these institutions are nimble and responsive to local economies. Federal proposals like the America's College Promise Act would give students the opportunity to access quality and affordable higher education that gives them the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the 21st century economy. We need to prioritize investments in education for working class families above tax giveaways for millionaires and billionaires. I'll fight to make Minnesota families a priority in Congress.

CANDIDATE RAY SKIP SANDMAN:

I am in complete agreement with these suggestions from The League of Women Voters.

- Provide leadership and vision to promote a quality education for all children;
- Provide broad common standards developed by educational experts upon which states and local education agencies can build;
- Provide a suggested curricular structure or framework as a guide to state and local education agencies to develop their own curricula;
- Provide a national assessment that clearly informs teachers, parents and students about how well individual students have mastered the criteria established at a national level;
- Provide a national assessment that informs district their student populations compare to similar populations to theirs; and
- Provide a combination of competitive grants and non-competitive funding to states and local school districts to achieve equity among states and populations.

Also, I would add that I would support more federal funding of pre-K through 12 based upon poverty rates with in a school district and specifically direct more funding towards those schools that service the hardest hit communities within said district.

QUESTION 7:

How would you reduce the role of money in American elections?

CANDIDATE PETE STAUBER:

no response received

CANDIDATE JOE RADINOVICH:

We need to reduce the role of money in American elections and change the way we do politics in this country. I support removing the corrosive influence of dark money flowing into our elections so that we can elevate our political discourse. This will help build the trust necessary to enact policies that benefit the public and not simply the wealthy and corporate interests. If we're going to wrestle control of our government away from the millionaires and billionaires across the country who are unaccountable to the voters in our district, we need a constitutional amendment to overturn the Citizens United supreme court decision and we need to remove the corrupting influence of secret money from our political system. We allow money to control too many of the decisions made in Washington, and that's why I have run a campaign without taking a dime from corporate PACs, and I'll support legislation to limit the influence of these groups that spend millions of dollars to attack candidates without being identified or held accountable to the voters. I'll also support efforts that limit or prohibit members of congress from "dialing for dollars" on the taxpayer's time in Washington. These are bipartisan, common-sense solutions. We can also look into limiting the campaign season and providing more public financing for our campaigns and elections.

CANDIDATE RAY SKIP SANDMAN:

We need the Supreme Court to reverse Citizens United declaring that money is a form of free speech and/or pass a Constitutional Amendment declaring that only humans can be protected under the bill of rights. I am a supporter of the “We the people amendment” to the US Constitution. I will support efforts to strengthen transparency and disclosure requirements on who pays for political advertising and campaign materials.

QUESTION 8:

In your opinion what is the most important challenge facing our country and how do you propose to address this challenge?

CANDIDATE PETE STAUBER:

no response received

CANDIDATE JOE RADINOVICH:

I believe the biggest challenge facing working families in our nation and especially in our district is the pressure brought on by our changing economy as a result of increased mechanization and globalization. As our nation grows wealthier and more productive than ever, workers are not sharing in that increased productivity and, in fact, have experienced stagnant wages for the better part of the last 40 years. To address this challenge, we need to make investments in skills training and re-training, protecting the rights of workers to unionize, and fortifying complementary systems and services that make work possible—like healthcare, childcare, paid family leave, and public education — which will give all of us the stability, employability, and safety we need to build our futures. We also must ensure that every American has the ability to retire with economic security in this changing economy by protecting and strengthening Social Security, Medicare and pensions.

CANDIDATE RAY SKIP SANDMAN:

We all need to have the faith and courage to demand Congress change things for the better for all of us. The despair of the poor and decline of the American middle class as characterized by the obscene wealth disparity we now endure, has led many Americans to conclude that we live in a rigged society and economy. Many have given up hope that there will be a change for the better. We must not accept defeat, as a society, we must have faith that things can be changed for the better. National Polls indicate that voters support raising the minimum wage and /or going to single payer health care. Few politicians are willing to really push for these needed reforms because they are bought and paid for by their wealthy donors. There will not be real substantive change that benefits regular Americans until we have politicians brave enough to stand up to the money. As a society, we must be brave enough to stand up to the money by rejecting their politicians, accept only those politicians that will vote to improve the lives of regular Americans. My name is Ray “Skip” Sandman and I thank you for your time.

MN STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 3B

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of MN Representative.

CANDIDATE KEITH MACDONALD:

no response received

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

I love the job of state representative and I make a difference! I work hard, listen and suggest solutions that others enthusiastically accept because they were allowed to participate in the process. Over the years I have earned recognition and respect for my leadership style which is democratic, supportive, encouraging, inclusive and promotes consensus. That being said, *experience* and *seniority* matters at the legislature and I use both judiciously every day. The concerns and interests of the people who live in district 3b hold priority and I demonstrate that by being available all year long and not *just* at election season. I am constantly involved, committed and I treasure the confidence the voters have given me. Thank you.

QUESTION 2:

Please explain why you do or do not believe that the state government should ensure that every Minnesotan has health coverage.

CANDIDATE KEITH MACDONALD:

no response received

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

Every Minnesotan deserves access to high-quality, affordable health care and no one should be driven to choose between paying for a roof over their head and paying their monthly insurance premium or health care bills. Too many citizens are forced to put off health care decisions until they are able to afford to go to a doctor. Delaying care not only is costly but it is dangerous and can prevent people from going to work, school or fully participating in their community. Health care for every Minnesotan is a moral issue and an economic issue. Ensuring everyone has access to the care they need reduces the amount of uncompensated care in hospitals and clinics and reduces the cost burden of our safety net providers. Participation from every community member is how we will build a strong Minnesota. We should open up MinnesotaCare so all Minnesotans can buy-in. We should guarantee that every worker has paid sick and family leave and we need to put an end to wage theft. I hope these measures will eventually lead us on the pathway to universal healthcare.

QUESTION 3:

What should the state government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor the middle class and the wealthy, particularly addressing racial and cultural divides?

CANDIDATE KEITH MACDONALD:

no response received

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

One way to address economic disparities is through the tax code. Ensuring an equitable public education system is another approach. I also think it will more likely happen if voters return a DFL Majority to the Mn. House and Senate to work in cooperation with Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan. In 2012 Minnesota voters voiced their concerns over the states's growing inequality, and in 2013-14, the DFL Majority followed through on the promises to restore fairness to the tax system, structurally balance the budget, and make overdue investments in middle income tax relief, education and job creation. Specific to the tax code, the 2013 legislature and Governor Dayton made substantial progress in making Minnesota's tax system more equitable by requiring high income Minnesotans to pay their fair share. During 2013-14, the DFL Majority also boosted progressive Property Tax Refund programs for homeowners and renters by \$177 million and middle income tax cuts by more that \$100 million, including an expanded Working Family Credit. These efforts made the tax system more fair and progressive. In the 2019 session, if DFLers get back the majority, we will strive to increase funding for community-based child care options and expand access to public. universal pre-k for all Minnesota children. We will offer and expand grants to "full service" k-12 schools. We will fight to ensure every Minnesotan has the affordable access to job training or higher education they need to thrive.

QUESTION 4:

What should the state government's top priority be in setting a sound energy policy that also addresses the impact of global climate change?

CANDIDATE KEITH MACDONALD:

no response received

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

We must modernize our aging energy infrastructure so that it is secure and supports greater use of renewable energy. When setting sound energy policy we should consider: (1) developing renewable energy, (2) conserving energy, (3) complying with the Clean Power Rule. Renewable energy has been a huge success story in MN. In 2002 less than 5% of our electricity came from renewable sources but by 2015 over 21% was produced. I initiated legislation that established the wind power industry in MN. In 1991 I received the American Wind Energy Association Achievement Award for leadership advancing the cause of Clean Energy Development. In this century Solar and biomass have made great strides and we could still do much more with hydro-electric power. The Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) was part of legislation since the early 1990's. Under CIP gas and electric utilities are encouraged to find ways for their customers to use less energy. In the last 20 years CIP has avoided 82 million tons of carbon emissions and saved consumers over \$6 billion. Implementing Minnesota's plan under the Clean Power Rule could also be a big part of our future energy policy. If so, there could be further improvement to CIP , and further development of renewable energy using

discoveries and recommendations of University of MN. NRRI. Some individuals think we should include a carbon allowance trading program ("cap and trade") but I am not convinced that would be a benefit for the nation, world or planet.

QUESTION 5:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted?

CANDIDATE KEITH MACDONALD:

no response received

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

Minnesota usually leads the nation in voter turnout and receives high marks for its election administration. We should build on the successes of the past, making it easier for Minnesotans to participate in our democratic process. I would like to see more Civic Education programs, perhaps led by the League of Women Voters in cooperation with public radio and television that try new ways of "reaching out". We should consider reforms that will move forward with a streamlined voter registration process, use electronic rosters to store voter data and process voters on Election day, hopefully this will result in shorter lines at the polls, better voter privacy and more accurate voter records. We should be making it simpler and safer to vote. American elections are the envy of the free world. It is our duty to protect our elections from foreign meddling. An assault on American elections is an assault on America. We should be at the front of the line to cooperate and apply to receive available federal funds to protect and improve our election systems even if Minnesota has to match the funding.

QUESTION 6:

How can the state government, in collaboration with other levels of government, provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre- K through grade 12?

CANDIDATE KEITH MACDONALD:

no response received

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

The Minnesota state Constitution says "it is the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools. The legislature shall make such provisions by taxation or otherwise as will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state". We should follow the Constitution. School districts should not have to rely on regressive property tax referendums for general operating expenses. Pre-K and early childhood programs should be available and affordable for all children and families. Full service Community Schools are an important strategy in ensuring equity in our schools and reduces opportunity and achievement gaps. In order for schools to offer these "wrap around" services, partnerships within the community is essential. For example, at Myers-Wilkins Community School in Duluth partners with nine organizations in the area to provide enrichment programs, while also working with Blue Cross and the county in the creation of a community health hub on campus. I authored HF1709 which provided grant money to foster the development and expansion of full-service community schools across the state. Four competitive

grants were awarded and Lincoln Middle School in Duluth was selected in 2016. There is a waiting list and many schools want to provide full service. We should fund a larger number of grants so more students and families across the state have these proven opportunities.

QUESTION 7:

How would you reduce the role of money in American elections?

CANDIDATE KEITH MACDONALD:

no response received

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

I would like to reduce the amount of money a candidate or campaign is expected to raise and spend in an election. I would also like to see more transparency, disclosure and reporting by candidates and contributors. I think local elections and school board elections should have the same reporting requirements. I strongly support public disclosure of all spending and contributions to campaigns at all levels in America. I support and participate in public financing and voluntary spending limits. I think the Minnesota Political Contribution Refund (PCR) program should continue to be funded so Minnesota residents can contribute to candidates whom they support. I also support the party check off on our state income tax forms. We need to continue with community conversations about solutions for problems caused by the Citizen United decision; how individuals can run for office even if they don't have personal funding to contribute; and independent expenditures reporting. We can't give up.

QUESTION 8:

In your opinion what is the most important challenge facing our state and how do you propose to address this challenge?

CANDIDATE KEITH MACDONALD:

no response received

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

We must finish the work that was blocked from committee agendas or was vetoed after final passage. We must set priorities for the future. We must listen to our constituents and build an economy that works for everyone. The legislature must ensure transparency in the process of making laws and restore confidence and openness in government as well as establishing a legislative calendar with rules that are realistic and allows opportunity for "the people" to be heard. Last session our DFL caucus created the Minnesota Values Plan. Led by Representative Liz Olson of District 7B a subgroup of our caucus engaged people in communities across the state to build a legislative agenda rooted in the hopes, aspirations, and demands of Minnesotans. Hundreds of people participated in these "town halls" and "listening sessions" and were not afraid to speak out and this is what they revealed: Minnesotans care deeply about each other and want to see one another succeed. Working together, we can strengthen our communities across the state by improving education opportunities, investing in a brighter future for our families, and increasing economic prosperity for all Minnesotans of different races and from different places. Our shared Minnesota Values bring us together and can serve as a guide for how we move forward--and how we make Minnesota work better for all of us. I will work to achieve the goals of the Minnesota Values Plan.

MN STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 7A

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of MN Representative.

CANDIDATE DANA KRIVOGORSKY:

no response received

CANDIDATE JENNIFER SCHULTZ:

I'm currently a state representative (second, two-year term), Professor of Economics at UMD, mother of two boys (Otis & Lewis), and a partner to an incredible husband (& criminologist) Rob Weidner. I'm running for re-election to continue working on economic, social and environmental justice, and to pursue my passion to pass meaningful health care reform. As a public servant, I use my expertise in economics, health policy and higher education to create legislation to help Minnesotans. I currently serve on the Tax, Health & Human Services Finance, Higher Education, Rules, and Legislative Data Practices Committees. I am proud of my work serving on the Great Lakes Commission and the Executive Committee of the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus where I have successfully introduced resolutions to protect our water and our Great Lakes. Next session I hope to pass legislation to address legislative redistricting to increase bipartisan collaboration, improve voter participation using automatic voter registration, offer the Minnesota Care buy-in program so everyone has access to affordable health insurance, and pass tax policies to help struggling families.\

QUESTION 2:

Please explain why you do or do not believe that the state government should ensure that every Minnesotan has health coverage.

CANDIDATE DANA KRIVOGORSKY:

no response received

CANDIDATE JENNIFER SCHULTZ:

The state and federal government should work together to provide affordable health coverage to everyone. The state of Minnesota could implement the Minnesota Care buy-in program which could offer affordable health insurance coverage to the non-Medicare population. Health care is a right that should be distributed based on need, not by ability to pay.

QUESTION 3:

What should the state government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor the middle class and the wealthy, particularly addressing racial and cultural divides?

CANDIDATE DANA KRIVOGORSKY:

no response received

CANDIDATE JENNIFER SCHULTZ:

The Legislature should pass bills to increase the minimum wage, provide paid leave for safe and sick time, subsidize child care, increase the state earned-income tax credit, provide tax deductions and refundable tax credits to reduce student debt, provide tax deductions for college savings accounts, increase investments in early childhood education, increase funding for public schools, offer a public option on MNsure to provide affordable health insurance, offer a public retirement savings option, and increase tax rates on investment income. To specifically address racial and cultural divides the state should investigate discrimination, protect those who are victims of discrimination, and educate and train public employees about all forms of discrimination, bias and privilege. The state needs to implement programs to increase diversity of teachers and increase funding to reduce achievement gaps in public schools.

QUESTION 4:

What should the state government's top priority be in setting a sound energy policy that also addresses the impact of global climate change?

CANDIDATE DANA KRIVOGORSKY:

no response received

CANDIDATE JENNIFER SCHULTZ:

The state should take an inventory of all greenhouse gas emissions, make public buildings more efficient, set high targets for utility companies to reach efficiency goals for providing clean energy (including setting rules for utility companies to pay market rates to consumer/community solar gardens) and provide incentives to convert to clean energy consumption for commercial and residential users. The state legislature, governor and state agencies need to work on policies that protect our water, air and land. We need to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels, including the burning of coal. We also need to provide goals to our utility companies to invest in clean energy and provide incentives to consumers to reduce energy consumption. Investing in community solar and wind energy are now cost-effective solutions. Other initiatives include reducing greenhouse gas emissions (80% reduction by 2050), reducing reliance on fossil fuels, increasing energy efficiency requirements, retire/repower coal plants, zero energy building codes, wastewater treatment energy efficiency standards, use of electric vehicles using renewable energy, transit and multimodal travel, use of thermal renewable energy, and use of cover crops.

QUESTION 5:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted?

CANDIDATE DANA KRIVOGORSKY:

no response received

CANDIDATE JENNIFER SCHULTZ:

We need to make it easier to vote. I chief authored a bill for automatic voter registration when applying for or renewing a driver's license. I oppose all legislation that creates barriers to voting, such as voter ID laws. Early voting and voting by mail can be made much simpler than our current system. Minnesota should also restore voting rights of convicted felons.

QUESTION 6:

How can the state government, in collaboration with other levels of government, provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre- K through grade 12?

