MARK HALL
FOR HAMILTON COUNTY COUNCIL
To Serve Neighbors
WWW.MARKFHALL.COM

STOPPED A $500 TAX INCREASE.
He stood in the gap for families.
A colleague pushed a $500-per-family tax hike.
Mark Hall said no — and made it stick.
Your money. His principles.
PAID FOR BY FRIENDS OF MARK HALL

IAF HAMILTON COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS FIRE PAC 2026 ENDORSED

THE HAMILTON COUNTY REPORTER
Your Hometown Newspaper

ELECTION DAY SPECIAL EDITION

ELECTION DAY, NOV. 3, 2026

ARCADIA | ATLANTA | CICERO | SHERIDAN | TIPTON
CARMEL | FISHERS | NOBLESVILLE | WESTFIELD

WISHTV NEWS GATHERING PARTNER

LIKE & FOLLOW US!

TODAY'S WEATHER

Today: Partly sunny and warm.

Tonight: Showers after midnight.

HIGH: 74 **LOW**: 61

paulpoteet.com

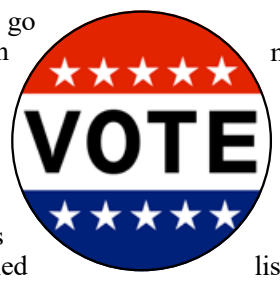
Get out there and vote

The REPORTER

Today is Election Day. While voting is a right, it is also a responsibility, and Hamilton County's Hometown Newspaper is offering you as much information as we can so you can make an informed decision at the polls.

Several candidates have ads in today's special edition, and our thanks go out to them both for supporting local, independent news, as well as for engaging with voters.

The resources we have assembled to help you make your choice include:



- A list of endorsements on Page 2
- An abundance of candidate bios, which you can find at **this link**.
- The complete list of polling locations on Page 8 at **this link**.
- A full list of candidates on Page 9 at **this link**.

According to Hoosier Weather Daddy Paul Poteet, today will be partly sunny with a high of 74. We could see some scattered showers later this evening, with a low of 61.

No more excuses. Get out there and vote, Hamilton County. Our republic needs you.

Hamilton County makes voting accessible for voters with disabilities

First-time voter shares his experience using assistive technology at the polls

The REPORTER

When Noblesville High School senior Matthias Vescelus cast his first-ever ballot this past weekend, he did so independently, thanks to assistive technology available at every Hamilton County polling place.

Vescelus, who is blind, used a device called DoubleTalk that connects to the voting machine and reads the ballot aloud through headphones. The technology allows voters with visual impairments to navigate their ballot, make their selections, and cast their votes without assistance from another person.

"I preferred this over voting absentee because I could do it myself," Vescelus said. "It took me a second to figure out the system, but once I figured it out, it was super easy."

All Hamilton County voting machines can be equipped with the DoubleTalk hardware. The machines also offer a zoom feature for voters who need larger print. For those with mobility challenges, the voting panel can be lowered to a seated position, allowing voters to use the equipment more comfortably.

"Our goal is to make sure no one feels that a disability prevents them from participating in an election," Hamilton County Clerk Kathy Kreag Williams said. "If you arrive at a Vote Center and need assistance, please don't hesitate to ask. Our poll workers are trained to help make every voter feel comfortable and confident when they come to the polls."

Voters with disabilities also have several options for casting an absentee ballot in future elections:

- **Vote by Mail:** Voters with disabilities may request an absentee ballot by mail if they can personally mark their ballot and sign the required envelope.
- **Vote with Print Disability Ballot:** Voters with qualifying print disabilities may request an electronic ballot delivered by email that can be read using assistive technology.
- **Traveling Absentee Voter Board:** Voters who cannot independently mark their ballot or sign the absentee ballot security envelope may request assistance from a bipartisan absentee voter board, which can travel to their location and assist them with voting.

Voters who have questions about accessible voting equipment, absentee voting, or requesting assistance are encouraged to contact the Hamilton County Elections Office or visit **hamiltoncounty.in.gov/220/Vote-Absentee**.



Photo provided by Hamilton County Government

Matthias Vescelus, who is blind, voted early last Saturday thanks to the assistive technology available at the county's polling places.

Information about two ballot measures



COLUMNIST
RAY ADLER
Ask Adler

Indiana has two statewide ballot measures certified to be on the ballot on Nov. 3.

The state legislature has referred a constitutional amendment to the ballot that would require city and town court judges to reside in the county where the court is located or in a county closest to the court which borders the county where the court is located.

The legislature has also referred a constitutional amendment to the ballot to provide offenses other than murder or treason are bailable unless the accused poses a substantial risk to any other person or the community if the presumption is strong, and the state proves that no condition of release will protect the community.

Ray Adler is a longtime attorney with offices at The Adler Building, 136 S. 9th St., Downtown Noblesville. He is also one of the owners of The Hamilton County Reporter Newspaper.

Voting, veterans & virtue



COLUMNIST
NANCY KELLY SMITH
Civility Counts

"In essentials, unity, in non-essentials, liberty, and in all things, charity."

Puritan Richard Baxter promoted this maxim in his day, and it still has relevance for us as citizens today.

In order to have a functioning government, practicing civility is a necessity, an essential. We are now in the season of campaigning and voting for some of our local, state, and national leaders.

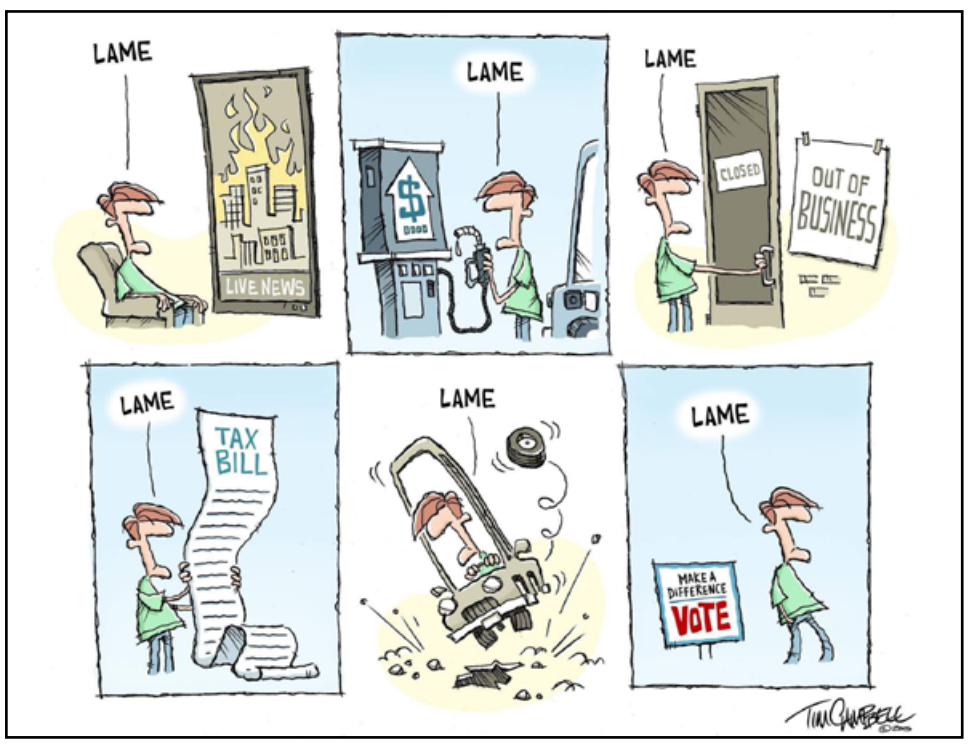
So when and where do we practice civility? In all our interactions with other citizens, especially those of a different political persuasion, we treat people with respect. We don't have to agree, but can agree to disagree. Disagreeing doesn't mean we are entitled to be rude or insulting, however. To those campaigning who come to our doors, a simple "Thank you, but I don't have time now" and closing (not slamming) the door is a way to end the encounter civilly. Maybe the campaign material given will end up in the trash, but the other person wasn't "trashed"!

Another time and place to practice civility is at the polling place. Having recruited poll workers for three different elections in Hamilton County, I know what a VERY long day is required for those who accept a position at the polls. If a question, mistake, or challenging situation should come up, that issue would be directed to a person who could help resolve it. We may feel frustrated at times if we believe we are not getting our due in some way. But we can calm down, practice self-control and still treat poll workers with civility and that could help resolve the issue without lingering animosity. We are all human, less than perfect, and we may do well to give ourselves and others some grace.

Undoubtedly, most citizens in our county are being civil with each other as we engage in the election process.

Important to note also, is that it is not essential that we persuade others to vote for our choices. We have the liberty to vote for the candidates we think would best reflect our values and perform the duties of their elected

See *Virtue* . . . Page 2



Come meet the candidates

The Reporter has done its part to help voters make informed decisions when casting their ballots whether early, absentee, or on Election Day.

The Reporter has published Candidate Bios for all candidates who chose to engage with our readers. You can read them at **this link**.

Election Day polling places are listed on Page 8 of the Candidate Bios, which you can read at **this link**. *Please note that Vote Centers will **not** take effect in Hamilton County until the May 2027 primary election.*

This is a free public service we are providing both to candidates and our readers.

DIXON FOR SHERIFF
PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT DUSTIN DIXON

- Veteran Who Served Our Country
- Leader Focused on Public Safety
- Strong Community Relationships
- Proven to Deliver for Hamilton County

ENDORSED BY 4 MAYORS
SUE FINKAM, CARMEL • SCOTT FADNESS, FISHERS
CHRIS JENSEN, NOBLESVILLE • SCOTT WILLIS, WESTFIELD
ENDORSED BY ALL 4 FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE LODGES IN HAMILTON COUNTY
ENDORSED BY ALL 3 COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DIXONFORSHERIFF.COM



Early Voting Totals

Below are the final number of early voters as of Monday, Nov. 2, listed by polling location.

Judicial Center	12,719
4-H Fairgrounds	18,828
Carmel Clay Public Library	5,270
Jill Perelman Pavilion, Carmel	5,262
Wilfong Pavilion, Carmel	4,243
Billericay Park Bldg., Fishers	5,676
Roy G. Holland Bldg., Fishers	4,893
Cool Creek Nature Center	5,087
Westfield City Hall	3,100
Westfield Washington Twp. Bldg.	3,302
Cicero Library	1,172
Sheridan Library	638
TOTAL	**70,190**



Candidate Endorsements

State

Greg Ballard for Secretary of State
Sue Ellspermann, former Indiana Lt. Governor
Paul Rieckhoff, Iraq War veteran & podcaster

Beau Bayh for Secretary of State
State Senator Greg Walker (R-Columbus)

Max Engling for Secretary of State
Turning Point Action
Indiana Right to Life PAC
President Donald J. Trump
Vice President J.D. Vance

Coumba Kebe for Treasurer of State
Pete Buttigieg, Former Secy. of Transportation

Kirsten Root for Indiana Senate District 21
Cheryl Popiela, Sheridan
Amy Christmas, Westfield
Kaitleyn Moreno, Westfield
Kim McDowell, Sheridan

John Ruckelshaus for Indiana Senate District 29
Indiana Professional Fire Fighters PAC

Alaina Shonkwiler for Indiana House District 29
Natalie Muir Eden, Nobelsville

Devon Wellington for Indiana House District 29
Moms Demand Action
Moffett R. Craig, Noblesville
Patricia LeSueur, Fishers
Michelle Payne, Noblesville
David Wellington, Noblesville
Lauren Driskell, Noblesville
Cady Dawson, Noblesville
Devon Watkins, Noblesville
Charlene Stacy, Noblesville
Larry & Sara McSpadden, Fishers
Leslie Rowley, Noblesville
Voters for a Green Indiana
Nocona Cannady-Flatt
Indiana Political Action Committee for Education

Danny Lopez for Indiana House District 39
Professional Fire Fighters Union of Indiana PAC
Carmel Fraternal Order of Police
Indiana Realtor RPAC
National Federation of Independent Business

Lindsay Gramlich for Indiana House District 39
Pete Buttigieg, Former Secy. of Transportation

Federal

J.D. Ford for U.S. Representative District 5
American Federation of Government Employees
Equality PAC

Victoria Spartz for U.S. Representative District 5
George Hodgson, Noblesville

County

Beth Sheller for County Clerk
County Recorder Trini Beaver
Michael Colby, Major, U.S. Army (Ret.)
County Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt
County Councilwoman Sue Maki
Noblesville Attorney Ray Adler
County Councilman Mark Hall
County Commissioner Steve C. Dillinger
Dianna Lynch
Peggy Beaver, former County Clerk