CANDIDATE DANA KRIVOGORSKY:

no response received

CANDIDATE JENNIFER SCHULTZ:

We can invest in public schools, particularly those schools that need more resources to address achievement and opportunity gaps. We can also invest in educating teachers and support staff, and increasing the diversity of the workforce. Salaries for public teachers have not kept up with comparable professions in our state. This hurts our ability to attract high-quality students to the profession. We also should be investing in early education where there are high rates of return.

QUESTION 7:

How would you reduce the role of money in American elections?

CANDIDATE DANA KRIVOGORSKY:

no response received

CANDIDATE JENNIFER SCHULTZ:

It is vital to pass legislation for campaign finance reform. Citizen's United has changed campaigns making compromise in divided government difficult. A significant amount of money was spent in state races to gain control of legislative redistricting. In many states redistricting has led to more polarization of elected officials. I chief authored a bill to reform legislative redistricting by taking it out of the hands of the Legislature. We now have fewer moderates running for office. We also have more anonymous PAC money being used in negative advertising. The DFL has proposed the DISCLOSE Act to force PACs to disclose donors and spending on campaigns. I fully support the DISCLOSE Act and other measures to reduce the amount of money spent on campaigns. I also support the political contribution refund program.

QUESTION 8:

In your opinion what is the most important challenge facing our state and how do you propose to address this challenge?

CANDIDATE DANA KRIVOGORSKY:

no response received

CANDIDATE JENNIFER SCHULTZ:

In our state the most important challenge is moving families out of poverty. We can overcome this challenge by addressing opportunity and achievement gaps. To move families out of poverty state funding is needed for affordable housing, education, job training, financial counseling and public subsidies that help families move toward independence. I believe that by addressing poverty we can resolve many barriers to success. To do this the state and local units of government need to work together to fund social workers, public health staff, mental health case managers, teachers, counselors, youth development programs, shelters, and many other services designed to help families succeed.

MN STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 7B

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of MN Representative.

CANDIDATE CAROLINE BURLEY:

My name is Caroline Burley. I was born and raised in a blue collar family in Littlefork, Minnesota. My father logged, farmed and worked for the county highway department. Later he worked for the paper mill in International Falls. He served as assessor, justice of the peace and three terms as a Koochiching County commissioner. His father was a legal immigrant from Norway in the early 1900's. One of my mother's grandmothers belonged to Daughters of the American Revolution. I graduated with honors from Littlefork – Big Falls High School. After attending Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota for two years as a math major, I moved to Minneapolis where I met my husband. I married at age 21 and was married for 49 years before my husband died from Parkinson's in 2011. I then moved to Duluth because our son and his family lived there. I graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. I worked for 40 years in the life insurance industry as a programmer and systems analyst. I completed both the FLMI and CLU courses of study. I also worked as a tax professional. I was a member of the Minneapolis Business and Professional Women and also a member and officer of the Minneapolis Branch of AAUW. My political background includes serving as secretary, co-chair and treasurer of my BPOU. I have been a delegate to district and state Republican conventions and have served many years as an election judge. Throughout each political season, I volunteer for campaigns by making telephone calls, block walking, literature dropping and signs in my yard. This is the first time I have run for office. I am running because I believe conservatives deserve a voice in Duluth and greater Minnesota.

CANDIDATE LIZ OLSON:

My family and I are proud West Duluth residents raising our daughter in a neighborhood we love. My experience lies in engaging and mobilizing diverse groups of people, especially those often left out of the political process, to shape policy solutions at the state and local level. My career has included advocacy for access to healthcare, worker protections, and ending homelessness. I am currently serving my first term in the Minnesota House of Representatives and am seeking re-election for a second term. When I ran to represent the people of 7B two years ago, I promised to build relationships at the Capitol and in our community in order to make people's lives better. Now, as I run again, I am proud to say I have done this. But our work is unfinished. There is still more to do to ensure that everyone in our state can thrive. As I look to the future, I remain committed to the work of making Duluth a city where everyone can thrive. As your representative I will continue to build to a city that works for everyone.

QUESTION 2:

Please explain why you do or do not believe that the state government should ensure that every Minnesotan has health coverage.

CANDIDATE CAROLINE BURLEY:

Health coverage is a difficult and complex issue. Unions and large corporations are able to provide health insurance and sometimes dental coverage at a reasonable rate. It would be interesting to know how much

large employers and their employees pay for health coverage. I am fortunate to be covered by Medicare and a Blue Cross/ Blue Shield supplement through a former employer. I currently pay \$314 a month for the supplement. It was twice as much when my husband was alive. Medicare reimbursements are rather low and I think this contributes to the cost of insurance for others. Dentists and Doctors and Hospitals set rates that may or may not be competitive. My son and his family currently do not have health insurance because he works for a small employer and it costs too much. Many people do not have enough income for health coverage. I do not believe a single payer or Medicare for all is the solution. Government programs are not always efficient and cost effective.

CANDIDATE LIZ OLSON:

Since my earliest days working and organizing in Duluth, I have worked to make sure everyone in our city has access to healthcare. Now, as a legislator, I regularly hear from people who rely on MinnesotaCare, one of our state's public healthcare programs--and other public programs like it--to take care of themselves and their families. I know how important our public programs are, and not only will I work to protect them, I will fight to strengthen expand and find new ways for our state to deliver quality, affordable health care coverage for all Minnesotans.

QUESTION 3:

What should the state government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor the middle class and the wealthy, particularly addressing racial and cultural divides?

CANDIDATE CAROLINE BURLEY:

I think poverty is due to people unable to work and due to lack of education and job skills that prepare them for a job. I think education needs to be changed to teach the basics and job skills. I think the current common core education is destroying the minds and souls of our children. There is undue emphasis on sexuality beginning in kindergarten. The curriculum for English, math, history and science needs to be improved and needs to be taught to reach students where they are. Some classes like math have become so advanced that average students cannot keep up. History has become so watered down that important information is no longer taught. Writing is no longer taught. As a result the students can no longer read writing. The absentee and tardy rates indicate students are finding school difficult and irrelevant. In Duluth it seems like school is all about good benefits and wages for teachers. It should be about teaching students what they need to know to be successful in life. It should be meeting students where they are. Tenure and high salaries and benefits do not mean the most skilled teachers have chosen teaching as a profession. Some people in Duluth have high salaries because they demand them. This makes their products and services more expensive for their customers. Excessive government regulation makes life more difficult for citizens and business owners.

CANDIDATE LIZ OLSON:

Almost a quarter of the people in Duluth live in poverty. And for people of color and indigenous the income disparities are even greater. Too often, our neighbors, friends, and family are living paycheck to paycheck, facing foreclosure, or experiencing homelessness. People are working full-time and still can't support their families. This poverty hurts our entire community, not only those struggling daily to make ends meet. I believe that we must build an economy that works for everyone, with living wage jobs that allow families to support themselves and live with dignity, and benefits like paid family leave and paid sick and safe time for all workers and improving access to quality affordable childcare.

QUESTION 4:

What should the state government's top priority be in setting a sound energy policy that also addresses the impact of global climate change?

CANDIDATE CAROLINE BURLEY:

Global climate change is due to the cost in third world countries to have clean energy. It is also a problem in our country. Air pollution is increasing because of forest fires, automotive emissions and business emissions. I think having diverse job opportunities in the state will reduce the metro area congestion and reduce commute times. A sound energy policy needs to be affordable.

CANDIDATE LIZ OLSON:

I support the League of Women Voters efforts to target climate change through legislative solutions, including setting caps on greenhouse gas and carbon pollution, encouraging conservation and renewable energy and investing in a new clean energy economy. As a state we need to continue our work to reduce carbon pollution, invest in cleaner transportation, and invest in renewable power sources. In addition we need to continue to find ways to conserve energy. Above all we need to ensure that special interests and corporate profits do not jeopardize the future our water, land or residents.

QUESTION 5:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted?

CANDIDATE CAROLINE BURLEY:

I am concerned that the loosening of voter restrictions has increased the possibility of voter fraud. I think we need to eliminate same day registration. I am concerned that registering and voting by mail may increase voter fraud. The biggest problem we have is that too many voters are not well informed. Schools should be teaching more about the responsibilities of a citizen.

CANDIDATE LIZ OLSON:

I worked hard to defeat the Voter Restriction amendment in 2012 and believe we need to expand access to our democracy, not shrink it. I believe that full and robust participation in all parts of politics — from the way campaigns are run, to the voting booth, to how policies are shaped and passed — makes for a stronger democracy. Minnesota, and Duluth in particular, has historically high voter turnout. This is something to be proud of. However, there are still laws that keep people from participating in our democracy. Tens of thousands of Minnesotans who have left prison and returned to their families and communities cannot cast a ballot because they are still on probation or parole. I support efforts to restore voting rights to those 47,000 Minnesotans. It's time for the voices of these community members to be heard at the ballot box.

QUESTION 6:

How can the state government, in collaboration with other levels of government, provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre- K through grade 12?

CANDIDATE CAROLINE BURLEY:

I think we need to allow school alternatives to the public schools. I think the current common core curriculum needs to be changed. Teachers need to meet the students where they are. I think conservative principles need to be added to the school curriculum. It concerns me that college students won't even listen to conservative speakers. Students learn in different ways. The curriculum should allow for this. More classes need to be hands on. I don't believe pre-K students should receive the common core curriculum which has an undue emphasis on sexuality which is detrimental to having class time to teach the basics.

CANDIDATE LIZ OLSON:

The basic K-12 formula allowance provides ongoing state funding that allows public schools to offer high-quality educational opportunities for all students. However, this funding has lagged behind inflation for nearly two decades. We need a tax system that provides equitable, sustainable, predictable, and sufficient funding for public schools. The state needs to strengthen its position as lead funding source for public education in Minnesota. Relegating funding obligations to local communities creates unjust disparities in educational opportunities for students due to the significant differences in tax bases communities across the state can generate. A quality education shouldn't be restricted to those living in wealthy communities. In addition, the state of Minnesota should fully fund special education programs. Special education is an absolutely essential service within our public schools, but it is also one of the most significant unfunded mandates created by our federal government. Minnesota can't pass on that burden to local districts by ignoring the significant costs of SpEd programs. In addition we need to target closing the achievement gap by funding initiatives such as full service community schools, all day kindergarten and smaller class sizes.

QUESTION 7:

How would you reduce the role of money in American elections?

CANDIDATE CAROLINE BURLEY:

I would reduce the role of money in elections by prohibiting unions from donating to elections. Union members should donate individually to the candidate of their choice just as other citizens do. I would encourage public forums so the public can hear and see all of the candidates.

CANDIDATE LIZ OLSON:

Since the "Citizens United vs. Federal Election" Supreme Court decision in 2010, corporations have gained more influence in our elections, legislative process, and in our everyday lives. Corporations continue to influence elections and policy at the state level and we need to support efforts to publicly fund elections and get the money out of our elections.

QUESTION 8:

In your opinion what is the most important challenge facing our state and how do you propose to address this challenge?

CANDIDATE CAROLINE BURLEY:

Our state faces many challenges. Most of the voters I have talked to are concerned about immigration and health care. Immigration needs to be legal. No country can afford to accept immigrants who cannot work to support themselves. This is what Canada and Australia do. We need to secure our borders to stop drug and

human trafficking. We need to put the safety of our citizens first. We need immigrants who will conform to our values. We need to work with federal immigration authorities to prevent illegal immigration.

CANDIDATE LIZ OLSON:

We need to expand access to our democracy and bring more people to the decision making table. For too long our decision makers have not reflected the gender, racial, ethnic and economic diversity of our state. By bringing more people to the table---whether through elected office or by engaging communities most impacted by policy decisions-- we shift who decides and who benefits

MN GOVERNOR AND LT GOVERNOR

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of Governor.

CANDIDATES JEFF JOHNSON AND DONNA BERGSTROM:

I live in Plymouth with my wife Sondi and our sons Thor (20) and Rolf (17). I was born and raised in Detroit Lakes, went to Concordia in Moorhead, got my J.D. at Georgetown Law School in Washington, D.C., and after working in law for Cargill and others I started my small business focused on human resources issues. From 2000 to 2006 I served in the Minnesota House of Representatives, where I was elected Assistant Majority Leader, while continuing to run my small business. I am currently serving my last term as a Hennepin County Commissioner. I am running for governor for a pretty simple reason: I believe Minnesota is one of the best places to live, work, and raise a family, but that we can do better in so many ways than we are right now. Minnesota state taxes are almost twice the national average, and more Minnesotans are leaving the state than coming in. Under Dayton, Minnesota lost the headquarters of 5 Fortune 500 companies, government spending has risen by over 50% and young Minnesotans have been leaving for other states. I will bring common sense and accountability back to St. Paul.

CANDIDATES TIM WALZ AND PEGGY FLANAGAN:

My name is Tim Walz, and I am a teacher, coach, 24-year National Guard veteran, and Congressman. I am running to be Governor of Minnesota with my running mate, State Representative Peggy Flanagan. We are running for One Minnesota. A Minnesota where the people impacted by policy has a seat at the table. A Minnesota where every child has the opportunity to succeed and hope for the future. A Minnesota with fair wages, fully funded public schools, and affordable healthcare are a right, not a privilege. A Minnesota where we protect our environment, invest in renewable energy and jobs, and maintain our roads, bridges, and transit across the state. We want to bring this vision to the governor's office and support the Minnesota we know and love.

CANDIDATES CHRIS WRIGHT AND JUDITH SCHWARTZBACKER:

Thirty-two years ago, I started my political activism as a founding member of the Grassroots Party and Minnesota NORML to legalize cannabis. Far from being a single-issue candidate, I've grown in my studies, knowledge and wisdom about issues and policies that are extremely important to Minnesotans. You can read my detailed plans for addressing our most important issues at **(link removed - Voter Guide policy)**. In contrast, my opponents address issues and policies superficially. Where are their plans for addressing income and wealth inequality, candidate bribery, climate change, economic development, health care fraud, and reining in administrative bloat at our universities? You know our economic system is rigged. You know our political system is rigged. You know we are facing the global catastrophe of climate change. But we don't have to stand by helplessly. We don't have to suffer economically, tolerate candidate bribery or live in a world without a sustainable future. We don't have to live in poverty anymore; without education, without health care and without hope. As Alfred, Lord Tennyson once wrote, "Come my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world." We can create the world anew and that is what this campaign is all about. We have a moral duty to address the real issues facing Minnesota and that is why I am running.

CANDIDATES JOSH WELTER AND MARY O'CONNOR:

I am Josh Welter, a husband, father, volunteer and engineer in the Twin Cities. I am not a professional politician. I believe we all have a duty to step up when we see something wrong. I see plenty wrong with today's politics and the lack of care for the average individual citizen. I believe that we each need to expect more freedom from our government.

QUESTION 2:

Please explain why you do or do not believe that the state government should ensure that every Minnesotan has health coverage.

CANDIDATES JEFF JOHNSON AND DONNA BERGSTROM:

I strongly believe that every Minnesotan should have access to high quality and affordable health care. The very fact that you are still asking this question helps me answer it. It has been 8 years since Obamacare was passed in Washington, and 4 years since Minnesota launched its failed MnSURE experiment. Billions of dollars have been poured into government health care schemes, and the result has been a rolling disaster. The price of health insurance has skyrocketed (both premiums and deductibles), access to choices has declined, and Minnesota's health care delivery has suffered. Some people have seen their premiums for the same care more than double. The last thing I want to see is our access to affordable health care be made even worse by injecting even more government into the system. Tim Walz' promise to provide a state-run health care system is sold as a means to help people afford health care; what it really will bring is skyrocketing taxes (in other states like California they calculated that taxes might double or more), the loss of providers, and health care rationing. Most Minnesotans would see their access to health care reduced, not increased by Walz's plan. Government bureaucrats will make medical decisions, not doctors and patients. Instead, I want to reduce the cost of health care by promoting price transparency, more choices not fewer, and access to the best doctors through new technologies. We can do this and continue to provide insurance to those with pre-existing conditions and help to those who need subsidies. Minnesota has done this for decades and that will not change.

CANDIDATES TIM WALZ AND PEGGY FLANAGAN:

Everyone needs health care. We must take meaningful action to ensure every Minnesotan has access to high-quality, affordable health coverage. That is why I support a MinnesotaCare Buy-In. We can take immediate action to control costs and improve care. Minnesotans don't have to wait for the federal government to act. We have a public health care option right now -- MinnesotaCare -- that delivers high quality care at a price Minnesotans can afford.

CANDIDATES CHRIS WRIGHT AND JUDITH SCHWARTZBACKER:

It's a duty of government to protect the public health. Health care should be a right, not a privilege. Minnesota should opt-out of Obamacare and replace it with a Single-Payer Health Care program, the only long-term solution to our health care crisis. That is why I support the Minnesota Health Plan introduced by State Senator John Marty. Opponents of single-payer health care tell us we cannot afford this expansion of government. But as a percentage of GDP, America spends almost twice as much as other advanced nations, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and Taiwan. This begs the question, "DO YOU PREFER TO PAY TWICE AS MUCH IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR OR HALF AS MUCH IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR?" Without a reduction in quality, why would anyone worry about higher taxes if their overall cost of living went down? Don't YOU want more money in the bank? Our parasitic corporatized medical insurance produces no healthcare whatsoever. However, it does produce healthcare rationing, higher prices,

diminished choices and un-related healthcare spending--overhead, billing, sales & marketing departments, huge profits and exorbitant executive pay; not to mention the billions wasted and spent on computerized billing fraud and abuse. It is estimated that over 10% of medical billing is waste, fraud, and abuse. I've proposed a plan to create a model fraud-control strategy that could cut the cost of healthcare in this state by a billion dollars even with today's system. When will my opponents address this issue?

CANDIDATES JOSH WELTER AND MARY O'CONNOR:

When has government not made a mess of things? Health care used to be affordable. The more we have asked for health care reform, the worse our price premiums have become. We all have a right to care. We have approached the point where the ability for us to afford health care is prohibitive. We need to remove the management of care and allow the free market return to operation. We will then see price stabilization, with constant government intrusion we keep moving that bar and increasing the costs for all. That must end. Single payer health provider is the greatest way to end our choice for how we want to be cared for.

QUESTION 3:

What should the state government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor the middle class and the wealthy, particularly addressing racial and cultural divides?

CANDIDATES JEFF JOHNSON AND DONNA BERGSTROM:

The economic stagnation that plagued the nation after the financial crisis has finally been replaced by a vibrant, growing economy. More jobs at better wages will go a long way toward achieving this goal. What the state can do is vastly improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged communities. Despite decades of rhetoric, not nearly enough has been done to close the achievement gap

CANDIDATES TIM WALZ AND PEGGY FLANAGAN:

Our economy leaves behind disadvantaged people in many pockets of the state. Residents face a lack of housing from North Mankato to North Minneapolis. Child care is out of reach for families from Alexandria to Apple Valley, and a college education is too expensive for young people across the state. Rather than let emerging problems divide our state, we see that they unite us to act. Our state's future depends on all of us coming together to tackle these challenges. It's the right thing to do, and it helps all of our residents be part of our state's economy. To address the opportunity gap for children we need to start early and fund programs that help provide culturally competent child care options for families and we have to do a better job of training, hiring, and retaining educators of color. Peggy and I will also fight to reinstate the Angel Investment Tax Credit and have half of those funds go to women entrepreneurs, companies led by people of color, or rural-based startups. Our future economy must create opportunity for underrepresented groups

CANDIDATES CHRIS WRIGHT AND JUDITH SCHWARTZBACKER:

Most people want a living wage, not charity. The minimum wage must increase. The ROOT CAUSE OF WEALTH INEQUALITY IS our flawed monetary system based on FRACTIONAL RESERVE LENDING. With a fraction of reserves banks can create money out of nothing. If you or I could create money out of thin air and charge interest for it, then who couldn't rule the world after a time? Counterfeiting isn't illegal for banks. The bible says the borrower is servant to the lender. When Congress gave bankers the money power, they enslaved Americans as servants to the lender, made bankers the ruling class, and able to direct our governing policies. For every dollar in reserves the banks can create nine dollars in new money loans based on your credit score. Wealthy people get the lowest interest rates and we pay the highest rates. Banks create money at

the top of the wealth pyramid to benefit the top of the wealth pyramid. To call this a rigged economic system is a colossal understatement. Since banks create the principal but not the interest to pay back their loans, without new loans our debt-based money supply would dry up. Therefore, I support an idea introduced in the Minnesota legislature called the Minnesota Transportation Act, which regulates banks to create the interest to pay back their loans in the form of infrastructure. I would require state chartered banks to create money interest free, without bonding and apply it to transportation, rural broadband, and renewable energy infrastructure.

CANDIDATES JOSH WELTER AND MARY O'CONNOR:

The State government can address the growing economic disparity by increasing individual freedom and the ability for individuals to improve their lives. The best way government can do this is by getting out of each of our lives and reducing the hurdles to a better life. That means lifting regulations, mandates, taxes and fees that prohibit the development of skills, or the promotion of new industries. We need to allow for new businesses to be formed and encourage them not to just create jobs, but to offer careers with paths for upward movement.

QUESTION 4:

What should the state government's top priority be in setting a sound energy policy that also addresses the impact of global climate change?

CANDIDATES JEFF JOHNSON AND DONNA BERGSTROM:

Minnesota has made huge strides in modernizing its energy generation, reducing both pollution and greenhouse gas production. Clean, affordable, and abundant energy are the key to economic growth, and it's a mistake to sacrifice any of these goals. The switch from coal to natural gas has led to a dramatic reduction in pollution and carbon emissions, and that transition will continue to take place. Wind has become another cash crop for our farmers. Minnesota will continue to lead the way to an energy grid that serves Minnesotans' goals.

CANDIDATES TIM WALZ AND PEGGY FLANAGAN:

I have never shied away from tackling a hard issue. We need to invest in renewable energy technology which will create jobs and combat climate change. I support increasing our renewable energy standard to ensure that by 2030, at least 50% of our energy comes from renewables and I support reducing greenhouse emissions by 80% by 2050. Minnesota should be an innovative leader in the clean energy economy.

CANDIDATES CHRIS WRIGHT AND JUDITH SCHWARTZBACKER:

My plan is "Zero by 2050." Climate scientists have calculated that we can only pollute another 270-Giga-tons of green-house gases (GHG) from now on to stay within 2-degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels to avert planetary catastrophe. Therefore, WE MUST REDUCE AT 3% GHG's PER YEAR, ZERO BY 2050, to stay within the survival zone. At today's rate, we'll have used up that 270GtC by 2030, requiring reductions of 20% per year, zero by 2035, an impossible feat. For those who say, "What if global warming is a hoax and we create a better world for nothing?" I ask, "What's nothing?" Obviously, "NOTHING" is our children, grandchildren and future generations. I will not go silently into the night or put the profits of the few above the survival of humanity. Those who endanger our survival have a broken moral compass, PERIOD. My plan envisions an all-electric Minnesota with biomass gasification meeting our chemical needs. To begin 3% yearly reductions, I propose a simple law that says, "ALL NEW ELECTRICAL POWER GENERATION SHALL BE RENEWABLE AND STORABLE." Government & industry shall reduce at: 30% by 2025; 60% by 2035; and 100% GHG-free by 2050. Industries like electric, natural gas, refinery, transportation, agriculture, architecture,

solid waste, cement & metal producers shall submit plans for how they will meet these reduction targets. Constructing a renewable infrastructure is not a sacrifice; it is an investment that will pay for itself in local self-reliance, thousands of good paying jobs, lower energy prices, and better health.

CANDIDATES JOSH WELTER AND MARY O'CONNOR:

The state should not set the energy policy, we should allow the citizens to decide through demand which path to pursue. By removing the subsidies to all energy industries we can move forward where all entities are playing by the same rules and delivering the best energy to our citizens, along with returning your hard earned money. We must remove restrictions that prevent the use of Solar, Wind and Geo Thermal by our citizens so that we can all make a positive impact on our planet. I believe people want to do the right thing, as we educate the population on what choices they have, people will make choices with their own money to define the best energy policy.

QUESTION 5:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted?

CANDIDATES JEFF JOHNSON AND DONNA BERGSTROM:

Minnesota leads the way in voter participation. It's a record we can be proud of. Ensuring that every citizen can vote, and that every vote comes from a citizen, will be high priorities of my administration.

CANDIDATES TIM WALZ AND PEGGY FLANAGAN:

Voting is one of the most patriotic things we can do. It is a right and we have to do everything we can to protect that right, whether you're white, black, brown, or indigenous. Minnesota has led the way with early voting, and to register and same-day registration. However, we have huge disparities when it comes to who registers and who votes. I will strongly consider any proposal that can increase voter registration and turnout.

CANDIDATES CHRIS WRIGHT AND JUDITH SCHWARTZBACKER:

We could end Gerrymandering by transferring redistricting authority to an independent fully transparent commission that must follow strict guidelines that eliminate human bias. To assist the commission in this process I would recommend using the open source program called "Auto-Redistrict." Simply open a "shapefile" load in census and election data, and hit "Go." ([link removed - Voter Guide policy](#)). When tested, Auto-Redistrict created tighter district lines than the humans. Of course, humans can always enter bias into the program, but that's the reason why we want a transparent commission to have the final say, even if they are biased. How about automatically registering eligible citizens to vote? Citizens can always decline to be registered.

CANDIDATES JOSH WELTER AND MARY O'CONNOR:

The real question is how do we encourage everyone to vote, not what can be done to ensure that everyone has the ability to vote. You and every other citizen already have the ability to vote and it is counted. We must motivate all of our citizens to take advantage of this right, 70% of Americans did not vote in the last Presidential election, more than 17% of Minnesotans eligible to didn't vote. When we don't participate we end up with the politics of today. The negative ads only serve to keep people at home. We need to focus on what we can achieve and what we can change. We need to ignore the negative campaigning and find the issues that matter to each individual and let each citizen find their chosen candidate.

QUESTION 6:

How can the state government, in collaboration with other levels of government, provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre- K through grade 12?

CANDIDATES JEFF JOHNSON AND DONNA BERGSTROM:

K-12 education is one of the few state responsibilities specifically addressed in the Minnesota Constitution, so it will be one of my highest funding priorities. Unfortunately, some politicians believe that the only thing that matters in education is increasing the budget every year. While money matters, accountability, funding simplification and empowering parents and teachers is even more important. We need to radically simplify the funding formula, start eliminating mandates on our school districts, allow teachers to teach in a way that best fits their students rather than a way that bureaucrats require and give parents more choice in their kids' education and more control over their kids' schools.

CANDIDATES TIM WALZ AND PEGGY FLANAGAN:

Every single child in Minnesota will grow up and begin to compete with workers in the global economy. Our state must have the best educated workforce not just in the country - but in the world. No matter whether a child is black, brown, white or indigenous; no matter their zip code – every single child in Minnesota deserves an education that prepares them to succeed in a 21st century economy. We need to fully fund our schools. One way to do this is to The current index the education budget to inflation so that we stop playing budgetary games with school funding.

CANDIDATES CHRIS WRIGHT AND JUDITH SCHWARTZBACKER:

Minnesota must treat education as a human right essential to the exercise of an effective democracy. At all levels of education, the teaching of critical thinking is paramount. Without the moral values of truth, fairness and objectivity, in a question driven society trained in critical thinking, a democratic government cannot endure nor be reformed. How about higher standards for teachers? In Finland, a master's degree is the minimum requirement to become a teacher. Finnish teachers get their education free of charge because education is a fundamental right in their Constitution. By contrast, a Minnesota teacher must only have a bachelor's degree; must go into debt to get their degree; and there's no such thing as a guaranteed right to education in our Constitution. If I have my way, Minnesota will have the most highly educated population on earth, not Finland. By reducing administrative bloat and providing conditional funding for undergraduate education our state can provide two-year TUITION-FREE HIGHER EDUCATION which includes trade school. Funding should be provided only on the condition that: (1) Public colleges shall maintain 75% of their faculty as full-time; (2) 50% of capital shall be spent on direct instructional costs; and (3) No more than 25% of classes shall have more than 25 students. The legislative auditor should investigate the true cost of undergraduate education at the University of Minnesota and our State Colleges. To rein in administrative bloat, we should determine the optimum ratio of Administrators to students and reasonable compensation for those services.

CANDIDATES JOSH WELTER AND MARY O'CONNOR:

The state government needs to remove barriers to good education and allow for the freedom of the schools to provide quality education. We need to allow the good teachers to flourish and allow schools to retain them. We need to allow the schools to use a full complement of teaching and learning techniques. We need to stop teaching to a set of tests, but spread the love of learning for a lifetime and encourage the use of new techniques and approaches. We need to return the control of education to the teachers and the parents.

QUESTION 7:**How would you reduce the role of money in American elections?****CANDIDATES JEFF JOHNSON AND DONNA BERGSTROM:**

The more the government spends, the more people will spend to influence it. The Supreme Court time and again has determined that political spending is political speech, so it is difficult to get money out of politics. What we can do is require that political spending is more transparent. People at least deserve to know who is spending the money.

CANDIDATES TIM WALZ AND PEGGY FLANAGAN:

I am proud of the work I have done in Congress to get the STOCK Act signed into law, which prohibits lawmakers from making a profit from insider information. We need to make sure that politicians are motivated by the interests of their constituents and not by money. I will work closely with my legislatures to identify solutions that will reduce the role of money in our elections in meaningful ways.

CANDIDATES CHRIS WRIGHT AND JUDITH SCHWARTZBACKER:

In 2017, More than 99% of voters never contributed to a candidate or party, but the wealthy did. That means the wealthy chose your candidates for you. You just THINK you selected your candidates. What difference does it make if your candidates are already-chosen, as in a totalitarian state like communist China, or MONEY-CHOSEN, as in an oligarchy like Minnesota or Russia? Both types of regimes exercise MANIPULATED CONSENT and deny democratic self-determination. Obviously, our elections are rigged. We could end the oligarchy and restore democratic self-determination with a simple law that says, "NO CANDIDATE OR PARTY SHALL BUY TIME OR SPACE IN THE MEDIA; TIME AND SPACE IN THE MEDIA SHALL BE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE; AND ELECTIONS SHALL BE NO LONGER THAN EIGHT WEEKS." Asking the money-chosen candidates to bring about campaign finance reform is like asking a burglar to kick the money ladder from underneath him when he gets to the second story. Not likely. The only ones who could possibly change our corrupt campaign finance laws would be an independent like me, but you'd rather vote for Benedict Arnold's with more allegiance to money than the voters. Most people vote in their moral interests, not their self-interests. Republicans vote for "Father Knows Best." Democrats vote for "Nurture Knows Best." Well, the government is not your parent. These oligarchs are clever. Not only have they gotten you to vote against your own self-interest, but what's really clever is they've gotten you to THINK against your own self-interest.

CANDIDATES JOSH WELTER AND MARY O'CONNOR:

This seems like a poor question for a state position, perhaps a softball for the Democratic candidate in a democratic leaning district. As Governor I would advocate for transparency and fairness for all in the political process at all levels, city, state and federal. I dare any of the candidates to return all special interest money or donate it to local non profits.

QUESTION 8:**In your opinion what is the most important challenge facing our state and how do you propose to address this challenge?**

CANDIDATES JEFF JOHNSON AND DONNA BERGSTROM:

My top priority is making state government accountable to taxpayers again and changing the culture in some of our state agencies from that of controlling and directing us to actually serving the taxpayers. Time and again we have seen important functions of government completely fail. Elder abuse, child care fraud, the failures of the MNSURE website and the MNLARS disaster. Real Minnesotans are getting harmed by government failures, and hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars are being wasted or even stolen. Balancing the state budget is important, but instilling a service culture back into government and ensuring that tax money is actually helping Minnesotans is even more so.

CANDIDATES TIM WALZ AND PEGGY FLANAGAN:

We have seen a divisive and fearful politics sweep the nation. Minnesotans are sick of the politics and the inability of government to get things done. I am running on One Minnesota, where those impacted by policy have a seat at the table. As a teacher, coach, 24-year National Guard veteran, and one of the most bipartisan members of Congress, I know what it takes to work with others, to form coalitions, and get the job done.