Dustin Dixon for Sheriff
OneZone Business Action Committee

Mark Hall for County Council
Hamilton County Professional Fire Fighters Local 4416

Townships

Doug Allman for Fall Creek Twp. Trustee
Jennifer Davisson, Fishers
Fishers City Councilwoman Tiffanie Ditlevson

Susan Davis for Fall Creek Twp. Board
Rachel Quade, Fishers
Fishers City Councilwoman Tiffanie Ditlevson

Diane Eaton for Fall Creek Twp. Board
Fishers City Councilwoman Tiffanie Ditlevson

Lynne Goodin for Fall Creek Twp. Board
Fishers City Councilwoman Tiffanie Ditlevson

Peggy Pfister for Noblesville Twp. Board
George Hodgson, Noblesville

Robyn Cook for Jackson Twp. Trustee
Jack Russell, Jackson Township
Anthony Jay Cook, former State Represenative
Ford Hebner, Cicero
Hamilton County Professional Fire Fighters Local 4416
Jenna Majors, Jackson Township
Jay Trauring, Cicero
Mike Kirchberg, former Firefighter/Paramedic/Investiagor

Judicial

Emily Angel Shaw for Superior Court 8 Judge
Debbie Dean, Carmel

School Board

Josh Perry for HSE School Board District 2
Scott Fadness, Mayor of Fishers

David Turk for HSE School Board District 3
Scott Fadness, Mayor of Fishers

Denise Dye for Noblesville School Board
Carl Sampson, Noblesville
Martin Strother, Noblesville

Joe Forgey for Noblesville School Board
Chris Hartig, Noblesville Democratic Chair for Precinct 9
Dr. Charles Leonard, former HSE Schools Superintendent

Misti Ray for Noblesville School Board
Chris Hartig, Noblesville Democratic Chair for Precinct 9
Dr. Charles Leonard, former HSE Schools Superintendent

Virtue

from Page 1

office with competency, dedication, and integrity, embodying civility in what they say and do.

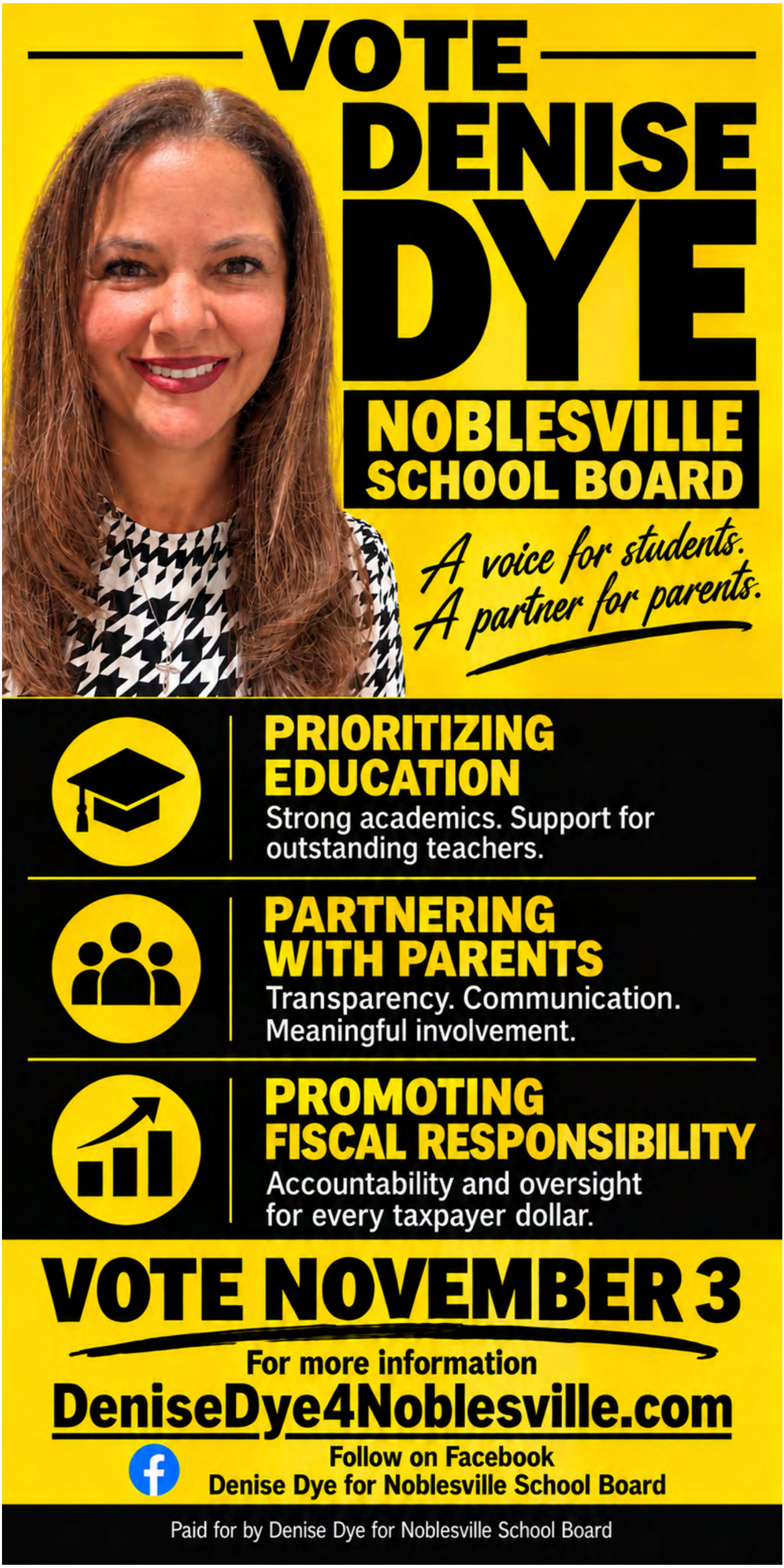
Many of us have had family members or friends who served in the military, or who are veterans themselves. My father was in the Army in WWII, trained at Camp Atterbury here in Indiana, fought and was captured and spent months in a German POW camp before being liberated. Consequently, I have some knowledge of what suffering veterans and their families have endured to preserve our freedoms, including the freedom to vote. All the veterans I know fought in Viet Nam. Most of them were not treated with civility and respect when they returned stateside. But now we have the opportunity to thank them, to attend ceremonies that honor them, to donate to reliable veterans organizations that support veterans, and hopefully, provide resources that can provide housing, mental and emotional support and end the tragedy of veteran suicide.

Who among us does not want to be understood? to belong? to be loved? To me, "charity" IS love, and is the foundation of "civility." I don't think of love necessarily as an emotion. I think sometimes it is a decision to care about another person. To treat that one as we want to be treated with dignity and respect.

Charity is a virtue to permeate all our words and actions. If it does, the practice of civility can become commonplace. We can all do our part to make it so.

Nancy Kelly Smith is a retired English professor and published author. She is also an Ambassador for the national civility organization Civic Renaissance. Learn more at civic-renaissance.com.




VOTE
DENISE
DYE
NOBLESVILLE
SCHOOL BOARD
A voice for students.
A partner for parents.
PRIORITIZING
EDUCATION
Strong academics. Support for
outstanding teachers.
PARTNERING
WITH PARENTS
Transparency. Communication.
Meaningful involvement.
PROMOTING
FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY
Accountability and oversight
for every taxpayer dollar.
VOTE NOVEMBER 3
For more information
DeniseDye4Noblesville.com
Follow on Facebook
Denise Dye for Noblesville School Board
Paid for by Denise Dye for Noblesville School Board



Both sides of District 29 election

Republican Alaina Shonkwiler discusses hometown service

By AIDA KARIM
news@readthereporter.com

Noblesville born and bred, this candidate's passion for her hometown is deeply ingrained.

The Reporter spoke with Alaina Shonkwiler, the Republican incumbent running against Democrat challenger Devon Wellington in the Nov. 3 election for Indiana House of Representatives District 29.


Shonkwiler

Shonkwiler said she chose to run the first time because she "wanted to be a voice for Noblesville."

"As somebody who was raised here by two public servants, a teacher and a nurse, I knew how much the Statehouse really affected our local communities," Shonkwiler said.

Before office

Prior to her election, Shonkwiler said she got her start with the city government and Statehouse through her participation in various committees and work for different officials.

Shonkwiler said she worked with past officials Luke Kenley and Kathy Richardson (Williams) to establish the cultural arts district in Noblesville.

Shownwiler also worked for prior District 29 Rep. Chuck Goodrich and for Noblesville Schools in a workforce development coordinator position. She helped launch high school students into the best careers possible.

"We focused significantly on workforce development," she said. "Crafting bills that were specifically around graduation pathways and workforce development."

Shonkwiler said as she worked with Congresswoman Victoria Spartz, staying by her side when the congresswoman attended Statehouse meetings. She said there she began understanding how some federal implications at the congressional level were impacting the Statehouse.

During office

When evaluating her priorities in office, Shonkwiler said she questions legislation, wondering, "Is it going to make life more affordable? Is it going to make the government work better? Is it going to make our communities safe?"

Shonkwiler said an example of legislation she worked on includes giving law enforcement the tools and clarity and resources that they need to protect our communities while supporting transparency and accountability with House Bill 1232 (**iga.in.gov/legislative/2025/bills/house/1232/details**).

"In this past session, I was proud to lead some meaningful local government reform conversations," Shonkwiler said. "Having township modernization legislation that actually took a thoughtful approach, looking at improving efficiency, reducing duplication in local government entities, and ensuring that taxpayer dollars were used wisely."

Shonkwiler told The Reporter she worked on Senate Bill 270 (**iga.in.gov/legislative/2026/bills/senate/270/details**) making the statehouse continually evaluate how it can deliver better services at lower cost to the taxpayer.

"It was the first time we had meaningful reform of township government in over 20 years," Shonkwiler said.

According to Shonkwiler she also focuses on reforming and the regulation of investor-owned electric utilities.

She said, "Indiana is really growing, and in that growth comes energy demand, and that depends on reliability and affordability of electricity."

Shonkwiler said within her role on the government and regulatory reform committee at the Statehouse, she has continued to push for housing affordability.

According to Shonkwiler, another issue was duplicate efforts, where multiple units of government were involved in the contracting process for different public services. She said she aims to minimize taxing people twice for the same service.

Shonkwiler told The Reporter she stands out as a candidate because of her unique connection to Noblesville.

Noblesville connection

In terms of the Make My Move program opposing candidate Wellington had utilized, Shonkwiler said, as somebody who has consulted in economic development for communities across the state, the program has recruited some incredible people to the community.

"I don't want to disparage the people who came here through using that program because it was a tool that they were able to use," Shonkwiler said. "Do I necessarily agree with using tax dollars to do that? No, not really."

Shonkwiler said there are people who've lived here their whole lives and invested in the community who didn't need the incentive to do so.

"I was raised here. My kids have been raised here," Shonkwiler said. "I actually bought the house that I grew up in from my parents. And so I've been ingrained in the community basically my whole life."

Shonkwiler goes to the American Legion and VFW and told The Reporter she knows the members by name. She has volunteered at Noblesville Main Street and with Noblesville Schools. She has been on the sidelines at school sporting events alongside her community.

Shonkwiler said she "knows the community backwards and forwards."

If voters would like to reach out to Shonkwiler, she encourages inquiries at **alainafornoblesville@gmail.com** or by visiting **alainafornoblesville.com**.

District 29 encompasses Noblesville and a small portion of Fishers. You can see the full district maps and look up your district at **iga.in.gov/information/house-district-map**.

According to the Indiana General Assembly, the House of Representatives works alongside the Senate and Governor to draft and pass laws as well as establish the state budget and taxes.

In June 2023, The Reporter published a story detailing the Make My Move program and how it's brought people to Noblesville. You can read that story at **tinyurl.com/HCRmakemymove**.

Democrat Devon Wellington talks about her priorities

By AIDA KARIM
news@readthereporter.com

A new candidate is in town and looking to reform the state's educational priorities.

The Reporter spoke with Devon Wellington, the Democratic candidate running against incumbent Republican Alaina Shonkwiler in the Nov. 3 election for Indiana House of Representatives District 29.


Wellington

Wellington told The Reporter she has worked in education policy on the district, state, and federal levels.

Wellington said she works daily to ensure states around the country guarantee good outcomes for kids, in spite of the "bad policy that they are often handed or unfunded mandates that state legislature gives them." She works alongside an array of different governmental bodies, which she said emulates the job of a state legislator in many ways.

"I have a personal rule for myself that sort of keeps me in check, and that rule is that I'm not allowed to complain about something unless I'm willing to do something about it," Wellington said.

Wellington and her family had previously lived in northern Virginia. Years before their move, the family had been visiting the city and attending Saturday Night Crusin' On the Square regularly.

She said from these experiences she knew Noblesville was the place to raise her kids.

In 2022, Wellington and her family relocated to Noblesville under the Make My Move program.

Education

Wellington said when her son began to attend Noblesville schools, she was naturally curious about how the district approached different issues.

"I got involved in several of the district-level committees and have had a wonderful experience with our schools in that regard," Wellington said.

Wellington told The Reporter this experience directly led to general community involvement, observing complications surrounding the state legislature and education.

"I don't feel like we're headed in a great direction and in a direction that will benefit my children or the community long term," Wellington said. "And thinking about my background, experience, and knowledge, it became really clear, very quickly, the Statehouse was where I could do the most good."

Wellington said the state continues to maintain an effort that ignores the needs of the majority of students' interests in favor of what a few parents and legislators want.

Many school districts have referendums on the ballot for November. Wellington said she believes many people are experiencing strong emotional ties to many of the issues at stake because they impact their communities and utilize their tax dollars.

"I'm never going to begrudge a parent who is trying to get the best education for their child," Wellington said, "but when we systematically take money away from our public schools and then expect them [the schools] to be able to do more with less, piled on top of unfunded mandates and expectations that we are throwing at teachers and schools without the support to actually make them effective, and then blaming them when we're not getting the educational outcomes we want, it's just – quite frankly – insanity to me."

Wellington told The Reporter she believes that before the state decides to allocate tax dollars to a private or charter school, the people should get to vote on that decision on a ballot.

Community members are feeling immense pressure because the state is, in her words, "tragically underfunding our schools. I think we are viewing education as an expense as opposed to an investment."

Wellington said beyond her vote on different bills, something she can do is bring more stakeholders to the table and get them on the same page so that we are moving together towards a shared goal.

Affordability

Aside from educational priorities, Wellington said affordability is another major aspect of her campaign.

"Hamilton County should continue to be a place to invest in, but still be affordable," Wellington said.

She said every day, as a parent, she is asked to pay more for something today than she paid yesterday. She said she believes the state should pass certain policies to effectively help families and set them and their children up for long-term success.

Supermajority

"My job is not to go to the Statehouse and try to push through every initiative that I think is important to push through," Wellington said. "My job as a representative is to be the voice for my district and do what, collectively, we believe is important."

She said even with a Republican supermajority she believes she can go into the Statehouse thoroughly understanding what her constituents want.

Wellington said her job would be far more than making a big show of politics.

"Good politics is more about being focused on being the workhorse than being the show horse, and I do not mind being the workhorse," Wellington said.

She said many representatives focus on working down the aisle, but she believes the reality of good policy-making starts with good intentions for her district.

If she were to be elected, Wellington said, "I'm never going to complain about something that I won't be involved in or willing to put work toward. I will continue to show up for my community."

Wellington encourages any and all community members to reach out to her via email at **devon@votedevon.com** or **info@votedevon.com**, or call her directly at (317) 316-8378. You can read more about her campaign online at **votedevon.com**.



Local candidates speak to voters at Northern GOP



Photos provided

The Northern Hamilton County GOP met Monday, Sept. 14, at Greek's Pizzeria in Sheridan. Featured speakers were Candidate for Secretary of State Max Engling, Hamilton County Commissioner Christine Altman, Candidate for Judge Danica Eyler, Candidate for Sheriff Dustin Dixon, Candidate for Hamilton County Clerk Beth Sheller, and Hamilton County Councilman Ken Alexander. Great food and conversation were enjoyed by all. The next meeting of the Northern Hamilton County GOP will be at 6 p.m. Monday, Oct. 17, at the Hamilton County FOP Lodge. (From left) Christine Altman, Danica Eyler, Dustin Dixon, and Beth Sheller.

Hamilton County Election Board unanimously approves Vote Centers

New model to take effect with 2027 municipal elections

The REPORTER

The Hamilton County Election Board voted unanimously on Tuesday, Sept. 29, to transition from traditional precinct-based voting to a countywide Vote Center model beginning with the 2027 Municipal Elections.

Under the new system, Hamilton County voters will no longer be required to cast their ballot at an assigned precinct on Election Day. Instead, they will be able to vote at any designated Vote Center in the county.

Hamilton County currently operates 102 polling sites. Under the approved plan, the county will establish 57 Vote Centers – more than double the 28 locations required by state law based on Hamilton County's registered voter population.

"This gives voters more flexibility while allowing us to build an election system that can better accommodate Hamilton County's continued growth," County Clerk Kathy Kreag Williams said. "Beginning next year, voters can choose the Vote Center that works best for them rather than being tied to one specific location."

The unanimous vote marks a change from last year, when the proposal fell one vote short of the unanimous approval required. Ray Adler, the Republican appointee to the Election Board, voted against the proposal at that time, saying he wanted to see how Vote Centers worked in Allen County before making such a significant change in Hamilton County.



Photo provided by Hamilton County Government

(From left) Elections Administrator Beth Sheller, and Election Board members Kathy Kreag Williams, Ray Adler, and Greg Purvis hear testimony from a citizen on the vote center proposal.

The public speaks

Leading up to the Election Board's meeting, the county conducted an online survey to gauge the public's response to the Vote Center proposal. A total of 323 responses were submitted through Sept. 25.

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	254	78.6%
No	43	13.3%
Maybe	26	8.0%

"I had concerns last year because this is a major change that will affect hundreds of thousands of voters," Adler said. "We've had another year to study the process, learn from other counties, and strengthen our own plan. I'm comfortable that we're ready to move forward."

Greg Purvis, the Democratic appointee to the Election Board, supported the proposal last year and again voted in favor of it Tuesday.

"We didn't all start in the same place on this issue, but we took the time to work through the concerns and get to a plan we could all support," Purvis said. "That's how this process should work. Now we can focus on making sure voters understand the change and are prepared for 2027."

The change will first be implemented during the 2027 Municipal Elections, giving election officials an opportunity to refine the process before the higher-turnout 2028 Presidential Election.

A key part of the plan is the renewed participation of Hamilton County's local school districts. Several districts had previously stopped serving as polling locations because of security concerns, but all have now agreed to once again host voting locations throughout the county.

"One of the biggest reasons this proposal works is because our local school districts have stepped up as partners once again," Williams said. "By opening their buildings as Vote Centers, they're helping ensure voters across Hamilton County have a convenient place to cast their ballot close to home."

Williams authored Indiana's original Vote Center legislation while serving in the Indiana House of Representatives.

View from inside the meeting

By RAY ADLER
Election Board Member

Hamilton County becomes the 73rd county to adopt voting centers.

Voting Centers will be primarily in local schools, so there will be a consistent location. Voters can vote at any of the centers, no matter where they live.

Steve Baranyk spoke in favor, specifically citing the ease of finding a voting place, the elimination of voters showing up at the wrong voting location, and not having time to get to the right polling place before it closed. Regarding the choice to put locations at schools, Baranyk said making sure there will be adequate parking and handicapped access are important.

Jennifer Fallis of Westfield, a recent resident, was in favor. She noted it would be easier to find a location to vote, and that vote centers would encourage more youth to vote.

Lisa Dick represented the League of Women Voters of Hamilton County, opining that the League wanted easy access and secure voting with no possibility of voter fraud. She remarked on the convenience and bringing out the youth vote.

Janet Chandler, a former government teacher, noted that when she had to arrive at work early, it was sometimes difficult to find time to vote.

Before coming to the Election Board, the proposal was unanimously supported by both the Hamilton County Commissioners and the Hamilton County Council.

The next meeting of the Election Board will be the public test of voting machines 10 a.m. Oct. 2 at 609 Westfield Road, Noblesville. That location is just between Ace Hardware and Dollar General.



Ford explains what drives his desire for public service

By AIDA KARIM
news@readthereporter.com

Affordability for Hoosiers is the name of the game for this candidate.

The Reporter spoke with JD Ford, Democratic challenger to incumbent Republican Victoria Spartz in the Nov. 3 election for U.S. Representative of Indiana's 5th Congressional District, which includes Hamilton, Madison, Delaware, Grant, and Tipton counties, as well as the large majority of Howard County.

Ford was elected to the State Senate in 2018, representing District 29 and flipping his district from red to blue.

"I was going to be a one-term state senator, but I got into office and I got to work on behalf of Hoosiers," Ford said.

Background

Ford grew up in a union family in the Midwest. His dad was a truck driver and his mom was his school secretary, ending her career with work in an assisted care facility.

According to Ford, they worked hard to provide for his family.

"My grandparents served as local officials," Ford said. "Through this I learned that public service is about people, not power."

According to Ford, his parents and grandparents gave him a "Northern Star" that inspired him in his professional endeavors.

Ford told The Reporter he worked on a college campus, fraternity, and the **Julian Center**, with this experience guiding him as a current state senator.

"And now it guides me as I throw my hat into the ring to run for Congress."

In the State Senate

According to Ford, he worked in a bipartisan way to best fulfill the needs of his community.


Ford

"I've spent eight years in the State Senate passing over 200 pieces of bipartisan legislation," Ford said. "So I hope that shows people I am able to work across the aisle, especially when it's a good deal for the people of my district."

Pivoting to affordability, Ford voted to end the 7 percent sales tax on utility bills to help lower Hoosiers' costs, sponsoring House Bill 1002 (**tinyurl.com/HB1002-2026**).

"There wasn't everything I wanted to include in that bill, but it's certainly a step in the right direction to ease the burden of rising costs," Ford said.

Ford said he believes his biggest accomplishment in office was showing up and listening to his community.

Ford told The Reporter he had talked about putting barriers around retention ponds in previous years.

"Unfortunately, there has been a very tragic situation in our state where a child died in a retention pond," Ford said, "[In 2025] I put forward a piece of legislation that would help protect the children of our state."

Senate Bill 69 (**tinyurl.com/SB69-2025**), authored by Ford in 2025, did not receive a hearing.

The situation Ford spoke about was covered by our news gathering partners at WISH-TV, and you can read about it at **tinyurl.com/muhxces9**.

Ford said healthcare is another major component of his platform.

"We've got lower healthcare costs to make sure every family, no matter where they live, can access affordable quality care," he said.

According to Ford, he championed capping the prices of insulin and EpiPens and reducing prescription costs in addition to banning non-competes to allow doctors to practice in our state.

Plans for office

Ford told The Reporter he's running to "help Hoosiers, to hear what's on people's minds, and to bring solutions to Washington, D.C."

Ford said he will fight against big corporations that are getting tax breaks and handouts for projects that communities don't want.

"I want to keep Hoosier affordability at the top of my priority list," Ford said. "I have to believe that people are sitting down at their dinner tables, talking about things that are gonna make their life easier."

Ford said he emphasizes the importance of representing Hoosiers who have high utility, grocery, and gas bills. He intends to give Hoosiers access to jobs that pay a living wage and make housing affordable.

"How we make housing more affordable for Hoosiers is by banning international investors and big corporations from buying homes to use as rentals, which limits the housing stock and drives up costs," Ford said.

Ford said he aims to lower healthcare costs and make child, senior, and mental support more accessible.

"I have people who are willing to get back into the workforce. But they can't because they have children and they can't afford childcare," Ford said. "If childcare is 500 or 1,000 bucks a week, that's a significant chunk of change families would have to come up with."

According to Ford, his family navigated senior care when his grandfather was admitted into an assisted living facility. He said, "People really need that flexibility with space to take care of their loved ones when they're aging."

Ford also hosted a round table concerning mental health, meeting with providers, students, and parents. He said, "The environment in Indiana needs to really change when it comes to student mental health."

Ford told The Reporter Congress ought to stand with organized labor to make sure that workers are never left behind.

"I'm always going to try and put Hoosiers first," Ford said.

Ford said, as a state senator, he regularly held coffee meetings where he bought constituents a cup of coffee while discussing their concerns.

"They could come, sit down with me and talk about their ideas and solutions," Ford said. "I got into service because I want to listen to folks and find solutions to their concerns."

Ford encourages the public to read more about his platform at **electjdford.com**. He also said anyone is welcome to reach out to him through email at **hello@electjdford.com**.

A look at voter participation in the County Council races, May 2026 Primary

	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4
GOP Votes Cast	5,103	4,825	6,396	5,998
Dem Votes Cast	5,337	5,344	3,899	5,151
Total Votes Cast	**10,440**	**10,169**	**10,295**	**11,149**
GOP Percent of Total	48.9%	47.4%	62.1%	53.8%
Dem Percent of Total	51.1%	52.6%	37.9%	46.2%

Democrats showed up this primary, now comes the general election

By AIDA KARIM
news@readthereporter.com

This Nov. 3, Hamilton County could come to witness an election unlike ever before.