CANDIDATES CHRIS WRIGHT AND JUDITH SCHWARTZBACKER:

I was asked, "Chris don't you have something better to do with your life than legalizing pot and drugs?" I replied, "I'm fighting for freedom. Don't you have something better to do with your life than vote for people who want a complete police state?" President Ronald Reagan's racist War on Drugs and his mass incarceration surveillance police state has made America the most jailed nation on earth. We jail more people than Stalin's Gulag system and more than communist China; a totalitarian state with three times our population.

Vices are not crimes. Vices are those acts by which a man harms himself or his property. Crimes are those acts by which one man harms the person or property of another. Prohibition has subsidized criminals; destroyed public safety; endangered our children; armed criminals better than police; made cops trigger-happy; undermines the Bill of Rights; promotes gang values; is racist in origin and in practice; overburdens the courts, overcrowds the prisons and can't be kept out of prison—a complete police state. Reagan has based your employment on an oath of urination that requires body cleansing to get a job and is nothing more than forced perjury. Despite the fact that 88,000 people die a year from alcohol, prohibition is worse. Despite the fact that illegal drugs kill far less than alcohol, prohibition is worse. Alcohol prohibition destroyed social order. Regulation of alcohol restored social order. Let's regulate drugs just like alcohol, promote social order, generate revenue, and end the police state.

CANDIDATES JOSH WELTER AND MARY O'CONNOR:

In my opinion the most important challenge facing our state is the erosion of our freedom. We are on a path where the government will spend more than we ever have in this state. We are on a path where the government will take more money from every citizen in this state. Our government is on this tax and spend path when the average Minnesotan is not experiencing that same ability. When our state expands its budget faster than the average Minnesotan can afford, we spread the disparity and entrench that mentality for the next generation. We must change that. We must expect more for ourselves and demand less government. We must demand to hold on to what we earn, and expect the government to protect our freedom not special interests. We must expand the ability of small business to grow and flourish. We can do this by eliminating the income tax and still provide the same service to our state. We can spread the vision of liberty and freedom by changing our course of action. We can provide a boost for all Minnesotans by voting this November for liberty minded candidate like Chris Dock for Auditor and myself, Josh Welter for Governor.

MN SECRETARY OF STATE

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of office.

CANDIDATE JOHN HOWE:

The Secretary of State is one of Minnesota's constitutional offices, and it has several responsibilities. First and foremost, the Secretary of State is the chief election official for Minnesota. The office also handles business licensing and registration, along with maintaining Uniform Commercial Code records.

CANDIDATE STEVE SIMON:

As Secretary of State, a big part of my job is overseeing our best-in-the-nation election system. I like to say that I'm in the democracy business. My mission has been to make voting as easy as possible for all eligible Minnesotans. I'm particularly proud of my role in helping to lead Minnesota back to number one in voter turnout in America (up from number six). I expanded voting opportunities for students, military service members, and new Americans. I fought back successfully against the federal government's attempt to collect sensitive personal information on millions of Minnesota voters. I kept our election system safe and secure when the Russian government targeted Minnesota during the 2016 election. As Secretary of State, I also oversee a wide range of business-related filings. I've made it easier to start and maintain a business in Minnesota. I've cut red tape and expanded online offerings. I've also added value to businesses by providing new services like the Minnesota Business Snapshot, a short and voluntary survey for all new and continuing businesses. Over 240,000 businesses have participated so far, and the resulting information is a resource not just for businesses, but for individuals, journalists, academics, and economic development authorities. Another critical function of my office is to administer Safe at Home, an address confidentiality system for survivors of domestic violence, victims of stalking, and others who fear for their safety. The program saves lives, providing protection during the worst time in people's lives.

CANDIDATE WILLIAM DENNEY:

The Secretary of State is responsible for overseeing elections throughout Minnesota and operating the voter registration system. In addition, the office manages business licensing and the "Safe at Home" program.

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE JOHN HOWE:

I am seeking this office because I am passionate about fair, open and honest elections. My background includes a Master's degree in Criminal Justice from St. Cloud State, working as a corrections officer, owning and operating several Sears stores and running my property management company.

CANDIDATE STEVE SIMON:

I grew up in Hopkins, where I still live with my wife and two young children. My father was a lawyer and sports agent, representing numerous professional athletes in their contract negotiations. He's disabled now, but I draw strength from his determination and his commitment to hard work. My mother was an immigrant; a business person and community volunteer; an energetic champion for fairness whose sudden death at age 54 taught me about the fragility of life. I'm the proud product of the Hopkins public schools. After going to college outside of the state, I returned to Minnesota for law school. I served as an Assistant Attorney General for nearly five years, before going into private law practice, where I represented business and individuals for almost fourteen years. In 2004, I won a seat in the Minnesota House of Representatives, representing Hopkins and St. Louis Park. I served for ten years in the House, including as Chair of the House Elections Committee. There, I wrote the laws that gave us online voter registration and the ability to vote early by absentee ballot without having to provide an excuse or explanation; groundbreaking reforms that have helped propel Minnesota back to the top spot in the country in voter participation. In 2014, I was elected to serve as Minnesota Secretary of State. I'm seeking another term to defend our democracy, provide value to our small businesses, and protect our most vulnerable citizens from domestic violence.

CANDIDATE WILLIAM DENNEY:

This is a unique office at a unique time in history. I want to bring an independent, nonpartisan voice to the office that would be able to effectively work with leaders of all parties and ensure the maximum integrity of all electoral systems here in the state without any partisan gamesmanship. The duties of this office are too unique and critical to be left to those who carry the water of a major political party. I've been involved in campaigns across 4 parties. I know how to work independently and with other leaders.

QUESTION 3:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted?

CANDIDATE JOHN HOWE:

Minnesota has expanded the early voting period, and gives citizens a number of ways to vote. I think it's important that voters know their votes are not being offset by ineligible voters, and the Secretary of State's office can do a much better job than it has of reducing ineligible voting.

CANDIDATE STEVE SIMON:

I'm proud to say that my mission as Secretary of State has been to make voting as easy as possible for all eligible Minnesotans. That mission is consistent with our long, bipartisan Minnesota tradition of providing maximum access and ease for voters. To continue that tradition means playing both "offense" and "defense." As for playing "offense," I want to extend my record of providing access to voters. I'm proud to have expanded voting opportunities for students, military service members, veterans, and new citizens. Those breakthroughs happened because I worked with legislators of both major political parties, and traveled the state to reach consensus and forge partnerships. As for playing "defense," I'll keep resisting attempt to weaken and water down our strong voter laws. I'm proud to have fought back successfully against the federal government's attempt to collect sensitive personal information on millions of Minnesota voters. I'll keep being a defender of voter privacy. Nobody who registers to vote in Minnesota should expect that their personal information will end up in the hands of outside agencies or groups with political agendas. One more thing: Partisanship has no place in the Secretary of State's office. I'll keep administering our election laws without any consideration whatsoever to partisan outcomes. That's an important way to ensure integrity in our system.

CANDIDATE WILLIAM DENNEY:

I am in favor of an automatic statewide voter registration for Minnesota residents as they turn 18. I also support reinstating voting rights to felons who are no longer incarcerated. I will fight any effort to remove paper ballots from our election systems as we must have a paper trail to ensure credibility.

QUESTION 4:

How would you use the power of your office to protect the citizens of MN from fraud and other abuses?

CANDIDATE JOHN HOWE:

By ensuring that all the tools of the office are used to root out ineligible, fraudulent and illegal voting. The current Secretary of State is currently defying a court order to release public data about challenged – meaning potentially ineligible or illegal – voters. Without that information, we cannot determine the scope of ineligible voting in Minnesota

CANDIDATE STEVE SIMON:

The integrity of our election system in Minnesota is second to none. Ours is an honest, clean, and open system, which other states seek to copy. That's because Minnesota has rigorous checks and balances before, during, and after balloting that ensure integrity. My office works with multiple state and federal agencies to ensure the fundamental security of our system. As a result, the incidence of misconduct is minimal. In our last statewide election—of almost three million—eleven were found to be the result of fraud. There isn't an election system on the face of the earth that will guarantee an error rate of absolute zero, but the good news is that ours is 0.00037 percent. You have a greater chance of being struck by lightning than you do of witnessing voter fraud. The biggest threat to our election integrity is the danger of a cyber-attack by outside forces seeking to undermine our democracy. In 2016, Minnesota was one of the 21 states targeted for intrusion by a foreign government. Fortunately, we kept the would-be hackers out, and led the successful effort to get new and secure election equipment in the hands of our counties and cities. But the cyber-intrusion challenge is a race without a finish line. I'll continue to deploy resources to fight back. I've been granted a "secret" level security clearance by federal intelligence officials, so I can keep receiving classified threat assessments and other information that can help us protect our system from attack.

CANDIDATE WILLIAM DENNEY:

Abuse of this office for political gain is my biggest fear. By having a Secretary of State that is not influenced by the Democratic or Republican 'talking points of the day' it provides Minnesotans the greatest protection from abuse. Simply put, the Secretary overseeing election results should be neutral.

QUESTION 5:

If elected, how do you will reach out to your constituents?

CANDIDATE JOHN HOWE:

The Secretary of State has a variety of communications tools available to disseminate information to the public, and I will not only use those, but continue to raise the visibility of the office through more public outreach.

CANDIDATE STEVE SIMON:

The best ideas come from all over Minnesota. As Secretary of State, I visit each of Minnesota's 87 counties every year. I'm now finishing up my fourth 87-county tour. I meet with everyday people, students, workers, election administrators, civic volunteers, business owners, teachers, economic development experts, domestic violence victim advocates, and others. I'll continue those visits in my next term. I'll also continue to make myself as available as I can be, whether for in-person meetings, phone calls, or email exchanges. To tackle our biggest challenges, I'll keep convening "working groups" consisting of citizens from a broad cross-section of Minnesotans. And I'll continue to listen more than I talk.

CANDIDATE WILLIAM DENNEY:

I intend to hold monthly live-streamed Town Halls where Minnesotans can ask unfiltered questions and receive a response directly from me. I also intend to create a set of debates sponsored by the Secretary of States office also streamed live on the Secretary of State website. For too long candidates are running for office while running from debates. Minnesotans deserve to hear from those running for office and listen to them differentiate themselves from their opponents.

QUESTION 6:**If elected, what are your priorities for your tenure?****CANDIDATE JOHN HOWE:**

Ensuring that Minnesota not only maintains its status as a high voter turnout state, but does so while protecting the integrity of the system. We need to ensure that only eligible, legal voters take part in our elections.

CANDIDATE STEVE SIMON:

I'll continue to be a Secretary of State for all Minnesotans. That means working with anyone, from any political affiliation, and from any part of our state, to get the best possible results for Minnesotans.

I want to continue to defend our democracy. I'll keep making our election system as secure as possible, which means modernizing and securing our election infrastructure to minimize the risk of electronic infiltration. That will require investments in our Statewide Voter Registration System, nurturing strong relationships with our partners in local governments, and working with federal intelligence officials. As for policy innovations, I'll work for automated voter registration, expanded early voting, pre-registration for high school students, redistricting reform, restoration of voting rights for those who have left prison behind, and transparency in our campaign finance system. I want to add even more value for small businesses. That means continuing to streamline business services. I'll also refine and expand our quarterly economic reports, as well as our Minnesota Business Snapshot survey – to enable individual entrepreneurs and businesses to leverage information for their own productive use. I want to provide extra protection for the physically vulnerable. Our Safe at Home program has been a national model for protecting survivors of domestic violence, as well as others who fear for their own safety. Other states imitate us. I want Minnesota continue to play an active leadership role in the national effort to safeguard survivors – and to spread awareness about resources for those who endure domestic violence.

CANDIDATE WILLIAM DENNEY:

My priorities for Secretary of State are:

- Election Integrity
- Ranked Choice Voting for all elections statewide
- Increased representatives in the MN House by creating smaller districts
- Public Trust, Independence, and Transparency
- Secretary of State Sponsored Candidate debates

MN STATE AUDITOR

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of office.

CANDIDATE PAM MYHRA:

The State Auditor leads the office and sets the tone for effective financial audits and performance reviews of the use of government resources – our tax dollars. Additionally, the State Auditor serves on six state boards: The State Executive Council, The State Board of Investment, The Land Exchange Board, The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, The Public Employees Retirement Association, and The Rural Finance Authority Board.

CANDIDATE JULIE BLAHA:

Our auditor focuses on three things: oversight, education, and representation. She oversees over \$20 billion in local spending, helping analyze how money is being spent and with what kind of results. She supports local leaders and activists with the training, data, and analysis they need to make decisions in our communities. And she represents Minnesotans on boards that deal with issues like investments, economic development, housing, and pensions. But perhaps most importantly, our auditor is an arbiter of truth. And in this time of fake news and unprecedented assaults on truth-tellers, we need a State Auditor who is committed to defending real, unbiased data.

CANDIDATE MICHAEL FORD:

no response received

CANDIDATE CHRIS DOCK:

My name is Chris Dock, and I am seeking the office of Minnesota State Auditor. The State Auditor has responsibility for the following categories of government operations:

Audit Practice Division - *performs approximately 150 financial and compliance audits and reviews 500 single audits per year.*

Constitutional Office - *oversees all the activities of the Office of the State Auditor and its divisions and supports the State Auditor serving on boards for the State.*

Government Information Division - *collects and analyzes local government financial data, which is assembled in regular reports provided to the Legislature and the public. It also conducts a Best Practices Review of local government operations.*

Legal/Special Investigations Division - *investigates allegations of theft or misuse of public funds.*

Pension Division - *reviews investment, financial, and actuarial reporting for about 700 public pension plans. Its objective is to ensure compliance with state statutes governing the administration of plans covering approximately 20,000 members.*

Tax Increment Financing Division - *promotes legal compliance and accountability through examination and review of political subdivisions' use of tax increment financing (TIF).*

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE PAM MYHRA:

I am a Certified Public Accountant with an active license and former Audit Manager at KPMG, an international public accounting firm. I home-educated my three children from pre-school to their high school graduation. I served two-terms as a MN State Representative from 2011 through the beginning of 2015. During my first term in office, I served as a member of the Capital Investment, Education Finance, Education Policy, and Tax Committees. In my second term, I was the Minority Lead member of the Early Childhood and Youth Development Committee and a member of the Education Finance and Tax committees. While in the legislature, I chief-authored two government transparency bills, both unanimously passed in the House and signed into law by the Governor. In 2013, I received the "Elected Women of Excellence" award from the non-partisan National Foundation of Women Legislators. My husband, Chuck, of 37-years and I, are long-time residents of Burnsville, Minnesota. I am seeking this office to use my unique skills, background and experience to improve the accountability and transparency of government spending and update the Office of State Auditor and related Minnesota Statute to be in conformity with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards to better serve the public.

CANDIDATE JULIE BLAHA:

I am running for Minnesota State Auditor to support the great work that happens close to home. I am a math teacher who recently served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Minnesota AFL-CIO. I have also lobbied to support public pensions; served on my city's Economic Development Authority and Governor Dayton's School Finance Working Group; been a board member of the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless; and bargained contracts with my local school district. These experiences have prepared me to effectively, efficiently fulfill the main roles of the auditor: oversight, education, and representation. I know that when neighbors have clear, quality, focused information, we can find solutions that directly improve the lives of Minnesotans.

CANDIDATE MICHAEL FORD:

no response received

CANDIDATE CHRIS DOCK:

I believe the State Auditor must provide independent and impartial oversight of the financial management of the municipalities within the State. All levels of government in our state are controlled by the Democrats or the Republicans; I am the candidate who will bring the highest level of independence to the office of State Auditor, as I have no conflicts of interest (either positive or negative) with either party. In addition, my skills and experience directly correlate with the requirements of this office. I worked as a Manager for Deloitte & Touche, a Senior Consultant for Watson Wyatt, and as a Senior Manager for Ernst & Young; during my tenure at these firms I worked on numerous benefit and retirement plan audits on both the sponsor and auditor sides of the engagements. I have Securities Licenses (Series 2, 7, 63, and 66) and have performed hundreds of pension valuations in my career. As a consultant for over 30 years, I have also worked extensively on data analysis and reporting, providing guidance to executive leadership and stakeholders on business planning initiatives. I have run my own companies for nearly 20 years in the areas of investment, technology, human resources, and business process consulting.