For the first time in recent county history, the number of Democratic voters in the May 2026 primary outnumbered their Republican counterparts in specific races. Republicans still maintain an overall majority.

Democratic voters experienced a significant increase in participation during the latest primary election in large part due to the number of Democratic candidates on the ballot. This election saw the largest number of contested nominations within the party.

The Reporter looked at voter statistics for the 2024 and 2026 primary and uncovered some interesting developments.

Compared to the 2024 primary, voter participation for State Representative in House District 29 increased by 29.7 percent for the Democrats in 2026.

More Democrats accounted for voters in Hamilton County Council Districts 1 and 2. Of the total number of votes cast in the primary, 51.1 percent of voters in District 1 and 52.6 percent of voters in District 2 cast a Democratic vote.

Hamilton County Council Districts 3 and 4 had a Republican majority of voters, with 62.1 percent of voters in District 3 and 53.8 percent of voters in District 4 casting a ballot for the GOP candidates.

Voter participation for township trustee in Fall Creek witnessed a 52 percent Democrat majority, while Republicans maintained a stronghold in Washington and White River townships.

When comparing midterm years, even the number of Democratic state convention delegate candidates saw an increase of 182 people, with 35 candidates in 2022 and 217 candidates in 2026. Republican state delegate candidates decreased by 57 people, with 163 candidates in 2022 and 106 candidates in 2026. (State convention delegates are selected during the primary election, not the general.)

The Reporter spoke with Hamilton County Election Administrator Beth Sheller about her observations this election.

Sheller said she noticed a higher than normal number of ballots being sent out for a midterm election.

"I feel like voters are more engaged this election than a regular midterm, but of course we won't know that until we see the turnout on Election Day," Sheller said.

Elise Neishalla: "From six cents to common sense"

By STU CLAMPITT
news@readthereporter.com

"We're working hard going from, as I like to say, lake to shining river, to get out the vote and to tell the great financial turnaround story for the state of Indiana," Indiana Comptroller Elise Nieshalla told The Reporter during an interview about her election campaign.

Nieshalla was appointed to the office by then-Governor Eric Holcomb on Dec. 1, 2023, following the resignation of Tera Klutz. Nieshalla is now involved in her first campaign for the office she currently holds.

That is not a new situation. Nieshalla's predecessor, Klutz, was appointed to the position in 2017. Kultz then won an election bid in 2022 before resigning in 2023.

The State Comptroller fulfills the duties of the Constitutional Office of State Auditor. The public name of the office was changed in July 2023 by legislative act signed into law by Gov. Holcomb. The formal title of the office remains the same and can only be changed by a future state constitutional amendment.

"We handle the accounting and the reporting of the state's funds," Nieshalla said. "We distribute the taxes collected on behalf of counties, cities, towns, and school districts to them to get those dollars put to good work serving Hoosiers. We also handle the state's payroll. We pay the state's bills. We also distribute funds to the state agencies. And we also administer the deferred compensation plan for the state of Indiana and administer the Indiana Transparency Portal shining the brightest sunlight in all of Indiana's finances."

Indiana's finances in the 21st century

"Twenty-plus years ago, if you remember, our state was struggling financially," Nieshalla said. "In fact, in the year 2002, they closed the books with only six cents in general fund reserves. They had spent down the other reserve funds by 74 percent, in addition to delaying hundreds of millions of dollars of payments to our schools. This was under the leadership of Democrats.

"Then Mitch Daniels came along, and he had this depth of fortitude to turn this state around financially, and the legislature followed. Now after a long string of solid Republican, fiscally conservative, and disciplined leadership, we've gone from six cents to $1.86 billion in that general fund reserve. And as I like to say, we've gone from six cents to common sense."

According to Nieshalls, Indiana is the fourth-lowest debt per capita state in the nation.

"We have a AAA credit rating now," Nieshalla said. "We have a balanced budget amendment that's the gold standard among the [other] states. We are only in a position to be able to do a gas tax holiday because of the reserves that we have in place. When we closed the fiscal year's books for '26, we had just under $4 billion in total reserves. You certainly couldn't offer a gas tax holiday in a state like a neighbor of ours."

When asked what the fourth-lowest per capita debt in the nation looks like in terms of actual dollars, Nieshalla told The Reporter it is $169 per resident. By way of comparison, the State of Illinois has $2,330 per capita debt.

"We have well-funded pensions and that is a real turnaround story as well," Nieshalla said. "Particularly when you look at the pre-1996 teacher pension fund: that was at 24 to 27 percent funded just a handful of years ago. Now we're looking at being fully funded in just a year or two. That is remarkable."

Public service experience

Nieshalla served in local government as the president of the Boone County Council and the president of the Indiana County Councils Association.

"As a member of [the Boone County Council], we were responsible for the budgeting and all the financial side of county government," Nieshalla said. "I now have the privilege of being in the office that distributes those funds to the local units of government so that they can put those tax dollars to good use. I still have the opportunity to work with all of my colleagues in local government. We're just at the service side as far as distributing those funds to them. It's a joy to get to work with them."


Reporter photo

While interviewing State Comptroller Elise Nieshalla, State Representative Hunter Smith sat down at the table behind us for a separately scheduled and unrelated meeting of his own. "You're sitting in good company," Smith said. "Nieshalla received my full endorsement and it is the reason I'm here. I'm in the legislature because she encouraged me. She's been a longtime friend."

Final thoughts

When asked to tell our readers something most people may not know about her, Nieshalla told The Reporter about her relationship with a book most people know only as a musical.

"I absolutely love the book *Les Misérables*," Nieshalla said. "I read it when I was probably 14 years old. That book has always been an inspiration to me. It has an incredible story of redemption. And as a 14-year-old, it gave me insight into the depths of suffering that we can face as humans and the power of forgiveness and redemption in our lives."

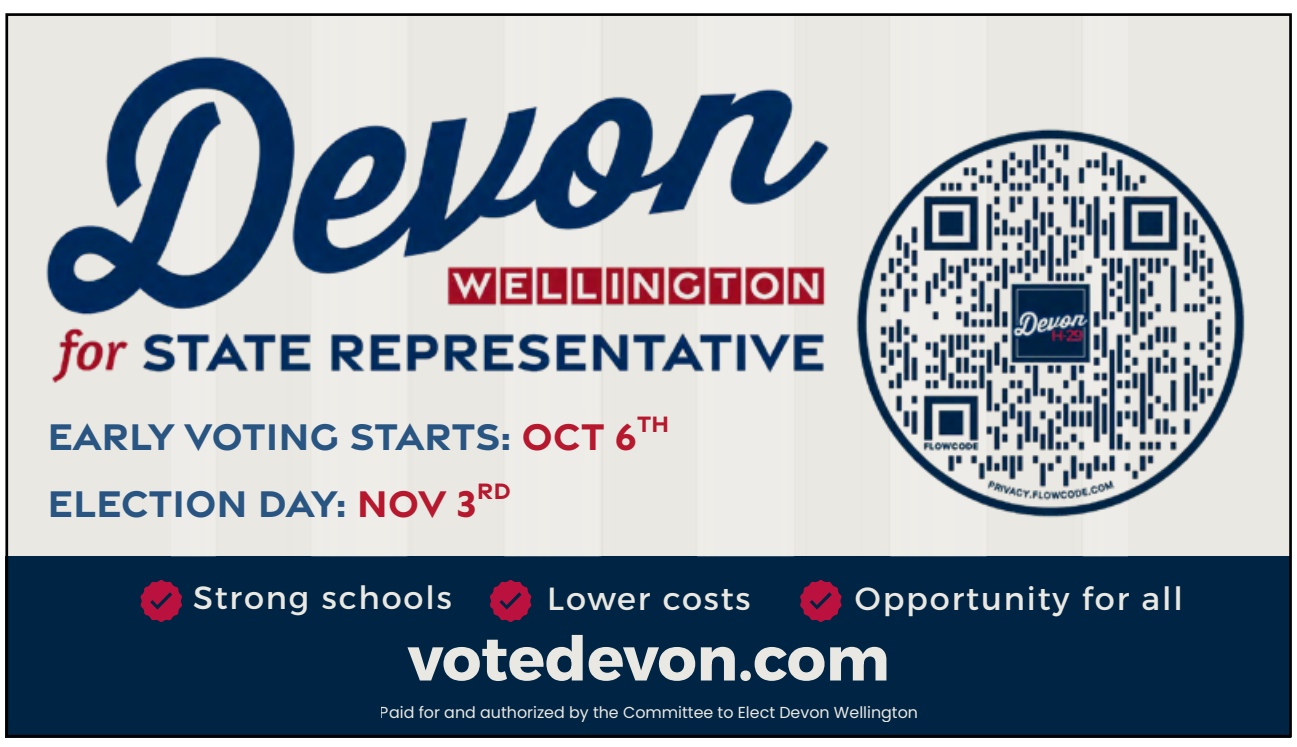
Nieshalla said she believes it is Republican leadership that has gotten our state to the financial position it holds today.

"Remember from where we come as a state and how it is Republican leadership that has turned this state around financially," Nieshalla said. "We've gone from six cents to common sense. Indiana – we might as well call ourselves a sunshine state, too, because we are shining that bright sunlight, which is the best disinfectant on any fraud, waste, or abuse that may be there."

Nieshalla said Indiana serves the nation as a template for how to handle taxpayer dollars.

"Given that Indiana has become this model of fiscal responsibility, let's make America like Indiana. Given that it's this model of fiscal responsibility and the situation financially with the federal debt, let's make America like Indiana. We are a bright, shiny beacon of fiscal responsibility, transparency, and discipline, not only in the Midwest, but for the country."





Dixon speaks to The Reporter

By AIDA KARIM
news@readthereporter.com

As Hamilton County grows, Dixon is looking to address what he says are the toughest challenges facing the sheriff's department.

Republican Dustin Dixon shares the ballot with Democrat Charles Hollowell for Hamilton County Sheriff this midterm.

Dixon has over 25 years of experience in the sheriff's office. He started his journey as an entry-level patrol deputy. Gradually, Dixon began to work himself up the ranks, serving in "nearly every job and every type of assignment."

Dixon is endorsed by all four FOP lodges (police unions) in Hamilton County, as well as with the firefighters union.

"I understand the operations of the department," Dixon said. "I understand the folks we work with on a daily basis from four cities, three towns, eight other police departments, and nine other fire departments. Those relationships are really what makes you successful in public safety."

Changes in Hamilton County

Dixon told The Reporter the jail population is continuing to increase. As a result, the medical, transport, and educational services the county provides are under strain.


Dixon

"Despite some of the violent crimes, I still say Noblesville, Carmel, and Fishers are all still very safe places, but they are not the Noblesville, Fishers, or Carmel of 20 years ago or even 10 years ago," Dixon said. "We are seeing some more violent crimes and some more bad actors coming into this area."

According to Dixon, a disproportionate 40 percent of Hamilton County's inmate population has Marion County addresses. He said the sheriff's office needs to be proactive and make sure they have the right mentality as far as holding criminals accountable if they commit violent crimes in Hamilton County.

Dixon told The Reporter he wants to start both a traffic enforcement unit and a fugitive unit in 2027.

Dixon said there are a number of active, or "outstanding," warrants in Hamilton County, so assembling a fugitive unit would ease the process of tracking down those individuals.

"We're already looking at additional software in the jail that will make it easier to get programs and education tools to [inmates] and help them communicate with their family, friends, and attorneys," he said.

Traffic enforcement

According to Dixon, the most frequent complaints he receives on a weekly basis are traffic issues, such as people speeding and disregarding traffic signs. Right now, the complaints go to the deputy working that beat. The deputy works a 100 square-mile beat in between taking calls and trying to do proactive patrols.

Dixon said 146th Street from Allisonville Road all the way to Boone County is county jurisdiction. He said the department witnesses a significant amount of crashes in this area.

"It doesn't typically get resolved real well because there's just not a lot of time and attention put into it," he said. "This unit would be two deputies and it would be their full-time job, 40 hours a week to deal with traffic complaints, traffic issues, and see what the data shows."

Building a better department

When asked what he sees as the biggest issues facing the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, Dixon said that, if elected, the community can expect to see a renewed focus on the retention and recruitment of employees.

Dixon said while Hamilton County is not struggling with recruiting and retention as much as other localities, he acknowledged that it remains a problem for all law enforcement agencies. He also said recruiting is important, but retention should be a greater priority.

"If we can retain the right employees, it makes recruiting a whole lot easier if we don't have to recruit as many – on a yearly basis – as we are right now," he said.

According to Dixon, serving as sheriff is the next natural step for him. He said he would like to "lead the agency and hopefully make it a bit better than it is for the next generation."

Hollowell cites public & private sector experience in bid for Sheriff

By STU CLAMPITT
news@readthereporter.com

Charles Hollowell is the Democratic candidate for Hamilton County Sheriff. The Reporter spoke to Hollowell about why he is running for this office, why he thinks he is the best man for the job, and why he previously endorsed a Republican candidate in the May 2026 primary.

Hollowell told The Reporter he believes his experience in both the private and public sector make him the best choice for sheriff. He transferred to Indiana from Michigan when working for The Honey Baked Ham Company, where he said he was in charge of a territory with a budget of tens of millions of dollars.

Hollowell told The Reporter he also holds an MBA from Kelly School of Business with a concentration in management and entrepreneurship.

Before joining the Westfield Police Department (WPD), Hollowell was a reserve officer in Clermont, Ind. He said he started working for WPD on Jan. 20, 2003.

"At the city of Westfield, I worked up through all the ranks of patrolman, sergeant, lieutenant on patrol," Hollowell said. "Then I became a patrol captain where I was, you know, over day-to-day operations for the patrol division itself. So everything from traffic units, actually I did our first traffic unit, developed our traffic unit in Westfield, because we didn't have one before I became a captain. Then I became a major of operations over the patrol division, as well as the criminal investigations division."

Hollowell is currently listed on WPD's website as a Lieutenant.

Hollowell has faced scrutiny for having endorsed Sheriff candidate Dustin Dixon's opponent, John Lowes, in the Republican primary. After Lowes lost the primary, Hollowell was appointed to be on the ballot by the Hamilton County Democratic Party.


Hollowell

When asked why he endorsed a Republican candidate, Hollowell said it was because of his relationship with Lowes.

"When I started working in Westfield, John Lowes was my very first Field Training Officer," Hollowell said. "So he's one of the first persons that I got to know. When you come into a county and you come into places that are different, I was faced with some biases and a little bit of racism before I became a law enforcement [officer]. So then I started working with John Lowes and he basically treated me with dignity and respect."

Hollowell followed Lowes up through the ranks. After Lowes became a lieutenant, Hollowell became a sergeant. After Lowes became a captain, Hollowell became a lieutenant under Lowes' command. He also credits Lowes with his own promotion to captain.

"If I'm not running myself, I'm going to support the person who I know, who I work with, and I know personally who I actually work with on calls," Hollowell said. "I work night shifts with them. I've been on trips with them with training for work. This is a person that I actually know. I know what type of person he is."

When asked why, after supporting a Republican, he would run as a Democrat, Hollowell said he had already planned to run as a Democrat, though at a later date.

"I wasn't planning on running until I retired from the city of Westfield," Hollowell said. "I was planning on running in basically 2029 when I retired from the city of Westfield … I'm a Democrat; I've been a Democrat my whole life. "My thing is it's people over party … At the end of the day, law enforcement should be nonpartisan … When I became a captain, when I was in major operations, it was Republicans that put me in those spots. I refuse to not support people who has the qualities of doing a great job … I've been a Democrat my whole life, but that doesn't mean that I can't support a candidate that I believe is better prepared for the job than the other person."

After speaking to The Reporter, Hollowell reached out asking that we also tell our readers the following:

"I support ending the Sheriff's Office's voluntary 287(g) agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and redirecting the Sheriff's Office resources associated with that program toward local public-safety priorities. My position does not mean disregarding federal or state law. The Hamilton County Sheriff's Office will continue to follow all applicable laws, honor lawful court orders, and fulfill legally required cooperation and notification obligations."

According to his campaign website, "Hamilton County is growing, and our Sheriff's Office must be prepared to grow and adapt with it. My plan is built around three pillars: Stronger Communities Through Partnership; Professional Public Safety & Effective Law Enforcement; and Accountability, Rehabilitation & Organizational Excellence." You can read the extensive details of those plans online at **Charles Hollowell.com/pillars**.

ACCURATE. BALANCED.
THE REPORTER

Greg Ballard seeks to "open the door" for independent candidates

By AIDA KARIM
news@readthereporter.com

Editor's note: When The Reporter reached out to all candidates for Indiana Secretary of State, Greg Ballard was the only one who responded in a timely manner.


Ballard

Greg Ballard says the partisan divide is putting Indiana's future at risk. As the Lincoln Party candidate for Secretary for State, he's looking to challenge the status quo.

Ballard shares the ballot with three other candidates this election: Republican Max Engling, Democrat Beau Bayh, and Libertarian Lauri A. Shillings.

According to Ballard, after serving as mayor of Indianapolis, he was asked to run for different positions from governor to the House and Senate, but "none of them felt right."

About a year ago, Ballard said a man named Nathan Gotsch came to him.

Ballard said he was "looking at the toxicity, the hyperpartisanship, and the divisions in the political atmosphere right now."

According to Ballard, Gotsch did a lot of polling and raised money for a group called Independent Indiana. The organization came to the conclusion that there are no competitive elections in November.

"The main election is now the primary because of gerrymandering. The November election is of virtually no consequence for most of Indiana," Ballard said. "There's one person who could win that race. It's going to be the Republican in the red areas, and it's going to be the Democrat in the blue areas."

Ballard told The Reporter he thinks voters need more choices and more people available to run for office.

Lincoln Party founding

Ballard told The Reporter the foundation of the Lincoln Party is based on the principles of the nation's founding fathers.

"We don't want to create a litmus test for anybody," Ballard said. "There are a lot of people who have their own opinions and don't quite fit the binary choices. The partisanship ideology gets in the way of good government, and we want to change that."

In order to get his name on the ballot, Ballard needed to collect 36,943 petition signatures of registered voters, or 2 percent of the votes cast for Secretary of State in 2022.

According to Ballard, the system independent candidates are obligated to follow is "purposeful and punitive," meant to limit elections with a two-party monopoly.

Ballard's campaign spent over $700,000 to raise signatures, hiring professional firms to support the effort. During the process, a paid employee of a firm submitted 10 fraudulent signatures in Hamilton County.

Ballard told The Reporter his campaign found out and the individual was dismissed immediately.

Ultimately, Ballard successfully collected 40,361 signatures.

Editor's note: Ballard will now appear as the Lincoln Party candidate for Secretary of State on this year's general election ballot. In order for potential Lincoln Party candidates to maintain automatic ballot access for the next four years, Ballard will need to get at least 2 percent of the vote on Nov. 3. Furthermore, once established, all minor parties in Indiana must attain 2 percent of the vote in the Secretary of State race in each general election in order to maintain automatic ballot access for the following four years. This also means that party (or those parties) must hold nominating conventions to select candidates.

If elected

According to Ballard, the office of Secretary of State should be independent of politics. He said the chief election officer carries a unique responsibility in the state.

"Once I'm in office, I will not endorse, I will not donate to anybody. I will not fundraise for anybody who's running for office under my peer review," Ballard said.

See *Ballard* . . . Page 8

THIS IS WHAT WE'RE SAYING YES TO
PEOPLE, PROGRAMS & OPPORTUNITIES THAT MAKE NOBLESVILLE SCHOOLS SHINE

CONTINUED ACADEMIC SUCCESS
Nationally ranked STEM programs, career pathways, and award-winning music and academic programs

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
Counselors, social workers, partnerships, academic supports, and mental health education

SCHOOL SAFETY
School resource officers, crisis and threat management resources, and ongoing safety initiatives

MILLER YES
VOTE YES ON NOVEMBER 3
PAID FOR BY STRONG SCHOOLS NOBLESVILLE

Secretary of State candidates detail plans for business services & elections

WISH-TV | *wishtv.com*

Indiana's candidates for secretary of state said the office needs to better align its business services with the needs of business owners and consumers.

During a forum sponsored by the Rotary Club of Indianapolis and moderated by WISH-TV government reporter Garrett Bergquist, the four candidates detailed plans for securities protection, auto dealer regulation, and business filing systems. Although the secretary of state's office is best known for administering elections, it also oversees business licensing and several related regulatory functions.

Consumers can file complaints and get restitution through the office's securities division, which includes investigators and attorneys who assist law enforcement and prosecutors on securities cases.

"Part of that role is to educate our most vulnerable populations about the signs of being defrauded. And I think we can do a little bit better job of expressing that," Shillings said, adding that she believes the office can also do a better job of monitoring restitution in those cases.

Ballard said he will push for a closer working relationship between the securities division and its counterpart in the attorney general's office, which focuses more on criminal prosecutions. Engling said he will focus on better educating business owners about securities regulations and resources available to them, while Bayh said the office needs to better advertise those tools and make them work for entrepreneurs.

The candidates also said they want to improve vehicle titling at the dealer level. Engling said he is already talking to state lawmakers about ways to simplify titling. Shillings said the office needs to listen to all dealers' needs regardless of whether they donated to the officeholder's campaign, while Ballard said he wants to improve communications between the auto services division and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Ballard said communication must also improve whenever the office fines dealers.

"One thing that I'm really interested in is e-title," Bayh said. "Some of the paper titling in the dealerships has increased costs. It's made some things messy with title searches and things like that. To the extent that we can move in an e-title direction, I think that makes sense."

Engling split from the other candidates over how election officials handled the recount between state Sen. Spencer Deery, R-West Lafayette, and primary challenger Paula Copenhaver. The Indiana Recount Commission, consisting of one Republican, one Democrat, and the secretary of state, rejected several ballots over a lack of a county clerk's seal and awarded Copenhaver the election before the Indiana Supreme Court reversed the decision.

Bayh, Ballard, and Shillings all said ballots should not be thrown out due to clerical errors and voter intent should be respected. Bayh said he will work with the legislature to codify that into state law. Ballard said he wants to replace the current recount commission with five retired judges serving on a nonpartisan basis. Shillings said she agrees with the court's decision but does not believe changing the commission is necessary, noting that any change to state law must go through the General Assembly.

Engling said both the recount commission and the Indiana Supreme Court followed the law as written and he accepts both decisions.



Ballard



Bayh



Engling



Shillings

"If you have a preferred outcome, you can work directly with the Statehouse to change the law, but otherwise, you have to follow the law," he said.

Engling was also the only candidate who did not disavow turning over voter data to the federal government, unlike outgoing Secretary of State and fellow Republican Diego Morales. Engling did not explicitly say whether he would turn over bulk data, but stated the office's core responsibility is ensuring voter registrations are valid. Shillings said elections should remain sovereign to states. Bayh said personal data should not go to the federal government without good cause.

"The fact that the federal government wants to interfere in our elections goes up against the founding of our country. That's not how we were built," Ballard said. "The states run their elections. It's always been that way, and to bring the federal government into our elections, wow."

All four candidates said each county should decide whether to become a vote center county. Hamilton County will become the 73rd of Indiana's 92 counties to adopt the vote center model next year. The candidates also said officials in each county should decide whether to use hand-marked paper ballots or another voting system such as a ballot marking device. State law requires a paper audit trail for all voting forms.

*This story was originally published by WISH-TV at **wishtv.com/news/election/indiana-secretary-of-state-candidates-detail-plans-for-business-services-and-elections**.*

Ballard

from Page 7

In light of the Supreme Court involvement over six disallowed votes during the May 2026 primary election of State Senator Spencer Deery, Ballard said the Recount Commission should be abolished.

"The election recount commission looks at campaign finance laws and are supposed to meet when there's a discrepancy," Ballard said. "However two Republican appointees and two Democratic appointees don't want to address the issues because they don't want to hurt whatever candidates have to come before them, so they don't meet."

According to Ballard, the commission's function needs to be assigned to retired administrative law judges in order to deter the office from partisan disputes.

Ballard's campaign developed a "Voter's Guide" this election. The guide book contains information about individual candidates, where to vote, how to vote, how long the voting centers are open, and a sample ballot on the last page.

You can access Ballard's Voter's Guide online at **gregballard.com/guide**.





EXCEPTIONAL WINES. EXTRAORDINARY STORIES.

Award-winning filmmaker and master falconer Edwin Brochin introduces Spirit of the Bull, The Falconer, and The Falconer 2 White, sharing the history, heritage, and remarkable people behind the wines.



EXQUISITE CUISINE. ARTFULLY CRAFTED.

With more than three decades in professional kitchens, Chef Nancy Nearon brings a particular passion for pastry and a broad command of savory cuisine. Her Franco-Iberian approach pairs classic techniques with seasonal ingredients and expressive flavors. Each creation is a celebration of craftsmanship, balance, and beauty.