QUESTION 3:

It has been said that “a successful audit is one that results in better government decisions and policies.” To what extent do you believe that state audits should -- and do -- influence government decisions and outcomes?

CANDIDATE PAM MYHRA:

Government Auditing Standards, established by the Government Accountability Office, say, “Government auditing provides objective, analysis and information needed to make the decisions necessary to help create a better future ... to provide accountability and to help improve government operations and services.” Minnesota has never had a licensed Certified Public Accountant serve in the position of State Auditor. With my unique set of qualifications as a licensed Certified Public Accountant, former Audit Manager, and former two-term State Representative, as State Auditor, I intend to be a catalyst to provide the accountability and transparency in the use of government resources Minnesotans need and deserve.

CANDIDATE JULIE BLAHA:

A good audit - and maybe more importantly, an honest, open, and supportive relationship with an auditor - ensures local decision makers have the tools to be effective. My experience in government finance showed this clearly. As a treasurer, my auditor was a key part of my team. Whenever we wanted to improve the transparency, clarity, or effectiveness of our financial process, he was one of my first calls. As a contract negotiator, our best bargaining sessions started by both sides reviewing a good audit together. As an advocate on pensions and school finance, our best, most bipartisan bills began with a thorough vetting of the numbers. Accurate, thorough, understandable audits that come with support before, during, and after the audit can build trust, provide accountability, and ensure that solutions are grounded in local reality. I want to be the State Auditor that works alongside local officials and citizens with the data they need to improve their communities.

CANDIDATE MICHAEL FORD:

no response received

CANDIDATE CHRIS DOCK:

As State Auditor, my most important responsibility would be to provide fiduciary oversight of government operations on behalf of the taxpayers of Minnesota. The office of State Auditor does not work for the government, it works for the people. The State Auditor reviews \$20 billion in annual spending, and it would be my responsibility to ensure the taxpayers receive the maximum value for their investment. I would do everything within my authority to aggressively review and analyze all levels of municipal spending to identify areas of waste and inefficiency. The State Auditor should not only ensure that municipal financial statements are accurate, the office should perform an analysis on the components of spending to identify areas of waste and inefficiency. I would implement a Report Card system that would rate each municipality's efficiency in major areas of spending. This would allow the citizens to be properly informed on how efficiently their tax dollars are being spent. By identifying areas of waste and inefficiency, the State Auditor can effect positive change in government operations. This change can either come about by a change in spending decisions by elected officials, or by a change in voting decisions by the citizens who would have better information available to them regarding how effectively their tax dollars are being spent.

QUESTION 4:

If elected, what are your priorities for your tenure?

CANDIDATE PAM MYHRA:

I will work with the Legislature and Governor to update MN Statute governing the Office of State Auditor to bring it in conformity with current Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards to better serve the public interest. With my unique set of qualifications, I will work tirelessly to provide the accountability and transparency in the use of government resources Minnesotans need and deserve.

CANDIDATE JULIE BLAHA:

If elected, there would be three priorities for the auditor's office.

Quality: The auditor sets the standard for truth in city, town, and county financial information. There are people in the legislature who are working to lower the standards of local audits to obscure the value of local initiatives. As auditor, I will continue Minnesota's tradition of high quality government by protecting the standards of transparency and honesty in our governmental information. Well run local governments are able to keep resources close to home where they can do the most good.

Clarity: Information is only as valuable as it is understandable. We are seeing record numbers of first time candidates at all levels of government, which will lead to a large number of new local officials this year. To be successful, they will need education and resources to help them navigate their new opportunity. I will stay connected and listen carefully to our local leaders so they see the auditor's office as a trusted partner. I will provide the education and background to make our new leaders successful.

Focus: Minnesotans trust information that is clearly matched to its purpose. Often, the auditor is at tables to make decisions beyond the specific scope of their office. My power at those tables is in being a trusted source of concrete, unbiased context and information. I will leverage the respect I have earned as an honest broker, bridge builder, and policy innovator to illuminate our path to making our values real.

CANDIDATE MICHAEL FORD:

no response received

CANDIDATE CHRIS DOCK:

My priorities as State Auditor are to be an independent, aggressive, and proactive protector of taxpayer money within the State of Minnesota. My Report Card system would provide each citizen with detailed -yet understandable - information regarding how efficiently their tax dollars are being spent. This would create an environment of higher accountability of elected officials to their constituents, as well as a directional change for the better in the efficient utilization of tax dollar resources. With oversight of \$20 billion in annual spending and pension plan assets that cover the retirement plans of approximately 20,000 public employees in the State of Minnesota, the office of State Auditor has a very important responsibility to provide independent and thorough reviews of government operations. Minnesota deserves to have a State Auditor who not only reviews the financial activity of government, but proactively and consistently searches for waste and areas of potential improvement. A truly independent State Auditor is the best option to lay the foundation for significant improvements in government operations.

MN ATTORNEY GENERAL

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of the office.

CANDIDATE DOUG WARDLOW:

no response received

CANDIDATE KEITH ELLISON:

I am running for Attorney General because working families in Minnesota need a fighter on their side. It is the Attorney General's job to hold those in power accountable and protect and defend the rights of all Minnesotans.

CANDIDATE NOAH M JOHNSON:

The Attorney General is the lawyer for the people of Minnesota, and has a duty to provide the state with legal advice in the best interest of the people. The Attorney General also prosecutes and defends lawsuits on behalf of the state, and issue guidelines and allocates resources for legal cases involving the state.

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE DOUG WARDLOW:

no response received

CANDIDATE KEITH ELLISON:

For the last twelve years, I have represented Minnesotans in Congress, where I have championed consumer, worker, and civil rights protections to defend the rights of Minnesotans against the interests of the powerful. I also served in the Minnesota House of Representatives. Before entering politics, I spent 16 years as an attorney specializing in civil rights and defense law, including five years as the Executive Director of the Legal Rights Center. As the leader of this public interest law firm, I oversaw a team of attorneys focused on delivering justice for Minnesotans who had nowhere else to turn. As Attorney General, I will fight to make health care more affordable and accessible; to protect the rights of workers and ensure a fair economy for all; and will fight back against attacks on women's equal pay and reproductive rights. I will take on the big drug companies, exploitative student loan services, and any company that tries to rip off every-day Minnesotans.

CANDIDATE NOAH M JOHNSON:

I am an attorney and studied politics and philosophy, and have a long history with political involvement, including in protesting injustices and volunteering and interning with the ACLU of Minnesota and the Innocence Project of Minnesota.

QUESTION 3:

It is important for candidates to engage, reach out, and listen to all communities, especially underrepresented communities. How are you currently accomplishing this and what is your plan to continue if elected?

CANDIDATE DOUG WARDLOW:

no response received

CANDIDATE KEITH ELLISON:

I think it is vital to listen and engage with the communities we are elected to serve. Throughout this campaign, I have traveled across the state to meet with and listen to Minnesotans of all walks of life. Additionally, I have held roundtables with underrepresented communities on important issues like affordable housing, the opioid crisis, worker safety, and affordable health care. As a Congressman, I have held regular roundtable discussions and town halls with my constituents. As Attorney General, I plan to continue to hold roundtables and work with communities across the state. We have to listen to local communities if we want to help address their concerns, as they know the issues facing their communities best.

CANDIDATE NOAH M JOHNSON:

I am lucky to live in an area of Minneapolis that effectively is a microcosm of America, filled with all sorts of different, but kind, hardworking and sincere people. It is one of the many proofs I've found that life is enriched by reaching out to all people with the hand of friendship.

QUESTION 4:

Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

CANDIDATE DOUG WARDLOW:

no response received

CANDIDATE KEITH ELLISON:

Unfortunately, I believe the current jury selection process often results in juries which do not fully reflect society at large. This can form a barrier to justice, when juries are asked to judge people whose life experiences they may not understand or relate to. We need to look at reforms to the jury selection process to better ensure fair representation and justice for all.

CANDIDATE NOAH M JOHNSON:

Not at all. I think the American judiciary is much too conservative and overly concerned with either a backwards-facing agenda, or else undue devotion to the language of the law at the expense of its spirit of justice. We are in desperate need of progressive and enlightened judges.

QUESTION 5:

Do you believe there is under-representation of women or people of color or indigenous people in the court system? If so, how would you work to correct the problem?

CANDIDATE DOUG WARDLOW:

no response received

CANDIDATE KEITH ELLISON:

While we have made good progress towards a judiciary that better represents the people it serves, women and people of color are unfortunately still underrepresented in our court system. As Attorney General, I will work with the Governor, the Commission on Judicial Selection, and the Minnesota Supreme Court to help build the bench of qualified and diverse candidates through intentional outreach and mentorship efforts. We need to encourage more people of color and indigenous people to consider, and pursue, a career of public service in the courts.

CANDIDATE NOAH M JOHNSON:

Yes. More effort can be made to seek out candidates of those backgrounds who are qualified for positions in the court system, as well as to provide resource for young people to pursue that path should they choose.

QUESTION 6:

What do you believe are the primary factors which contribute to high rates of minority incarceration? How should these factors be addressed?

CANDIDATE DOUG WARDLOW:

no response received

CANDIDATE KEITH ELLISON:

Minnesota's prison population is growing, and we have one of the highest rates of people on probation and parole in the county, disproportionately affecting our communities of color. As Attorney General, I would work directly with law enforcement agencies and county attorneys to make sure those on the front lines have access to racial bias and diversity training. I will also work to eliminate cash bail laws that prey on the poor and powerless in our system. We also need to work to correct the underlying factors, by working to ensure communities of color have access to affordable housing, health care, good schools, and professional opportunities.

CANDIDATE NOAH M JOHNSON:

The primary factor is economic disparity--poverty produces crime, and racial minorities have been on the receiving end of poverty in America. While some few, violent criminals are born sick, many petty offenders make the wrong choices simply as a reaction to the fact that wealth is concentrated among a small amount of the richest Americans. Robust social welfare programs and high taxes on the very highest earners can help to remedy the problem.

QUESTION 7:

Do you believe that all citizens have adequate access to legal help and the legal system? If not, what can be done to provide wider and better access?

CANDIDATE DOUG WARDLOW:

no response received

CANDIDATE KEITH ELLISON:

We must do more to ensure that every Minnesotan has equal access to justice. Every Minnesotan must have access to efficient and thorough legal counsel, regardless of income. I will make that work a priority as Attorney General. We also need to restore trust between community members and law enforcement officers. Nobody should be afraid to call the police or report a crime because of the language they speak or the color of their skin. Additionally, I will work with county attorneys and the state legislature to reduce our incarceration, probation, and parole rates and enhance public safety by helping people get back on their feet and successfully reintegrate into their communities.

CANDIDATE NOAH M JOHNSON:

No. I believe that the state should devote at least as many resources to public defense and legal aid programs as it does to prosecution.

QUESTION 8:

What is the most critical issue facing the criminal justice system in Minnesota?

CANDIDATE DOUG WARDLOW:

no response received

CANDIDATE KEITH ELLISON:

We need to make sure that our criminal justice system helps rehabilitate Minnesotans to be productive members of society, especially those convicted of non-violent offenses, while protecting the safety of our state at large. We must ensure there is a clear path back to society once people have served their time. Punishing people further to the margins does not keep our communities safe. True justice means allowing these individuals to seek rehabilitation, treatment, and training to re-enter our society as productive people leading full lives in their communities.

CANDIDATE NOAH M JOHNSON:

In the most immediate sense, the illegality of marijuana, which is not to say that no issue is more important for anyone than that, but it is an easily solvable problem--legalize marijuana, reduce racial and economic disparities in criminal prosecutions, allow people the liberty to use something that harms no one, and thereby increase justice.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of County Commissioner.

CANDIDATE JAMES BOOTH:

Declined to participate.

CANDIDATE FRANK JEWELL:

I am running for reelection to the St. Louis County Board because I love the community and county that I live in and believe that I continue to have something to offer. In the 44 years that I have lived here I have, with my wife Kathleen, raised two wonderful daughters and am the proud grand parent of two grandsons. This place has provided for us, educated our children and supplied an endless variety of opportunities to explore the outdoors, the arts, communities and neighborhoods. While St. Louis County and Duluth are wonderful places there are still problems to solve and helping find solutions is something I want to do.

QUESTION 2:

What should the county government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor, the middle class and the wealthy, particularly addressing racial and cultural divides?

CANDIDATE JAMES BOOTH:

Declined to participate.

CANDIDATE FRANK JEWELL:

This is hardly a question that can be answered in a short format, but I can highlight some key areas. 1) We should work to assure that every St. Louis County resident has health care. 2) We should support economic development that pays a living wage and hires a diverse workforce. 3) Where we can we should help support the creation of affordable housing. 4) Our justice system must be fair and just and those who are convicted must have a way to redeem themselves and start new lives. 5) Be a thoughtful steward of the environment for present and future generations.

QUESTION 3:

What are the top three things that the County Board should do to improve the region's economy?

CANDIDATE JAMES BOOTH:

Declined to participate.

CANDIDATE FRANK JEWELL:

1) Increase the diversity of business in the county. 2) Increase opportunities for young people, women and people of color to get jobs and start businesses. 3) Provide new opportunities for folks to attend college in both academics and the trades.

QUESTION 4:

What can county government do to help address the impact of global climate change in our region?

CANDIDATE JAMES BOOTH:

Declined to participate.

CANDIDATE FRANK JEWELL:

St. Louis County is a leader in using green technologies and in decreasing our use of fossil fuels. We have done this through better windows, insulation and heating systems in all of our buildings. We are also using solar and wind systems. And while these may seem minor, we have decreased the number of electronic devices and we even encourage people to walk the stairs which decreases the cost of elevator rides. Additionally we can work with the Climate Coalition, the Sea Grant program and others who are leading the way in developing policies and actions to combat climate change.

QUESTION 5:

What can county government do to address aging infrastructure (roads and bridges) in the region?

CANDIDATE JAMES BOOTH:

Declined to participate.

CANDIDATE FRANK JEWELL:

St. Louis County is working hard to assure that County roads and bridges are well maintained and when necessary replaced. St. Louis County has 3000 miles of roads and over 600 bridges. Several years ago, I along with 5 of my colleagues, agreed to raise the sales tax by ½ a cent raising annually over \$10 million which is invested back in our road system. Our staff in the public works department has also done innovative in creating a systematic program for road upkeep and has developed processes that both protect the environment and protect the infrastructure. These include controlling the amount of salt we use on the roads and better culvert and drainage design decreasing the impact of major storm events.

QUESTION 6:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted?

CANDIDATE JAMES BOOTH:

Declined to participate.

CANDIDATE FRANK JEWELL:

Duluth and St. Louis County have some of the highest voter participation rates in the country. We can do even better both by encouraging voting and making sure that residents know the ways in which they can vote: in person on election day, in person early voting and absentee voting.

QUESTION 7:

How would you reduce the role of money in American elections.

CANDIDATE JAMES BOOTH:

Declined to participate.

CANDIDATE FRANK JEWELL:

I don't think that this is something the County has any power over. In my role as a leader and elected official I would ask our state and federal representatives to make all donations that are used for or against a candidate to have the donor listed. I am also in favor of limiting the amount that can be spent on elections.

QUESTION 8:

In your opinion, what is the most important challenge facing our region and how do you propose to address this challenge?

CANDIDATE JAMES BOOTH:

Declined to participate.

CANDIDATE FRANK JEWELL:

At this moment our greatest challenge is probably the opioid crisis and along side it the high rate of poverty in St. Louis County.

COUNTY AUDITOR/TREASURER

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of office.

CANDIDATE BRANDON LARSON:

I am a candidate for the position of St. Louis County Auditor-Treasurer. The office is responsible for overseeing multiple divisions, each with their own specific duties and responsibilities. These offices included:

1. Clerk of the County Board & Elections Department – Oversee all aspects of the election process, administer tobacco and liquor licenses and maintain all official County Board records.
2. Accounting – Responsible for performing county-wide financial accounting duties such as accounts payable, accounts receivable, central payroll and benefit administration, financial investments and preparation of financial reports and annual financial statements.
3. Property Tax Administration – Oversees the processes relating to property tax collections, tax rate calculations, tax increment financing, fiscal disparity management, property tax distribution, property ownership, historical tax records, GIS parcel maintenance and the certification of deed and mortgages for recording.
4. Motor Vehicle Service Center – Provides vehicle and DNR registrations and titles, driver's license renewals and passport applications and photographs.

CANDIDATE NANCY NILSEN:

I am seeking the office of St. Louis County Auditor/Treasurer. The St. Louis County Auditor has several areas of responsibility. They include Elections, Clerk of the Board, Finance and Accounting, the Service Center, the Tax Department and Auditing. St. Louis County utilizes both an internal auditor as well as external auditors. Audits assess the effectiveness of the organization's governance, risk management and control frameworks. They also assess legislative and regulatory compliance, contract requirements, grant requirements and organizational policies and procedures. If problems are found or areas of risk are identified during an audit, changes can be made to put better checks and balances into place, before either a breach in the public trust occurs or to stop any further abuse from happening. The Auditor also provides advice as it relates to good governance, accountability, ethical practices, anticorruption programs, effective risk assessment, internal controls and sound business processes. The Auditor is entrusted with the financial health of the county. From the collection of taxes, the investment of the funds until needed, and the disbursement for appropriate expenditures, the Auditor needs to have the policies and processes in place to make sure the public's money is accounted for and used appropriately. The Auditor is also responsible for administering elections and making sure they are fair, accurate and impartial. The duties range from the printing of the ballots, training, testing of the voting machines, the actual election, and certification of the results. The Auditor is responsible for accurate reporting of board action.

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE BRANDON LARSON:

I am a graduate of the City of Virginia and of the University of Minnesota – Duluth (UMD). I have a degree in Business Administration with focuses in MIS, accounting and finance. I currently reside in Mountain Iron, MN, with my wife and three year old daughter and I commute daily to Duluth, MN, where I work as a Deputy Auditor and Tax Division Manager for the St. Louis County Auditor's Department. I was been with the County Auditor's office since 2006 and have held the role of a supervisor and Deputy Auditor during my entire career with St. Louis County. My position's duties include but are not limited to property tax administration, , property and ownership records, tax software development and employee management. I also have had extensive experience working with all of the divisions of the Auditor's office. My current position requires me to work daily with County department leaders, State agencies, and having daily communications with officials from all of St. Louis County's cities, townships and school districts. I also am a member of two statewide county auditor organizations known as MACO and MACATFO. Having been a resident of both Northeastern Minnesota and the City of Duluth, I know that I have the necessary understanding of the varying economies of St. Louis County. I also have the experience and knowledge necessary to ensure that the County can continue to operate with fiscal responsibility in order to serve the needs of all of its citizens.

CANDIDATE NANCY NILSEN:

I have the knowledge necessary to manage this office because I have been the Chief Deputy Auditor for St. Louis County for the past 11 years. I am the current Auditor's right hand person. Of the 70 employees in the office, I had 68 of them report up through me. I also have a Masters of Business Administration degree to back up my experience. Some of my additional responsibilities, besides managing the departments, include: Creating/managing the Auditor's \$3.6 million budget; creating our Business Plan; negotiating contracts with vendors; helped manage two major election recounts; manage the Department of State's Passport Reviews; participate in bid openings, participate in the bonding process and much more. When I started at the county in 2007 as the Chief Deputy Auditor, I brought with me 25 years of experience working in the field of Information Technology. That work experience allowed me to implement software solutions that helped businesses become more efficient. I knew what it would take to bring efficiency to the county and I started utilizing my experience immediately. We have installed many new systems and upgraded others. Our county has been in great hands with Auditor Don Dicklich and I would like to provide a smooth transition upon his retirement. Since I have been doing most of the functions of the Auditor in my current position, I feel I can be an effective leader as soon as elected.

QUESTION 3:

It has been said that “a successful audit is one that results in better government decisions and policies.” To what extent do you believe that state audits should -- and do -- influence government decisions and outcomes?

CANDIDATE BRANDON LARSON:

The process of an audit is as an ongoing activity between partners. Interaction throughout that period allows for the opportunity to ensure maximized compliance of county fiscal policies and reporting with regard to meeting legal and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). This open communication throughout this partnership results in the efficient and appropriate expenditure of taxpayer assets by the County. One

such example of a positive result of the auditing process is in St. Louis County receiving a AA+ bond rating. This rating allows for the County to borrow money through bonding at cheaper interest rates. These funds can then be invested in improving infrastructure utilizing skilled local union labor. These projects help to provide work for our local laborers as well as provide improved roads, bridges and facilities to our citizens. These audits can also find areas where governments can improve processes and identify points of weakness or vulnerability. This can lead to changes in workflows, improved security measures or identifying needs for improved technologies. County audits ensure that we are operating with fiscal responsibility and are providing accurate financial reports with how taxpayer dollars are being used to provide services to our communities.

CANDIDATE NANCY NILSEN:

I do believe a successful audit is one that results in better government decisions and policies. As it pertains to my current role as the Chief Deputy Auditor for St. Louis County, auditing provides for accountability, financial oversight and the protection of the public's assets. It ensures managers and officials conduct the public's business transparently, fairly, and honestly. One way audits influence government decisions and policies is if management or the County Board is not happy with the findings of an audit or they believe the finding is based on a regulation that is outdated, they can work to get the statutory regulations or internal policies changed. They will need to justify the need for the change to others. Any influence that occurs is transparent for all to see. The Auditor provides advice to other elected officials and employees of the county as it relates to decisions they may be supporting or bringing forward to a vote by the County Board. If there are any questions as to whether something is allowed by the statutory regulations or internal policies, they want to know about it before they bring it forward. Auditors implement policies that affect the way government is run and in essence influence government decisions. The policies may be based on the foresight of future risk, and the insight of what policies are working, or in some cases not working. Any influence audits have should be to positively protect the public's trust and stewardship of resources.

QUESTION 4:

If elected, what are your priorities for your tenure?

CANDIDATE BRANDON LARSON:

As County Auditor, my priorities would be as follows:

1. Continue to provide fair, accessible and equitable elections to all of our citizens. Elections are the foundation of our democracy and what I believe to be the most important role of the Auditor's office.
2. Ensure that the County continues to practice fiscal responsibility and operate within a balanced budget in order to reduce the burden on taxpayers. A balanced budget ensures that we are not requesting more tax dollars than what is actually needed to provide taxpayer services. It is important that we do not continuously go over OR under budget as this results in funds not being directed to where they are most needed and results in higher property tax rates.
3. Adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and legal requirements for the investment and distribution of taxpayer funds. This will be important in order to maintain our AA+ bond rating so that St. Louis County can continue to invest in local infrastructure and promote economic growth.
4. Review department processes to look for ways to utilize new technologies and cross train employees in order to reduce costs.
5. Promote an environment of Customer service in the Auditor's office as well as across the entire County. I am a big advocate of leading by example and by instilling in employees that our role is to serve the public to the best of our ability.

CANDIDATE NANCY NILSEN:

My priorities as County Auditor includes:

- Continuing our practice of providing excellent customer service;
- Maintaining high financial integrity;
- Maintaining our AA+ bond rating;
- Ensuring that our investments are in stable, secure opportunities;
- Administering accurate, fair and impartial elections;
- Providing a Service Center that maintains a smooth, efficient process for customers to obtain vehicle registrations, driver's licenses services, and passports;
- Auditing for fraud and compliance with statutory requirements;
- Providing accurate tax statements;
- Continuously improving the GIS Property Tax Parcel system;
- Providing guidance to the County Board on finance related activities;
- Investing in new technology to streamline processes and reduce expenses such as the implementation of the electronic routing of vouchers. This will allow departments to set up an electronic approval process and submit vouchers to the Auditor's Office electronically saving time and paper.

COUNTY SHERIFF

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including duties and the role of the Sheriff in Saint Louis County.

CANDIDATE ROSS LITMAN:

no response received

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE ROSS LITMAN:

no response received

QUESTION 3:

It is important for candidates to engage, reach out, and listen to all communities, especially underrepresented communities. How are you currently accomplishing this and what is your plan to continue if elected?

CANDIDATE ROSS LITMAN:

no response received

QUESTION 4:

Describe how you work with tribal government and tribal law enforcement.

CANDIDATE ROSS LITMAN:

no response received

QUESTION 5:

Do you believe there is under-representation of women or people of color or indigenous people in the court system? If so, how would you work to correct the problem?

CANDIDATE ROSS LITMAN:

no response received

QUESTION 6:

What do you believe are the primary factors which contribute to high rates of minority incarceration? How should these factors be addressed?

CANDIDATE ROSS LITMAN:

no response received

QUESTION 7:

Do you believe that all citizens have adequate access to legal help and the legal system? If not, what can be done to provide wider and better access?

CANDIDATE ROSS LITMAN:

no response received

QUESTION 8:

What is the most critical issue facing the criminal justice system in St. Louis County?

CANDIDATE ROSS LITMAN:

no response received

COUNTY ATTORNEY

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of the office.

CANDIDATE MARK S RUBIN:

I am seeking re-election to the office of St. Louis County Attorney.

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE MARK S RUBIN:

I began work as a prosecutor in 1978 in our office on the Range in Virginia. I had a short stint in private practice between 1988 and 1990. I returned to this office and in 2010 I ran for and was elected County Attorney. I was re-elected in 2014 and in May, filed for re-election. I want to follow through on the good work we have been trying to do. I am blessed to have an amazing dedicated staff consisting of 33 attorneys and 39 administrators and professional support staff to do the work from criminal prosecution, to protecting children to providing legal counsel to our County Administrator and Commissioners.

QUESTION 3:

It is important for candidates to engage, reach out, and listen to all communities, especially underrepresented communities. How are you currently accomplishing this and what is your plan to continue if elected?

CANDIDATE MARK S RUBIN:

Throughout my career, I hope I have built a reputation of one who reaches out, engages, listens to and supports all members of our community, especially those who are underrepresented and have no voice. It has always been my honor and privilege to be a voice for them. I pledge to continue to strive to continue to do my best in this area

QUESTION 4:

Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

CANDIDATE MARK S RUBIN:

The composition of our jury pool is improving but we still have more work to do to increase the numbers of minorities who are summoned for jury service. Since the jury pool comes from voter registration and driver's license lists, we need to encourage greater participation in the election process.

QUESTION 5:

Do you believe there is under-representation of women or people of color or indigenous people in the court system? If so, how would you work to correct the problem?

CANDIDATE MARK S RUBIN:

Today, women are well represented in the functions of the court system. This includes roles as judges, lawyers and court personnel. Of the 14 lawyers I have hired since taking office, 9 of them have been women. Racial minorities are another issue. Men of color are overrepresented in the system as defendants and underrepresented in roles of attorneys and judges. I can speak from experience that hiring is challenging because it is extremely rare to receive job applications from underrepresented individuals. I will continue my efforts to address this reality.

QUESTION 6:

What do you believe are the primary factors which contribute to high rates of minority incarceration? How should these factors be addressed?

CANDIDATE MARK S RUBIN:

We have worked to address the issue of high incarceration rates of minorities. Our prosecutors are relentless in assuring that they make charging decisions and engage in plea negotiations based on the facts of the case, the law and without regard to the color of a person's skin. My primary goal is to work for fairness, justice and safety in our communities. As disparate incarceration rates vary by type of crime, I continue to work with my fellow county attorneys on the Minnesota County Attorneys Association Board of Directors to ensure the Sentencing Guidelines are fair and equitable.

QUESTION 7:

Do you believe that all citizens have adequate access to legal help and the legal system? If not, what can be done to provide wider and better access?

CANDIDATE MARK S RUBIN:

Our citizens have adequate to very good access to legal help. Our local Public Defenders do an excellent job in both criminal defense and child protection cases. The sad reality is that over 90 % of defendants qualify for a public defender. Our local Indian Legal Aid office is historically underfunded when you consider the need. Private representation is often very good too, but out of reach financially for just about everybody. Part of the solution is an increase in funding for these entities along with our local Legal Aid and Volunteer Attorney offices who serve low income individuals in civil matters. I have worked to address this issue in part by revamping and enhancing the self-help services available in our courthouse Law Libraries in Virginia, Hibbing and Duluth.

QUESTION 8:

What is the most critical issue facing the criminal justice system in St. Louis County?

CANDIDATE MARK S RUBIN:

One of the most critical issues facing our local criminal justice system is the unacceptable amount of time it takes for matters to be resolved, either by plea agreement or trial. In my 39 years of doing this work, I have never seen the system so bogged down. On a positive note, our Judges and Court Administration are hearing our concerns and exploring ways to address this problem. I will do what I can to continue to work to improve our access to fairness and justice. Thank you to the League of Women Voters for this opportunity to share some of my thoughts.

SOIL & WATER SUPERVISOR DIST 2 SOUTH

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of office.

CANDIDATE MARCIA STROMGREN:

2nd District Supervisor So. St. Louis County : oversee the running of the district operations, by approving budgets & projects such as stream bank erosion, impaired waters, tree sales for reforestation thereby improving wildlife habitat, continuing education, meeting with legislators, presentations at Harvest Fest, Township Officers Association, attending monthly and yearly Area III and Minnesota Association of Soil and Water District meetings, volunteering for the Annual Youth Environthon, working with our other partners such as NRCS and writing letters to townships about tree sales and programs available.

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE MARCIA STROMGREN:

Fond memories flash back from time to time about walking in the woods while fishing with my family and allowing my children experience this as well living in Normanna Township. I served on the Normanna Township Board as the Clerk and then Supervisor for a total of nine years; concurrently as a Soil and Water Supervisor for several years; holding the position as Secretary of Area III, 3 different times; Co-Owner in a storage business with my husband, volunteer advocate for a handicap person, and through a sewing club do charity sewing, former 4H Project manager and spent countless volunteer hours in a variety of organizations and groups.

QUESTION 3:

If elected, how will you reach out to your district?

CANDIDATE MARCIA STROMGREN:

Continue what I have been doing and go into the schools encouraging more conservation ideas and participation in the Annual Envirothon.

QUESTION 4:

What are your long-term goals for your district?

CANDIDATE MARCIA STROMGREN:

Supervisors do not set goals for the district but I can encourage the Supervisors to be more visible and interactive with the public. Recently articles in the newspaper indicate we are out there getting things done such as the Chester Creek and Sargent Creek restoration projects. We have completed millions of dollars of work to restore private land owners property damaged by the 2012 flooding confirming that we "are a boots on the ground" district.

SOIL & WATER SUPERVISOR DIST 3 SOUTH

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of office.

CANDIDATE ALBERT MOLINE:

South St. Louis County Soil & Water Conservation District supervisor. Duties include attending meetings and approving the work and projects that our staff work on.

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE ALBERT MOLINE:

I worked for the DNR for 26 years as a wildland fire fighter. I enjoy the outdoors. I've been on the SWCD Board for 20 years and believe in protecting our soil and waters.

QUESTION 3:

If elected, how will you reach out to your district?

CANDIDATE ALBERT MOLINE:

By doing the best job that I can as a SWCD supervisor.

QUESTION 4:

What are your long-term goals for your district?

CANDIDATE ALBERT MOLINE:

Keeping the great staff that we have and helping our area stay safe from pollution.

SOIL & WATER SUPERVISOR DIST 5 SOUTH

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of office.

CANDIDATE DEBRA TAYLOR:

no response received

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE DEBRA TAYLOR:

no response received

QUESTION 3:

If elected, how will you reach out to your district?

CANDIDATE DEBRA TAYLOR:

no response received

QUESTION 4:

What are your long-term goals for your district?

CANDIDATE DEBRA TAYLOR:

no response received

CHIEF JUSTICE - MN SUPREME COURT

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of the office.

CANDIDATE LORIE SKJERVEN GILDEA:

I am running for re-election as Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. I have served as Chief Justice for over 8 years. The Chief Justice is the leader of the Judicial Branch. The Chief Justice makes decisions and writes opinions just as the Associate Justices on the Court do. During my time on the Court, I have authored more than 200 opinions and have helped the Court make decisions in thousands of cases. In addition, the Chief Justice is the “lobbyist-in-chief” for the justice system. When I took over as Chief Justice, Minnesota’s courts had suffered years of budget setbacks, and backlogs were building. I was successful in reversing that trend and stabilizing resources for the judiciary. The Chief Justice also chairs the Minnesota Judicial Council, which is the policy-making body for the Judicial Branch. I am leading reforms that are making our courts more efficient and effective for the people we serve. I commit to working hard every day to ensure that our courts are well-functioning.