THOUGHTFULLY PAIRED SMALL PLATES • SEASONAL INGREDIENTS • OLD WORLD FLAVORS

TICKETS

$150 PER PERSON

AN EVENING TO SAVOR

Wine tastings • Handcrafted small plates • Culinary artistry
Storytelling and film • Holiday pie orders • Wine available for purchase

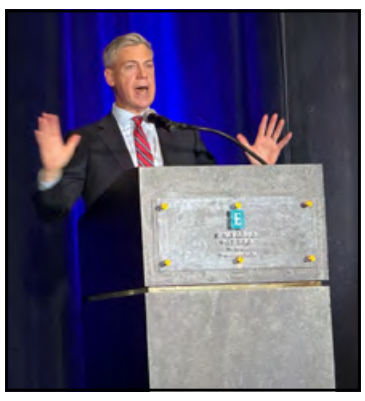
For tickets: https://OldWorldAffair.eventbrite.com

Strong GOP support leading into Election Day

The Hamilton County Republican Party Fall Dinner on Monday, Oct. 26, at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in Noblesville was a more than packed house. Several hundred GOP members, supporters, and donors were on hand to hear what party leadership had to say eight days before the 2026 General Election. When the results are tabulated on election night, The Reporter's people will be hard at work packing pages with vote totals, key races breakouts, and maybe even a bit of non-election news for our loyal readers. (Reporter photos)















(ABOVE, from left) U.S. Senator Jim Banks was the keynote speaker. Hamilton County Superior Court 8 candidate Danica Eyler introduces event sponsors. WIBC Radio Host Jerry Lopez served as the Master of Ceremonies. Indiana Secretary of State candidate Max Engling introduced Sen. Banks. Hamilton County Republican Party Chairman Mario Massillamany speaks to the crowd.







(ABOVE, from left) Gaylor Electric President Jim Crews and Indiana Secretary of State candidate Max Engling. Indiana State Comptroller Elise Nieshalla addresses the crowd. U.S. Senator Jim Banks and Congresswoman Victoria Spartz with Fall Dinner attendees.





































BUSINESS CARDS

Live Music At Pasto Italiano
Benito DiBartoli Every Wednesday
$25 Bottles of Select Wines on Wednesday
Reservations Recommended
PASTO ITALIANO RESTAURANT & BAR
3150 E. SR 32 Westfield
317-804-2051
Closed Sundays

HARTLEY - DUNNICHAY *Funeral Homes*
SERVING YOUR FAMILY THROUGH GOD'S GRACE
Pre-Arrangements
Celebrations of Life
Grief Support
Monuments
Honoring, Remembering, & Celebrating
317.984.3614
www.hartleyfuneralhomes.com

Arvin Masonry
Historical tuckpointing
Foundation repair & replacement
All things masonry
Noblesville 317-645-7460

NOBLE BUSINESS ADVISORS
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT
Wendy Stevens CPA, CGMA, MSA
Certified Business Advisor
Phone | 317.281.9063 • Fax | 317.219.0510
wendy.stevens@wstevenscpa.com
52 South 9th Street, Suite 3 • Noblesville, IN 46060
www.wstevenscpa.com
W. Stevens LLP DBA Noble Business Advisors

Scan me!
Explore, Play, and Connect with Hamilton County Parks!
Beautiful trails, playgrounds, and special events.
myhamiltoncountyparks.com • 317-770-4400

Green Avenue GRANT$ & MORE
- Grant Research
- Proposal Writing
- Planning
- Other Fundraising

Your Road To Fundraising Success!
(317) 750-1204
www.greenavenue.info • amys@greenavenue.info

NYSA
NOBLESVILLE YOUTH SPORTS ALLIANCE
ONE COMMUNITY ● 7000+ KIDS ● 16 PROGRAMS
www.noblesvillesports.com @noblesvillesports

Indiana treasurer race draws competing visions for managing state funds

Republican incumbent Daniel Elliott and Democratic challenger Coumba Kebe discuss state investments, local financing & their plans for the office

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Republican Treasurer Daniel Elliott is touting nearly $1.8 billion in state investment earnings in his bid for a second term, while Democratic challenger Coumba Kebe is calling for greater transparency in how Indiana manages public money.

The Nov. 3 election pits a former software engineer and local government official against a health care executive who says her work with seniors and people with disabilities showed her the consequences of statewide financial decisions.

Both candidates want to expand the office's work with local communities and help more Hoosiers use its savings programs. But they differ on how to evaluate investment decisions, communicate with taxpayers, and use the position to influence broader state policy.

The treasurer serves as Indiana's chief investment officer, managing more than $16 billion. The job also includes leading the Indiana Bond Bank and Statewide 911 Board, overseeing savings programs, and serving as sole trustee of the State Police Pension Trust.

Although the office does not write the state budget or set property tax rates, Elliott and Kebe each emphasized opportunities for the treasurer to influence those decisions – and both candidates promised to work with lawmakers on proposals to strengthen local finances and address the financial pressures facing Hoosier families.

Elliott emphasizes earnings, experience

Elliott, first elected to statewide office in 2022, is asking voters for another four years to continue his investment strategy, strengthen cybersecurity for 911 systems, and help local governments finance infrastructure.

His office reported in August that state general fund investments had generated about $1.785 billion during his first term, including about $450.2 million in fiscal year 2026. Elliott argues that earning more from public money reduces pressure to raise taxes.

In an interview with the Capital Chronicle, he credited the returns to a combination of available funds, investment flexibility granted by the General Assembly, experienced portfolio managers and favorable market conditions.


Elliott

Before becoming treasurer, Elliott worked in software engineering and consulting and served on the Morgan County Council. He says that combination of technical experience and local government finance has helped him navigate an office with responsibilities spread across numerous boards and programs.

"I am probably the biggest nerd in the building," he said. "But if you're thinking about it, isn't somebody who's kind of nerdy who you want as your state treasurer?"

Kebe, a Noblesville resident who founded Scope Consulting, **entered the treasurer's race** after losing the Democratic primary for House District 29. She said she began advocating online about Medicaid changes before deciding to run for office, frustrated that elected officials were not listening to concerns from people working in health care.

She's spent the past decade in the Medicaid and senior care fields, including work managing budgets and operations. That experience, she argues, would bring a different perspective to the state's financial decisions.

"Government is here to provide to keep people safe and to take care of people, and we can't continue to make decisions just focused on the numbers," Kebe said. "We've got to focus on people."

A divide over investment politics

Elliott has made opposition to environmental, social, and governance investing – commonly called ESG – a central part of his tenure. He maintains that public investment decisions should focus on financial returns rather than political or social agendas.

"When we're talking about my role as state treasurer … we've got to focus on return, nothing less, nothing more," he said.

Indiana lawmakers **approved restrictions on pension investing** in 2023, giving the treasurer a role in identifying investment managers with prohibited ESG commitments.

Elliott **placed BlackRock on a watchlist in** June 2024. That December, the Indiana Public Retirement System's board **voted to replace the firm** for management of a roughly $969 million inflation-linked bond portfolio. BlackRock disputed the allegations. The decision was made by the pension board, on which Elliott serves.

Kebe, however, questioned whether that effort served taxpayers' financial interests and said she wants greater disclosure about the costs and risks of changing investment managers.

"What I would like to see less of in this office is leveraging taxpayer dollars to make political and partisan statements," she said. "This job is pretty straightforward. You invest taxpayer dollars and you focus on fiscal responsibility and making sure you maximize returns."

Kebe said the office must follow state law, but she also believes a company's treatment of workers and management practices can matter to its long-term financial performance.

Elliott, meanwhile, maintains that financial returns should drive the state's investment choices.

"There's constantly this give and take, push and pull, and so we're always adjusting that depending on the market, and that is every single day," he said.

Kebe's transparency proposals include more accessible reporting about state holdings, investment performance and fees. She wants to explain that information to Hoosiers through social media, quarterly public reporting, press conferences and community meetings.

"[Hoosiers] want to understand how things impact them, but they don't necessarily always have the leaders who are willing to meet them on the platforms and where they're at to explain those things," she said.

Kebe also wants to use the office to advocate for changes to Medicaid and childcare policy. Those decisions, she noted, affect the workforce and the state's economic future.

"The things that I want to do will require partnership," Kebe said. "But I've started building those relationships early, even across the aisle."

Local infrastructure, 911 needs

Both candidates point to local infrastructure as a way the treasurer can help communities facing financial pressure.

Elliott highlighted the Indiana Bond Bank's new Recovery Advance Program for Infrastructure Damage, or RAPID, which launched Sept. 10 after August storms and floods. He said conversations with local officials helped identify the need for financing while communities wait for disaster assistance.

Under the **program**, communities can initially borrow up to $1 million at a fixed 2 percent annual interest rate for cleanup, emergency repairs and other eligible costs. Loans generally run for up to two years and carry a $15,000 participation fee.

Kebe said she wants the Bond Bank to work more proactively with municipalities on infrastructure needs and disaster preparation, including identifying financing options before a crisis. She also wants stronger partnerships with police officers and firefighters as the state makes decisions about its 911 network.

"I intend on bridging that gap and ensuring that we have a better partnership with our police officers and our firefighters when we're making decisions about the 911 communication system," she said.


Kebe

For Elliott, protecting that network from cyberattacks would be a leading priority in a second term. He said smaller and rural communities may lack the staff and funding available to larger counties, making state support especially important.

"911 is critical infrastructure, not just infrastructure like water or roads, but infrastructure that actually saves lives," Elliott said.

His **reelection platform** highlights a statewide cybersecurity assessment, dispatcher training and emergency communication services. The incumbent said he wants to build on that work with stronger defenses for local 911 systems and said he's already discussed the issue with lawmakers ahead of the 2027 budget session.

"Most everyone has good ideas," he said. "The question is, which ideas can you afford to do? Which ideas can you prioritize?"

Elliott also sees opportunities to help local governments earn more through TrustINdiana, the state's public investment pool. Better returns and state assistance with cybersecurity costs, he said, could ease pressure elsewhere in local budgets.

Kebe further said the property tax debate needs a fuller accounting of what changes would mean for schools, police, fire departments and other local services. She opposes eliminating the tax without explaining how those services would be funded and wants to work with experts and lawmakers on a sustainable approach.

"There are a lot of professionals in the space that are eager to partner with electeds to talk about what property tax reform could look like without us losing our incredibly important local programs," she said. "That's what I would love to do: partnering with experts who can help us figure out a better, sustainable way of funding some of these programs – and not just talking about eliminating property taxes for the sake of eliminating taxes."

Reaching more families

Both candidates share an interest in getting more people to use Indiana529 education savings accounts and INvestABLE Indiana accounts for people with disabilities.

Kebe's plan includes broader outreach, including partnerships with labor unions, to explain that education savings can help families prepare for eligible trade school expenses as well as college. She said the office should do more to meet people in their communities and explain the tools already available to them.

Elliott wants to reach more veterans and other adults who may newly qualify for INvestABLE. A federal eligibility expansion that took effect in January allows people whose disability began before age 46, rather than before age 26, to qualify if they meet the program's other requirements.

The accounts allow eligible people to save for qualified disability-related expenses while preserving access to public benefits, subject to program rules.

Elliott said his first-term record and experience working with local officials and legislators make him well suited to continue leading the office.

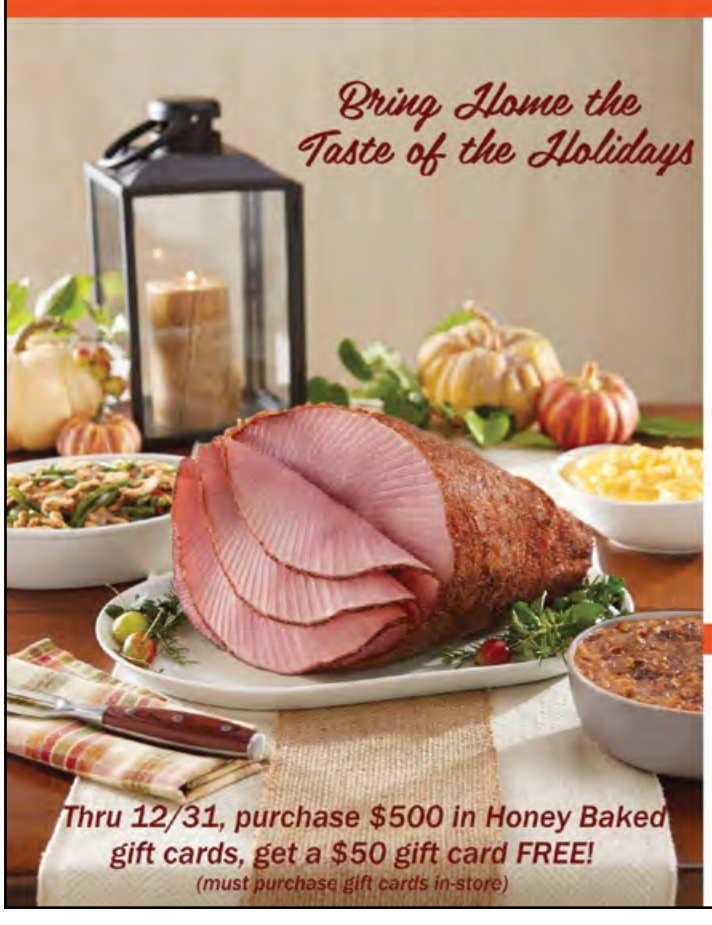
"I have built things across the board," he said. "What I hope is that they will trust me again for this next time."