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE LORIE SKJERVEN GILDEA:

I grew up in Plummer, Minnesota and I have what has been described as “a fierce and unreasonable pride in my Minnesota heritage.” I am honored every day to serve the people of my home state as their Chief Justice. I have been on the Minnesota Supreme Court since January 2006, starting as an Associate Justice. Prior to coming to the Supreme Court, I served as a trial court judge in Minnesota’s largest and most diverse county, Hennepin, where I presided over criminal cases. Before becoming a judge, I was a prosecutor, court room attorney for the University of Minnesota and a litigator at a large law firm in Washington, D.C. You can learn more about my background on my campaign’s website: www.chiefjusticeloriegildea.com. I am running for re-election as Minnesota’s Chief Justice because I have the experience and qualifications needed to serve effectively in this position. Serving as Minnesota’s Chief Justice has been a great honor and the most serious responsibility I have ever carried for the people of Minnesota. I am committed to preserving equal justice under the law for everyone and the people’s access to our courts to peacefully resolve their disputes.

QUESTION 3:

It is important for candidates to engage, reach out, and listen to all communities, especially underrepresented communities. How are you currently accomplishing this and what is your plan to continue if elected?

CANDIDATE LORIE SKJERVEN GILDEA:

Outreach is a critical part of the job of all judges in Minnesota. Courts in Minnesota do not belong to judges and lawyers; courts belong to the people. As judges, it is incumbent on us to reach out to the public we serve

and explain the job of a judge. We also must listen to the people for their concerns and advice as to how to make the courts work better for them. I have participated in 100's of these outreach opportunities during my time on the Supreme Court and commit to continuing to do so. The Supreme Court's traveling oral arguments are an example of our outreach efforts. On these visits, we take real cases into high schools and then spend hours with students teaching them about the court system. Our judicial districts are also actively engaged in community outreach, with districts holding community events and developing action plans based on what is discussed at those meetings. These experiences help connect us to the people we serve and make us better judges.

QUESTION 4:

Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

CANDIDATE LORIE SKJERVEN GILDEA:

The composition of juries in Minnesota is sometimes raised by the parties as a disputed issue in cases that come before the Court so my response here needs to be a general one. On a statewide basis, we regularly examine this question as part of our annual performance measures review. The most recent performance measure report, which is available on the Judicial Branch's website (www.mncourts.gov), reflects that almost all of the 46,000 jurors who reported for service last year completed demographic information. From that data, our report shows that those summoned are similar racially, ethnically and by gender as compared to the population of communities in Minnesota. I will take appropriate actions to prevent a system of jury selection that would permit bias to determine the selection of jurors or the composition of juries.

QUESTION 5:

Do you believe there is under-representation of women or people of color or indigenous people in the court system? If so, how would you work to correct the problem?

CANDIDATE LORIE SKJERVEN GILDEA:

Improving diversity of those working in the courts has been a long standing goal of the Judicial Branch and I whole-heartedly support that goal. We have more women and people of color serving as judges and leaders in our justice system now than we ever have before. Almost 45% of the judges in Minnesota are women. A majority of the members of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals are women. The diversity of our decision-makers adds to the richness of our decision-making process. In addition, if decision-makers are more representative of the people we serve it is likely that all people will have a higher level of confidence in our decisions. As leader of the Judicial Branch, I will continue to strive for inclusion and diversity in all of our hiring practices.

QUESTION 6:

What do you believe are the primary factors which contribute to high rates of minority incarceration? How should these factors be addressed?

CANDIDATE LORIE SKJERVEN GILDEA:

The role of judges in our society is not to define what behavior is criminal; that is the role of the legislature. Judges also do not decide who should be charged with crimes; that is the role of the prosecutors. The job of judges is to preside fairly over the cases that come to us and to impose sentences within the bounds of the law.

QUESTION 7:

Do you believe that all citizens have adequate access to legal help and the legal system? If not, what can be done to provide wider and better access?

CANDIDATE LORIE SKJERVEN GILDEA:

Our justice system depends on the ability of all of our partners to process the heavy caseloads they face. Part of my role as Chief Justice is to help our justice partners, including our public defenders and civil legal aid providers, make their case to the legislature and the governor for necessary funding. We have a strong partnership and I look forward to continuing to build on the successes we have had over the past eight years in ensuring that our partners have the resources they need to be effective in their roles.

QUESTION 8:

What is the most critical issue facing the criminal justice system in St Louis County?

CANDIDATE LORIE SKJERVEN GILDEA:

The success of our democracy depends on a vibrant judiciary. The vibrancy of our judiciary depends on the people's trust and confidence. The most important issue facing our justice system today is ensuring that all of the people of Minnesota have trust and confidence in their courts. As judges, we must work every day in every case to earn that trust.

MN ASSOCIATE JUSTICE 2 - SUPREME COURT

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of the office.

CANDIDATE MICHELLE MACDONALD:

I was nominated as a candidate for Minnesota Supreme Court Justice. The Supreme Court is a court of last resort, resolving challenges that concern constitutional rights. As your Minnesota Supreme Court justice, I will be in a position to judge the constitutionality of our laws, and “judge the judges” and their decisions in the lower courts, where you reside. ([link removed - Voter Guide policy](#))

CANDIDATE MARGARET CHUTICH:

I have served Minnesotans as an Associate Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court for the past two and one-half years, and I am seeking election to continue my service. As a Justice, I hear cases, work with my fellow Justices to decide these cases, author decisions, and act as a liaison with two judicial districts and several court committees. The Supreme Court is the highest court in Minnesota and is the last stop for those seeking justice under the Minnesota Constitution. The Court often hears novel and difficult issues, and deciding these challenging controversies is meaningful and rewarding. Seven justices serve on the Minnesota Supreme Court. Together, we review appeals from the Minnesota Court of Appeals, the Workers’ Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court. The Supreme Court is also responsible for judicial and lawyer discipline, reviewing petitions filed by the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board and the Board on Judicial Standards. The Court promulgates rules of practice that govern procedures in the state’s courts. Justices serve as the court’s representative to at least one of the state’s ten judicial districts; I currently serve as the liaison to the First and Seventh Judicial Districts. In addition, Justices serve on Supreme Court boards. I serve as liaison to the General Rules of Practice, the Committee for Equality and Justice, the Board of Continuing Legal Education, and the Legal Services Advisory Committee.

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE MICHELLE MACDONALD:

For 30 years, I have been an attorney and advocate for truth, justice and accountability in our courts. ([link removed - Voter Guide policy](#)). Time and time again I have stood up to judges on behalf of individuals and families, so that they could earn the basic recognition of their civil and constitutional rights in our society --- rights once recognized as sacrosanct to everybody. I am running for Minnesota Supreme Court because time and time again, as one attorney representing thousands of people across our state, I have witnessed an unprecedented display of courts abusing their discretion and authority, damaging people and families. While raising a family, I have consistently worked as an attorney, mediator and restorative justice facilitator; managed a law firm; and contributed my time to legal and community activities. I have been a Hennepin County Family

Court referee, (1992 – 2012); and Small Claims Court Judge, deciding hundreds of court matters (1999-2014). I have been lead counsel on dozens of appeals, researching and writing countless memorandums and briefs, which include amicus (“friend of the court”) briefs for the Minnesota Supreme Court, appearances before the Appellate Court and Supreme Court, and Petitions to the U.S. Supreme Court.

CANDIDATE MARGARET CHUTICH:

As a native Minnesotan, I am dedicated to ensuring that every person who appears before the Court is heard in a fair and respectful manner. Through my on-the-job experience, I understand first-hand the challenging and meaningful work of the Court, and my record shows that I have performed well in this role. An effective Justice must be able to write clearly to communicate to the public the decisions of the Court and its rationale. My work, the 299 opinions that I authored on the Minnesota Court of Appeals and the more than 30 majority and dissenting opinions I authored on the Supreme Court, shows that I write clearly and simply, in a respectful manner to the parties and my colleagues. My broad background and experience in both criminal and civil law demonstrates that I am a proven generalist who can get up-to-speed quickly on the variety of thorny issues in the wide-ranging areas of law that our Court is called upon regularly to decide. I prosecuted criminal cases as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Minnesota and as an Assistant United States Attorney. I also represented parties in civil matters, both in private practice and through the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General, where I represented the Department of Human Services. I have gained the trust of the legal community. Over 95% of attorneys voting on this race in the July 2018 Minnesota State Bar Association straw poll voted for me.

QUESTION 3:

It is important for candidates to engage, reach out, and listen to all communities, especially underrepresented communities. How are you currently accomplishing this and what is your plan to continue if elected?

CANDIDATE MICHELLE MACDONALD:

In 2011, I founded Family Innocence, a nonprofit dedicated to keeping families out of court: resolving conflicts and injustices peacefully. ([link removed - Voter Guide policy](#)) Together with attorneys, mediators, circle facilitators, professionals, parents and consumers, the group developed a consent process that involves court jurisdiction only when necessary. We have conducted various trainings, and mediate and facilitate restorative circles. As member of the Cooperative Private Divorce Project, we put forth legislation that creates an administrative pathway to divorce that skips the court adversarial system, and eliminates the judge. I was founding member of the Family Law Reform/ Child Custody/Parenting Time Dialogue Group, comprised of various stakeholders who, despite having different philosophies, were able to reach consensus agreements on numerous legislative proposals relating to family law. I am an active member of the National Association for Community & Restorative Justice (NACRJ) and Restorative Practices International. I have been recognized by MSBA North Star Pro Bono Lawyers Program each year since its inception (2013-2017). When I am elected, I can implement restorative practices in our court system, to include top to bottom reform. I will make our Judges accountable to us – the people of Minnesota.

CANDIDATE MARGARET CHUTICH:

I believe that engaging with all communities, particularly underrepresented communities, is essential to maintain public confidence in the state’s judicial system and to increase diverse perspectives in the legal community. As a member of the Minnesota Women Lawyers and the Lavender Bar Association, I seek to encourage women lawyers and LGBT lawyers in the practice of law. To engage with other communities, I

attend the events of affinity bar organizations, such as the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers, the Minnesota Hispanic Bar Association, the Minnesota Asian Pacific American Bar Association, and other organizations that strive to ensure access to justice for all. I have often served on panels sponsored by these organizations to encourage people of color to seek judicial positions. In addition, for the past five years, I have mentored students of color attending the University of St. Thomas School of Law. I have traveled throughout the state meeting with members of the community and listening to lawyers describing the issues that they face in serving low-income clients. During a recent court visit to the Red Lake Nation and Red Lake High School, I had the opportunity to speak with students, tribal members, and tribal judges about their community and tribal courts. If elected, I will continue to participate in affinity bar association events, mentor students, and engage with communities across the state as a liaison with two judicial districts and the Court's community outreach activities.

QUESTION 4:

Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

CANDIDATE MICHELLE MACDONALD:

An impartial decision-maker is a critical element of due process, oftentimes a jury. While the jury pool is taken from the community at large, lawyers and judges can "engineer" a jury specific to the case that does not adequately or fairly reflect the community at large. The presiding judge is the ultimate decision-maker at every stage, and can play a vital role in assuring that the jury composition is appropriate for each case. If my life and liberty were in the hands of a jury, I would most desire that each jury member be a good listener, have a keen sense of justice and fairness, follow the instructions given, and search for truth. As your Supreme Court Justice, I will remain committed to the jury system, and hold lawmakers and judges accountable to us.

CANDIDATE MARGARET CHUTICH:

Because this issue - whether the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflect society at large - may come before the Minnesota Supreme Court, I respectfully decline to answer this question. I can say, however, that my experience handling both civil and criminal cases has taught me firsthand that juries are an integral part of the justice system. The presence of neutral, third-party decision makers creates an equal playing field for those involved in disputes and helps to ensure that parties are given a fair opportunity to be heard. As an attorney, I had the unique experience of serving on a jury. That experience reinforced my belief that juries are an effective and democratic method of resolving disputes. In my experience, the collective wisdom of jurors has led to fair and just results. I firmly believe that impartial juries play an essential role in the criminal and civil justice system.

QUESTION 5:

Do you believe there is under-representation of women or people of color or indigenous people in the court system? If so, how would you work to correct the problem?

CANDIDATE MICHELLE MACDONALD:

It is the duty of the judge, to make sure that no one is under-represented, and that everyone is heard and understood. The system operates in generalities, but the judges must operate in specifics, and make sure that

there is adequate representation. Judges are ultimately responsible for what happens in their courtrooms. Judges are regularly failing to uphold the Rule of Law, Constitution and due process which impacts and harms people. Appellate courts appear to be “rubber-stamping” and finding ways to justify errors of lower court judges. I will eliminate the culture of cookie-cutter and “rigged” cases, and restore individual and family justice.

CANDIDATE MARGARET CHUTICH:

Yes, I believe that women, people of color, and indigenous people are still underrepresented in the court system. I do applaud the substantial progress that has been made in recent years to increase representation of women, people of color, and indigenous people on the bench. For example, the Minnesota Supreme Court now has a majority of women, 53% of the judges on the Minnesota Court of Appeals are women, and over 40% of the district court judges are women. Much progress has been made in increasing the prevalence of judges of color as well. The Minnesota Supreme Court has an African- American Justice, the first Native American Justice appointed to a high court nationwide, and the first member of the LGBT community. On the district court in Hennepin County alone, judges of color have increased from 7 judges to 18 in the last 7 years. These increases are critical because members of the public have confidence in the state’s justice system when the courts reflect the community that they serve. To build on this progress in diversifying the courts, we need to create a pipeline of diverse law students and attorneys who can become effective judges and justices. As a Justice, I have participated in programs that explain the judicial selection process and provide advice to encourage attorneys with diverse backgrounds to apply for judgeships. I am elected, I will continue to promote efforts to diversify and to build public confidence in our courts.

QUESTION 6:

What do you believe are the primary factors which contribute to high rates of minority incarceration? How should these factors be addressed?

CANDIDATE MICHELLE MACDONALD:

The primary factor is the failure of law enforcement, attorneys, prosecutors and judges to adhere to the Rule of Law and due process in every case. Due process of law is not simply offering a “process” or a “system”. Due Process requires clear rules, government adherence to those rules, speedy trials, adequate legal representation for all parties, impartial decision makers and an appellate process. If any step in the process is corrupted, due process is compromised. I am committed to reforming our court culture. Our judges should be concerned with everyone’s rights. Judges need to look at the particular people and facts, and not generalize, because each person, each case, has its own DNA.

CANDIDATE MARGARET CHUTICH:

A complex set of societal factors contributes to the high rates of minority incarceration in this country and state. Some of these factors involve the discretionary decisions of police officers and prosecutors in deciding who should be arrested and charged with crimes. Once a person appears in the court system, judges have great discretion in initially setting bail and then later, during the sentencing stage, in setting the length of any probation and its terms. Judges must consider that these decisions can be affected by implicit biases. I support the work of the Committee for Equality and Justice, a committee within the Minnesota Judicial Branch that is overseen by the Minnesota Supreme Court, which is reviewing how bail is set in Minnesota courts. The Committee has created the Minnesota Pretrial Release Evaluation Form and Assessment Tool (MNPAT) to ensure that the factors that judges consider in setting bail are effective in predicting whether an alleged offender will show up for trial. Some factors previously used disproportionately affected minorities and yet were

not helpful in predicting future appearances. Similarly, an effort should be made to study the terms of probation statewide to ensure that all offenders are being treated fairly no matter the color of their skin or where they live.

QUESTION 7:

Do you believe that all citizens have adequate access to legal help and the legal system? If not, what can be done to provide wider and better access?

CANDIDATE MICHELLE MACDONALD:

Bureaucracy is the biggest obstacle to accessing legal help and the legal system. As a judge in the highest judicial office of our state, I will protect individual fundamental rights by eliminating the bureaucracy and making certain the Constitution is upheld in the Judicial Branch to restore faith and Justice for all of us. This includes protecting your liberty rights ----- to be free from government abuse, to establish a home, family relations, and to acquire, possess and enjoy your resources and property.