Kebe said she would press for answers about state financial decisions and serve as a fiscal watchdog for taxpayers.

"There's no allegiance to a party here," she said. "The allegiance is to the people and reporting back out to them."

This story was published on Thursday, Oct. 22, at ***indianacapitalchronicle.com****.*

THE HONEY BAKED Ham CO



$7 off Any bone-in half ham 9 lbs or larger or whole boneless ham
coupon code 729709

$5 off Any bone-in half ham up to 9 lbs or any half boneless ham
coupon code 729710

$3 off Smoked or Roasted Turkey Breast
coupon code 729711

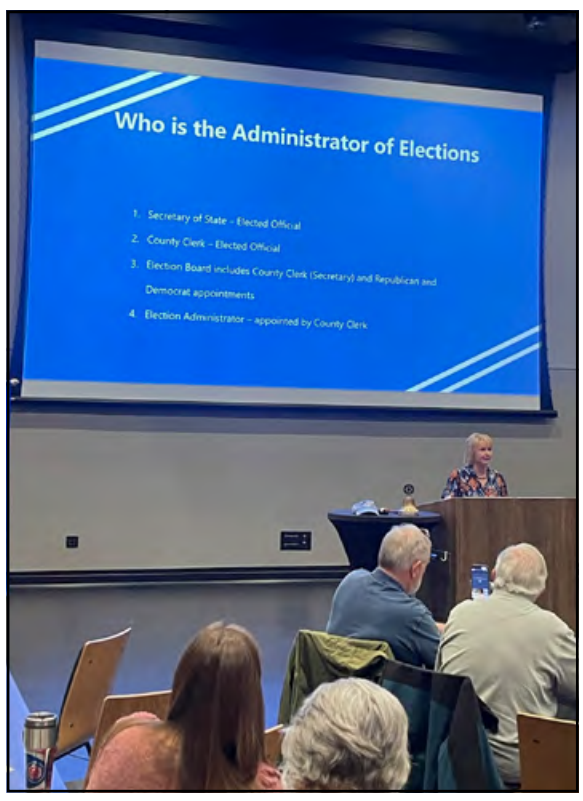
Carmel
2001 E. Greyhound Pass
honeybaked.com/stores/1705

Indy - Northwest
3905 W. 96th Street
honeybaked.com/stores/1704

Expires 11/30/2026 Only valid at participating retail locations. Must present coupon at time of purchase to receve offer. **If ordering online, enter promo code when prompted, as coupons cannot be applied at time of pickup.** May not be combined with other offers. One coupon per person, per visit. While supplies last. No cash value. Not valid on gift card purchases.

Election Administrator explains role to Fishers Rotarians





Photos provided

Hamilton County Election Administrator Beth Sheller spoke to the Fishers Rotary Club Friday, Oct. 2, on election integrity. She is running as a Republican for County Clerk of Courts.

Moorhead faces Ruckelshaus in potential Indiana Senate swing district

By GARRETT BERGQUIST
WISH-TV | wishtv.com

A state senator's bid for Congress leaves a Senate district in northwest Indianapolis open for new leadership.

State Sen. J.D. Ford, a Democrat, leaves his seat to challenge U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz. His departure opens a race for Senate District 29, a seat Ford previously won from Republican control. The district includes Carmel, Zionsville, and the west side of Marion County down to U.S. 36.

Voters will choose between two candidates with state government experience: Republican John Ruckelshaus, who served in the Indiana Senate from 2016 to 2020, and Democrat Kristina Moorhead, a former deputy state Medicaid director.

Affordability & child care

Both candidates are focusing on the cost of living in Indiana. Ruckelshaus and Moorhead want to repeal the 7 percent sales tax on utilities and change how the state calculates property taxes. Ruckelshaus suggests lawmakers rethink how the state determines property values. Moorhead wants to go further by tying property taxes to inflation rather than home values.

Gov. Mike Braun identified child care as a top priority for the 2027 budget session. Moorhead wants to expand who can get help paying for child care through vouchers.

"By providing access to vouchers, we provide an opportunity for employment, we provide employers the opportunity to hire workers, and we also provide our children a really great opportunity to start early learning," she said.


Moorhead


Ruckelshaus

Ruckelshaus favors tax breaks for parents and wants to find ways to help businesses run their own child care centers.

"I'm a former employer, a co-owner of several small businesses, so I get it, it's part of workforce," he said. "It's part of everyday life for Hoosiers today. And it's one of the biggest challenges and expenses for young families."

Medicaid

Moorhead expressed concern over the loss of programs that pay family caregivers through Medicaid. She wants to bring back funding that lawmakers cut in 2025. Moorhead also called new work requirements "excessive." She said while she understands the goal of having able-bodied adults work, many can only hold a job if the state first addresses their long-term health issues. She added that most people on Medicaid who can work are already doing so.

Ruckelshaus said the state needs to work with private businesses and charities. He does not believe the government can solve Indiana's Medicaid issues alone, but he said the legislature's recent cuts went too deep.

Data centers

Both candidates want tougher rules for data centers. Ruckelshaus said local communities should keep the power to pass pauses on new projects, similar to Marion County's current ban. He also said data centers should use "closed loop" water systems that do not affect local water utilities, and that operators should pay for all infrastructure upgrades.

Moorhead also believes local governments should have the power to pause projects. She wants to require public input for any data center proposal and supports "community benefit" rules, such as minimum wage requirements or requiring companies to pay for utility upgrades.

All INdiana Politics airs at 9:30 a.m. Sunday on WISH-TV and 11:35 p.m. on WRTV.

*This story was originally published by WISH-TV at **wishtv.com/news/election/indiana-senate-district-29-race**.*

American Bank of Freedom

www.americanbankoffreedom.bank

NMLS#409183

Save time and open your account online!

Certificate of Deposit Specials

3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
4.00% APY*	4.25% APY*	4.25% APY*

*Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is current as of this issue and subject to change at any time. APY assumes that interest remains on deposit until maturity. Minimum deposit of $1,000 to open this account with a maximum deposit of $240,000 per account. Minimum balance requirement of $1,000 to earn interest. A penalty will be imposed for early withdrawal. Fees may reduce earnings. Accounts may be subject to other fees, contact your local branch to learn more.
APPLIES TO NEW DEPOSITS ONLY.
American Bank of Freedom, Member FDIC.

Stop by or call your local branch today to learn more!
14611 N. Gray Road
Westfield, IN 46062
(463) 622-2930

Member FDIC | EQUAL HOUSING LENDER





Miller journalists interview school board candidates





Photos provided by Noblesville Schools

Noblesville High School student journalists Vaughn Anderson (gray sweater), Stella Lee, and Jackson Rush interviewed school board candidates Denise Dye, Misti Ray (pictured at right), and Dr. Joe Forgey at a forum on Monday, Sept. 21. The students developed the format of the event and the questions. You can watch the candidate forum at this link.

Lincoln Party releases Statement of Principles for candidates & party officials

New party will be built around principles rather than a policy platform

Submitted

THE LINCOLN PARTY

Lincoln Party Chair Nathan Gotsch has announced the party's Statement of Principles, which every Lincoln Party candidate and party official will be required to sign and uphold.

"The Lincoln Party will be built around principles, not a platform that tells candidates where they have to stand on every issue," Gotsch said. "That doesn't mean our candidates won't have clear positions on issues. Quite the opposite. It will be their job to tell voters where they stand and what policies they want to advance to solve the problems facing their communities."

The approach is not new. Independent candidates are already running successfully for office across Indiana without a party platform, asking voters to judge them instead on their character, competence, and positions on the issues. According to a 2025 report from Independent Indiana, 244 independent candidates appeared on ballots in partisan races across the state in 2023 and 2024, and 52 percent of them won.



Gotsch

The Lincoln Party will formally be established following the November election if former Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard receives at least 2 percent of the vote for Secretary of State.

Its Statement of Principles is organized around three commitments: the foundational ideals of American democracy, standards for governing in the public interest, and expectations for serving with integrity and humility.

Candidates and party officials who violate the Statement of Principles will be subject to an accountability process to be established in the party's governing rules, with consequences based on the nature and severity of the violation.

"The Lincoln Party's job is simple: find good people, hold them to a clear standard, and let them make their case to voters," Gotsch said.

Learn more at **thelincolnparty.org**.

Lincoln Party Statement of Principles

I commit to these principles and to being held accountable to them.

First, the ideals of American democracy embodied in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and its Bill of Rights:

- **Equality.** Treating every person with dignity and respect, and ensuring that government protects the rights of all people equally.
- **Liberty.** Protecting the fundamental freedoms that allow people to live, speak, worship, associate, and participate in public life.
- **Will of the People.** Respecting citizens through free and fair elections that guarantee their right to vote, honoring those elections' lawful results, and supporting the peaceful transfer of power.
- **Rule of Law.** Upholding the principle that no one is above the law or beneath its protections, and that every person is entitled to due process.

Second, standards for governing in the public interest:

- **People First.** Listening to constituents to understand their concerns and priorities, and keeping them informed about decisions made on their behalf.
- **Effective Government.** Recognizing that government has a responsibility to provide essential services, safeguard the public, and perform its duties competently and efficiently.
- **Freedom to Rise.** Supporting free enterprise and competitive markets as essential to liberty, opportunity, and the pursuit of the American Dream.
- **Fiscal Stewardship.** Respecting taxpayers by spending their money responsibly and with a clear public purpose.
- **Problem Solving.** Approaching problems by following the evidence and pursuing solutions that deliver measurable results.

Third, a commitment to serving with integrity and humility:

- **Honesty and Accountability.** Telling the truth, conducting public business with transparency, and taking responsibility for decisions and their consequences.
- **Ethical Conduct.** Serving in a manner worthy of elected office, with no tolerance for sexual harassment, financial impropriety, or other abuses of power or position.
- **Service over Self.** Putting the public good ahead of personal ambition, political loyalty, or the interests of the powerful.
- **Respectful Engagement.** Treating those who disagree with respect, engaging with good-faith arguments, and refraining from personal attacks.

In committing to these principles, I embrace what Lincoln called our "duty to posterity": to carry forward America's promise of liberty, equality, and democracy for the generations that follow.





Thanks for reading The Reporter!

Get to know Indiana's comptroller candidates

By MACKENZI KLEMANN
Indiana Capital Chronicle

A little-known statewide office responsible for disbursing and reporting how Indiana's state tax dollars are spent is on the ballot this election season.

Three candidates are vying to be Indiana's next comptroller: Incumbent Elise Nieshalla, a Republican, is seeking re-election against Democratic nominee Jessica Bailey and Libertarian John Schick.

The comptroller, formerly known as the state auditor, is responsible for accounting, disbursing and reporting how Indiana spends its $26 billion in annual state general fund revenues.

Former Gov. Eric Holcomb appointed Nieshalla to the position in 2023.

The comptroller compiles an annual financial report for lawmakers and governors to plan future budgets, pays the state's 30,000 employees, disburses funds to state agencies and local governments and administers Indiana's deferred compensation fund.

She also manages the state's transparency portal, intended for Hoosiers to know how their tax dollars are spent, and is a member of the State Board of Finance.

Nieshalla describes her ascent to the position as a natural progression from president of the Boone County Council and Indiana County Councils Association.

She spent the previous two decades in economic development and real estate acquisition for the Indiana Department of Commerce, now known as the Indiana Economic Development Corporation.

The role taught her the basics of state government – "it's all about jobs," she said.

"For a long time, I've known that it's my responsibility to do my part to keep the republic," Nieshalla said, adding: "And here I find myself now as a leading financial officer for the state of Indiana, and doing my utmost to keep Indiana fiscally strong, disciplined, responsible and transparent."