CANDIDATE MARGARET CHUTICH:

No, I do not believe that all citizens have adequate access to legal help and the legal system. As a practicing attorney and then as a Justice on the Minnesota Supreme Court, I have been committed to increasing access to justice for all Minnesotans throughout my legal career. I currently serve as a liaison to the Supreme Court's Legal Services Advisory Committee, which manages Judicial Branch grant funding for civil legal aid programs statewide. These legal aid programs do excellent work, but, unfortunately, because of a lack of funding, they can only serve about 40% of the people who qualify for their services. Increasing the funding for these organizations is essential, as is increasing the coordination and efficiency of the programs regarding their online and phone intake processes.

In addition, the Judicial Branch has worked hard to provide quality court forms for self-represented litigants, increase attorney participation in providing free legal services for those who cannot afford an attorney, ensure that disabled persons can have full access to the courts, as well as many other initiatives that help connect Minnesotans with legal services. I support these essential efforts to provide wider and better access to justice in the state.

QUESTION 8:

What is the most critical issue facing the criminal justice system in St Louis County?

CANDIDATE MICHELLE MACDONALD:

It took me 25 years to open my eyes and see that our justice system has evolved into a system of injustice. A colleague of mine, Emily Baxter, wrote a book, "We are all Criminals". One in four people have a criminal record. Four in four have a criminal history. The presumption of innocence has deteriorated. We incarcerate more people than any other country. The accused and the victims alike are not being adequately heard and understood. Laws and judges are harming people. There is corruption in our courts. Then we have appellate court judges "rubber stamping" orders and stretching for ways to justify rules, laws and court orders that violate civil rights and harm us. As your Minnesota Supreme Court Justice, I will protect and defend constitutional rights, and make certain there is oversight and reform of our judicial system.

CANDIDATE MARGARET CHUTICH:

The most critical issue facing the criminal justice system is maintaining public confidence in the system. To be effective, all Minnesotans interacting with the criminal justice system must believe that the system gives them a “fair shake,” that they will be fairly heard and tried without regard to their financial resources, the neighborhood in which they live, or the color of their skin. We are fortunate to have a robust system of capable public defenders who work to ensure that all indigent Minnesotans have equal protection of the laws. I am also impressed with the quality of the county prosecutors in our State. As officers of the court, they are entrusted with not simply seeking convictions, but ensuring that justice is done. We must make sure to adequately fund our entire criminal justice system—the county attorneys, the public defenders, and the courts— so that each case may be decided in a fair, impartial, and efficient fashion.

MN COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE 2

QUESTION 1:

Please provide a brief description of the office you are seeking, including a brief description of the duties of the office.

CANDIDATE ANTHONY L BROWN:

The Court of Appeals was established by constitutional amendment on November 1, 1983. It has 19 judges from various part of the state. It is the intermediate appellate court, meaning its sits between the trial court (the lowest court) and the Minnesota Supreme Court (the highest court). In theory, decisions from the Court of Appeals are appealable to the Minnesota Supreme Court, but in practice the Minnesota Supreme Court takes (approximately) only five percent of appeals from the Court of Appeals, making the Minnesota Court of Appeals the final arbiter in (approximately) ninety-five percent of the cases brought in Minnesota courts. I am seeking a judgeship on the court. My job would be to decide cases of a wide-variety. As a judge on the Court of Appeals I would read the legal writings of the parties, listen to their oral defense of those arguments, and—with the help of two other judges—decide the outcome of the case.

CANDIDATE LUCINDA ELLEN JESSON:

I am honored to serve as a judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals. I hope to continue in that role. After a trial court has ruled or a jury rendered its verdict, people have a right to appeal to our court. People also ask our court to review the decisions of counties, cities, and state agencies. As a result, our court receives about 2,000 filings every year. Ninety-five percent of our decisions are the final word on a case. Our decisions touch many lives. Almost every week on the Court of Appeals, three judges decide six cases, with each judge authoring two opinions. We see about everything: criminal, civil, family, and constitutional challenges. In my time on the court since 2016, I have authored over 150 opinions (all of which are available on my campaign website because I believe in transparency). I write my opinions knowing that even the best decision lacks meaning if it is not explained in a way that regular Minnesotans can understand. My opinions are written with this goal in mind: clear, understandable explanations. Besides deciding cases, judges work to promote justice in our state. One of my favorite assignments (which I requested) is liaison to the judges and lawyers of the Arrowhead. So I am here often. I also serve on the Judicial Council, co-chair the Tribal Court / State Court Forum and am a member of the Rules of Professional Conduct Committee for the Minnesota State Bar Association, which I formerly chaired.

QUESTION 2:

Please provide a personal statement describing your past work and life experience and why you are seeking this office.

CANDIDATE ANTHONY L BROWN:

I am a native Chicagoan, the youngest of twelve, who has lived in Saint Paul for nearly twenty years. I moved here to go to Hamline University School of Law from which I graduated. I have worked as a law clerk to a federal judge, as a business litigator at a large law firm in Minneapolis, as a public defender, as corporate counsel for a Minnesota non-profit, and I currently represent individuals in a wide variety of legal matters, civil and criminal. My work has taken me before juries, judicial referees, administrative agencies, trial court judges, the Minnesota Court of Appeals, the Minnesota Supreme Court, federal appellate courts across the country

and even the Supreme Court of the United States—I have prevailed before all of them. I am seeking a position on the Court of Appeals because I have seen first-hand how the Court is losing credibility with those who are poor and powerless. In my view, the Court, on far too many occasions, has shown little regard for rights of individuals in favor of government intrusion or whatever is in the best interest of corporations.

CANDIDATE LUCINDA ELLEN JESSON:

I practiced law for over 30 years before being appointed to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. During that time, I met my husband, Peter Knapp, and together we raised four children while we both juggled busy, full-time jobs and commitments to our church and community. I started my career with a decade at a large law firm in Minneapolis representing corporations and individuals. But I went to law school for public service. So I moved to the Minnesota Attorney General's Office where I served as a Deputy Attorney General, and later worked as the Chief Deputy Hennepin County Attorney for then-County Attorney Amy Klobuchar. After a stint at my own small firm, I joined Hamline University, where I served as an associate professor and founded the nationally ranked Health Law Institute. But public service called again. And I became Commissioner for the Minnesota Department of Human Services, overseeing the state's largest agency that provides services to well over one million Minnesotans every year. I was appointed to the court of appeals by Governor Dayton – after being thoroughly vetted by the Judicial Selection Committee (made up of attorneys and citizens from all over the State). I hope to continue my public service as a judge. I seek justice for all Minnesotans – regardless of their circumstances. This has been a mantra of my career as a lawyer, teacher, public servant focused on the most vulnerable in our society, and as a judge.

QUESTION 3:

It is important for candidates to engage, reach out, and listen to all communities, especially underrepresented communities. How are you currently accomplishing this and what is your plan to continue if elected?

CANDIDATE ANTHONY L BROWN:

My work as a public defender in an urban area puts me at ground zero of representing a cross-section of Minnesota—especially unrepresented communities. I am constantly called upon to represent people who are economically disadvantaged (*i.e.*, poor) diverse in their race, age, language, gender identities, physical abilities, and education. Many of my clients are mentally ill and struggling with substance abuse. The Court of Appeals would greatly benefit from having someone with this recent direct client contact with diverse communities. If elected, I commit to set aside time each month to speak with (or better still, listen to) any organization—especially schools—so as to not lose touch with the people that I represent on the Court.

CANDIDATE LUCINDA ELLEN JESSON:

An appellate judge must not only have a breadth of experience and an even-handed approach to decisionmaking, but also a true appreciation for the circumstances of the people we serve. I bring with me to the bench a humbling appreciation for and experience with the broad spectrum of people seen in our judicial system. My prior public service work provides the gift of coming to know and understand people from all walks of life and every corner of our state. But past experiences do not suffice for the long term. Judges must remain engaged in the society we serve. And I continue in my efforts to engage with the community – particularly underserved communities. I serve on boards of Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, which provides services to vulnerable people in all 87 of our counties; Southern Prairie Center for Community Health Improvement, which focuses on community health challenges in 12 counties in Southwest Minnesota; Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul, which is an anti-poverty organization consisting of churches, mosques and

synagogues; and Close Gaps by 5, which focuses on addressing the statewide achievement gap by advocating for high quality early learning programs for all low-income children. But personal involvement matters. And we cannot close the achievement gap without it. So every week I tutor a second grader who needs help learning to read. These experiences keep me grounded and connected to the communities that I serve. I will not stop.

QUESTION 4:

Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

CANDIDATE ANTHONY L BROWN:

Minnesota's jury pool is decidedly weak in its diversity—and it is hurting the confidence the public has in a fair trial. Time after time my clients look at me after a jury takes its seat and ask “jury of my peers! Where is it?” I have no answer to satisfy that question. That said, I do believe that jurors of a different race, age, etc., of a party to the case can still fairly judge the case. But those jurors must have an open mind to different traditions, experiences, and social norms to do so. Sometimes, I have found, that is simply asking too much. The fix for this lack of diversity rests with the Legislature and the Governor. If they looked at this problem in a non-partisan way, they would readily discover that automatic voter registration (jurors are often selected from voter registrations), greater job protections for citizens serving on juries, and increased compensation for jury service would go a long way toward diversifying the jury pool.

CANDIDATE LUCINDA ELLEN JESSON:

I am a great believer in the jury system. Much of my personal trial experience is found in my first fifteen years of practice, but the second half of my career has grounded me in parts of our judicial system less known to many lawyers: the child protection system, our mental and chemical health challenges, and the child support infrastructure which is critical to the infrastructure of many families. But all these perspectives – as well as my last few years as a judge – reinforce the idea that juries ground our law in common sense. Juries must fairly reflect the society at large. State court jurors are pulled from the communities in which they live. But this system only works if people show up. Jury duty is a privilege and a responsibility. A responsibility engrained in the Constitution. We need everyone to answer if called upon to serve on a jury. One way to ensure that juries adequately represent our society is through education at the earliest levels. We need to talk to young children and young adults about our jury system so they can understand and appreciate how unique and special this system is in our country. We also need to build public trust in the judicial system so people will answer when called upon to serve on a jury.

QUESTION 5:

Do you believe there is under-representation of women or people of color or indigenous people in the court system? If so, how would you work to correct the problem?

CANDIDATE ANTHONY L BROWN:

I cannot tell you how many times court personnel who are not yet familiar with me have mistaken me for the criminal defendant. It is exhausting. My colleagues who are Asian attorneys are often pegged as interpreters. So yes, I am confident that Minnesota's court system would benefit from some diversity. This is particularly true on the Court of Appeals, which, by any measure, fails to reflect all of Minnesota.

CANDIDATE LUCINDA ELLEN JESSON:

The Judicial System must reflect the people we serve. We have made strides. The majority of the Minnesota Supreme Court is made up of women. Ten of the nineteen court of appeals judges are women. Justice Anne McKeig is the first Native American woman anywhere in the country to serve on a state supreme court. Through the work of our merit-based Judicial Selection Commission and governors, we have made significant progress. But there is more work to be done. Diversity in the judicial branch is vital to promote the public's trust. Whether it is the judge on the bench, the clerk working at the counter, or the receptionist welcoming people to court. The public—whether litigants, attorneys, or jurors—must be confident that their voice will be heard. Knowing that people similar to themselves fill these different roles is critical to that belief. As a judge, I have a role in our progress. A role when hiring law clerks and judicial assistants. So I strive to have a diverse – and incredibly competent – staff. A role in encouraging people from all walks of life to pursue the law and, when lawyers, to consider becoming a judge. This is part of my outreach. And a role to advocate within the legal profession to make sure that there is a career path that is open to everyone – women, people of color, indigenous people. This is the critical path forward. We are on the way. We can do more.

QUESTION 6:

What do you believe are the primary factors which contribute to high rates of minority incarceration? How should these factors be addressed?

CANDIDATE ANTHONY L BROWN:

Race is America's original sin. And good people of all races have worked toward redemption but we are not yet redeemed. Racial bias is real; it apparent at every stage of our criminal justice system, from law making to sentencing. Facts: *some* laws have targeted minority communities (*i.e.*, the sentencing disparity for crack cocaine v. powder cocaine), *some* law enforcement officials unfairly target people of color because of a (wrongful) perception of criminality, *some* prosecutors press hefty charges against defendants of color in an effort to force a plea agreement (and some criminal defense attorneys are complicit in securing that plea), and *some* judges fail to identify with the defendants they sentence and therefore impose harsher sentences than what they would on a defendant who reminded them of themselves or someone they know. All of these come together to create a higher incarceration rate for minorities. To be clear, I do not subscribe to, and indeed reject, the notion that people of color are more criminal by their nature or by socialization; that is not the case. The best way to address this problem is to *actively* work toward a consciousness about what biases we (including me) might hold against those who are different from ourselves. It can no longer be "their community" v. "our community." We must see ourselves, no matter how different, as one community.

CANDIDATE LUCINDA ELLEN JESSON:

Answering this question requires a long conversation. A conversation that needs to be had by all partners in the criminal justice system – police, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, social workers, parole officers, etc. – as well as members of the public. And this discussion implicates more than just the criminal justice system, but also safe and affordable housing, the achievement gap in schools, early childhood education, and access to affordable healthcare. The conversation needs to be open, honest, and will – at times – be painful to have and to hear, as progress always is and will be. I have been part of this conversation—and seen halting progress—throughout my career. As a judge, one needs to take three steps. First, help address the underlying challenges of poverty, the achievement gap, and access to services so that there is an equal footing for all. One need not engage in politics – which judges should not – to take this step. But help vulnerable people. Tutor a child. Engage in the community that needs us. I do that every week. Second, understand our history

and the biases which we all carry. Because we do. Unless we understand bias, how can we address it? This requires self-examination. It is not easy. Third, call out – in a constructive manner – the bias that we see. We should not assume prejudice. But we cannot dismiss its signs. Which is why, on occasion, I write separately in opinions when I discern that the underlying situation reflects bias.

QUESTION 7:

Do you believe that all citizens have adequate access to legal help and the legal system? If not, what can be done to provide wider and better access?

CANDIDATE ANTHONY L BROWN:

Access to justice is critically lacking for poor Minnesotans—especially in the civil matters (e.g. family law, consumer protection, contract disputes, employment disputes, etc.). As for criminal matters, poor people are afforded an attorney at the State's expense but those attorneys (public defenders) are greatly overworked and underpaid. We need to adequately fund the public defense system in Minnesota and encourage attorneys to lend their skills and talents to the less fortunate.

CANDIDATE LUCINDA ELLEN JESSON:

No. I do not believe all people have adequate access to legal assistance. To ensure access to justice, adequate funding for the Public Defender system is essential. That does not always happen. (Though we do a much better job in Minnesota than in most other states!) And we must do more to fund organizations that help citizens who may not be able to afford a private attorney when facing civil disputes involving housing, health insurance, domestic relations, or adverse employment issues. People without the ability to pay for a lawyer should not be blocked from accessing their constitutional and statutory rights, which – often – can only be enforced by courts. I will continue to work and support adequate funding for these organizations.

QUESTION 8:

What is the most critical issue facing the criminal justice system in Minnesota?

CANDIDATE ANTHONY L BROWN:

I think my previous answers address that question. Good questions, hope my answers are helpful.

CANDIDATE LUCINDA ELLEN JESSON:

Public trust is always a critical issue for the third, but equal, branch of government. Where the other two branches publicly debate their work, much of the judicial branch work happens with less public attention or, as is the case with appellate courts, through written opinions. But without a solid judicial system, there is not a functioning society. And that judicial system cannot function without a foundation of public trust, which we must continually replenish in an increasingly polarized society. To do so we must have judges – especially at the highest levels – that command and continually earn respect throughout our state. We must have a judicial branch that reflects our society. We must have judges who remain truly independent from the politics of the day without retreating from the society we serve. Judges who think about justice when examining every case. As a society, we have made much progress during my life. But variations of the glaring injustices that led me to the law remain today. We see them on our streets and in our neighborhoods. The justice system alone cannot fix them all. But without a strong justice system we will advance no further. I want to continue to replenish the public's trust in the judicial system and be part of that strong justice system.