Democrat Bailey is finishing her second term as clerk of courts for Porter County, where she manages marriage licenses, traffic and criminal records and oversees county elections. She also spent six years with the Porter Township school board.

The apolitical nature of the comptroller's office is attractive to Bailey, who said she was inspired to seek the nomination to make Indiana's transparency portal more accessible to the average Hoosier.

As clerk of courts, Bailey said she started a mobile voting center out of a single-wide trailer for Porter County residents whose community polling centers had closed, so early voting wouldn't be so inconvenient.

"I think if we just put some of that out-of-the-box thinking into the comptroller's office, it'll make it much easier and more accurate for Hoosiers to get information functions like the transparency portal," she said.

Schick, a Northwest Indiana management consultant now in his fourth campaign for comptroller, joined the Libertarian Party in 2002. He rose through the ranks as secretary for the state central committee and now district leader for Congressional District 1.

Schick sees his political outsider status as an asset for the office, which he said would benefit under the direction of a comptroller who is not a member of either major political party.

"An independent state comptroller would make it clear that it's run independently (of the governor and legislature)," he said, "and isn't there just to have the same set of priorities as the legislature that's making the decisions."

Inside the transparency portal

Nieshalla is proud of Indiana's transparency portal, an online database of state assets, contracts, employees, finances, local governments and vendors. "It's a phenomenal tool," she said.

In May, Nieshalla launched a new dashboard dedicated to federal expenditures in Indiana.

Federal funding surged from an average of between $12 billion and $14 billion a year to $26 billion at the peak of the coronavirus pandemic and has remained elevated since then, she said.


Nieshalla


Bailey


Schick

"When you have that much money coming into a state so quickly … those dollars are vulnerable to fraud, waste and abuse because of the administration and assimilating those funds in so quickly," Nieshalla said. "So we needed to have the brightest sunlight on those dollars to be able to look back and look forward and say, 'Are those dollars being spent as they were intended?'"

The federal number is now dropping each year.

National debt advocacy

Nieshalla and state Treasurer Daniel Elliott formed a coalition of 37 state financial officers who lobby lawmakers to take action on the $40 trillion national debt, leaning on Indiana's balanced budget amendment as a model for the federal government.

Failure to act could result in national bankruptcy – eroding the U.S. dollar's status as the world's reserve currency, she said.

Nieshalla worked with Hoosier lawmakers as chair of the National Debt Crisis Task Force for the State Financial Officers Foundation on a resolution asking the federal government to act. Other states are doing the same.

"They're working to get it passed in as many states as possible to build this movement from the states, because what we're asking the federal government to do is some of the most difficult work," Nieshalla said, as it will require reforms of America's most popular social programs: Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security.

"We've got to get back to basics and understand that resources are finite and that there are consequences for a debt load of $40 trillion … and $1 trillion in annual cost of interest."

Bailey and Schick each said the national debt is concerning, but they would prefer to focus their attention on state issues where they could have more impact.

Opponents push to improve portal

Bailey and Schick each said they'd like to make the portal more user-friendly to the average Hoosier.

"Republicans talk a lot about the state transparency portal, but it's not very transparent," Schick said. "When you get into it, you realize it's not really giving you very much information about how much money is being spent."

A search of state expenditures in his home Porter County shows "60% of all spending goes into a single account called settlements," he said, "and it doesn't describe at all how all that money is being spent."

If elected, Schick said he'd "completely" rework the site and issue regular press releases about how state monies are spent on issues of the day like Flock cameras. "It's spending of public money and should not be hidden behind a wall of opacity," he said.

Bailey said there are practical solutions to site glitches – case sensitive searches requiring the exact spelling of an employee or contractor's name, which she said could be corrected to function more akin to Google by generating suggested names and search terms.

She'd like to add other information too about the prevailing wage and minimum standards for state contractors.

"It's a very good tool, and I think it's a good starting point," she said.

Bailey wants more focus on State Board of Finance

The three-member State Board of Finance supervises state funds – authorizing loans, appropriations and transfers made between accounts that don't require legislative approval.

Bailey said she'd like to see the board engage in more public discussion, so Hoosiers aren't left out. The meetings often last only a few minutes.

"As a county official, if I need more money in my budget, or if I need to transfer money within my (accounts), I go to the county council," she said. "They are the fiscal stewards of the county money. … They want to know why it wasn't high enough. They want to know where the money went, what the expenses were, what cost went up and what I plan to do with the additional money."

The State Board of Finance should do the same, she said. "But there's no discussion at a public meeting, so how are taxpayers across the state supposed to know what's happening with their money?"

Nieshalla said board members review information in advance to "make sure it's on the up and up." Many requests are routine, she said. Others are subject to additional scrutiny: "We do our due diligence to make sure we understand the request, why, what it's going toward and then we vote yea or nay."

This story was published on Tuesday, Oct. 13, at ***indianacapitalchronicle.com****.*



North GOP Club welcomes several state & local candidates



Reporter photo

The Northern Hamilton County GOP Club held its monthly meeting on Monday evening, Aug. 24, at the Noblesville FOP Lodge, 7201 E. 196th St. The meeting brought quite a crowd, as well as numerous candidates who gave updates on the water flow into the Martin Marietta quarry in Carmel. Reportedly, water is still flowing into the quarry at a rate of 14 million gallons per minute. It would take approximately two years to pump out the quarry, which now holds about 9 billion gallons of water, more than Geist Reservoir. (From left) Indiana House Speaker Todd Huston, County Councilman Ken Alexander, County Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt, Secretary of State candidate Max Engling, Superior Court 4 judge candidate Angela Brown Swenson, State Senate District 21 candidate Tracey Powell, County Councilman Mark Hall, Superior Court 8 candidate Danica Eyler, and Sheriff candidate Dustin Dixon.



Sheridan Retirement
502 W. 7th St.
Sheridan, IN 46069
62 Years Old or Older. Disabled Any Legal Age
Water, Sewer and Weekly Trash Removal included in rent.
1 and 2 bedroom units available.
Limited Rental Assistance Available for those who qualify
"This institution is an equal opportunity provider"
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY
317-758-5061
TTY 711

Thanks for reading!

The Dani Robinson difference
- What's the market value of my home?
- What is my process for buying a home?
- Who should I call for home repairs/remodeling?
- How do I learn about building a new home?
- Who should I call to refinance my home?
- Who should I call when I have someone who wants to buy my home?

Let's Talk
Scan here to view Dani's current listings.

Call Cicero your "Home Sweet Home!"



22585 Vos Hiatt Avenue
Cicero, IN, 46034
Welcome to walkable Cicero. This 1.73-acre property features an open-concept interior, large kitchen, fenced yard, and huge barn. Enjoy new vinyl flooring, a new AC unit, and a new well pressure tank. Welcome home!
Listed at $419,000



30 Blue Water Drive
Cicero, IN, 46034
Welcome to your peaceful Morse Lake retreat featuring a screened porch with water views, a beautiful courtyard, an open kitchen, a primary suite, two bedrooms, a storage shed, and a new carport.
Listed at $249,900

Talk To Dani Robinson REALTOR®/BROKER/SRES
317.407.6969
DaniR@talktotucker.com
TalkToDani.com
Talk to Tucker REALTORS
F.C. TUCKER COMPANY

R&R RANDALL & ROBERTS

Our family has been serving Hamilton County since 1953

1685 Westfield Road, Noblesville • 1150 Logan Street, Noblesville • 12010 Allisonville Road, Fishers

(317) 773-2584

The professional service you want - with the personal service you need

Secretary of State debate, round 2

Sharp divides in Indiana secretary of state debate over noncitizen vote, spending audit

By TOM DAVIES
Indiana Capital Chronicle



Photo by Doug McSchooler for Indiana Debate Commission

The Indiana Debate Commission hosted a debate on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026, featuring, left to right, Libertarian Lauri Shillings, Republican Max Engling, Lincoln Party candidate Greg Ballard and Democrat Beau Bayh. It was moderated by University of Indianapolis political science professor Laura Merrifield Wilson.

Republican Max Engling leaned into blocking noncitizen voting as a top priority as he and the other three **Indiana secretary of state candidates** debated Wednesday, Oct. 7.

Engling maintained that he was the only candidate firm on that issue — arguments that Democrat Beau Bayh called "ridiculous" and Lincoln Party candidate Greg Ballard labeled "ludicrous." Libertarian Lauri Shillings described Engling's push for tighter voter rules as unnecessary.

Bayh kept up his persistent push for an independent audit of what he calls corrupt spending by current Republican Secretary of State Diego Morales, whom **Engling defeated** for the GOP nomination.

Ballard used the televised matchup, sponsored by the nonprofit Indiana Debate Commission, to assert that an overhaul of the state's Election Commission and Recount Commission was needed to remove political bias.

Here are key topics that emerged in the hour-long debate:

Quarrel over noncitizen voting

The sharpest exchanges of the night came over Engling's arguments that other candidates weren't as **dedicated to blocking noncitizens from voting**.

"They all said it was unduly burdensome to verify if you're a U.S. citizen to be voting in our elections. That is a very big problem and they all said it," Engling said. "The question was: Do we need to ensure that it's only U.S. citizens voting in our elections? The answer is an absolute 'yes,' and I'm the only candidate that has said that and put that straightforward."

Ballard, who was a two-term Republican mayor of Indianapolis, quickly retorted Engling's statement.

"That's a ludicrous assertion. We all think that," Ballard said. "That's ludicrous."

Other candidates pointed out that **voting by noncitizens** is already illegal.

Bayh said during the debate that he supported Indiana's current voter ID law and told reporters afterward that "our elections are safe and secure in our state."

"Max is making this up because he wants to stoke fear and divide people and dissuade you from participating," Bayh said. "People should have faith in our elections. We have 92 county clerks from both major political parties who do a fantastic job on a bipartisan basis, making sure these things run smoothly."

Engling, who most recently was a top staffer to Republican U.S. Sen. Jim Banks, said he would advocate for Indiana to adopt driver licenses with different backgrounds for noncitizens as a further safeguard against them casting election ballots.

Shillings said after the debate that Engling was "looking for a problem that doesn't exist."

"What he's trying to do is bring the Republican SAVE Act and shove it down into our realm, and I think it's unnecessary entirely," she said. "We already have checks and balances in place to prove citizenship when you register to vote and our clerks do a great job of catching that."

Bayh aims to keep Morales an issue

Bayh never mentioned Morales' name during the debate, but repeatedly brought up the **spending controversies from his time in office**.

"The current secretary of state has spent $92,000 of your taxpayer money on a luxury SUV for himself," Bayh said. "He's hired members of his family, six-figure positions. He's taking trips all over the world and won't tell us who's paying or the purpose of the travel. He's given out millions of dollars in no-bid state contracts to his largest campaign donors. That's unacceptable."

Bayh said he would immediately start a forensic audit of Morales' spending and pledge to not give any contracts to campaign contributors.

Engling countered that he would support a review of the secretary of state's office by the state inspector general.

"I am the only candidate that has actually done something about the issues that we've seen in the office," Engling said. "I ran at the (Republican) convention and replaced the current secretary of state. I am the Republican candidate in this race, and I'm pressing forth to win, to bring new processes, to bring new procedures into this office."

After the debate, Bayh said an inspector general review was insufficient and that Engling "wants to kick this can down the road, pretend like this corruption never happened."

"The inspector general was appointed two years ago by the Republican governor, who's Max Engling's biggest supporter," Bayh said. "For two years, the inspector general has looked at the purchase of luxury SUVs in this office, has looked at no-bid contracts to

See *Sharp* . . . Page 15

About the office

The secretary of state is an administrative official who broadly oversees statewide policies for elections, which are run by county officials. The secretary, by law, is chair of the Indiana Recount Commission.

Other office responsibilities include the registration of businesses and nonprofit organizations, regulation of the securities industry, commissioning of notaries public and the licensing of motor vehicle dealerships.

Republicans have won every election for the office since 1994.

Engling clashes with secretary of state rivals over noncitizen voting

By GARRETT BERGQUIST
WISH-TV | wishtv.com

Republican secretary of state candidate Max Engling faced sharp criticism from his opponents during a debate Wednesday, Oct. 7, over his focus on preventing noncitizens from voting.

While federal law already prohibits noncitizens from voting in elections, Republicans nationwide have prioritized the issue this election cycle. During the event hosted by the Indiana Debate Commission, Engling claimed he was the only candidate committed to ensuring only citizens cast ballots in Indiana.

Engling's remarks drew immediate condemnation from his rivals, particularly former Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard, an independent running on the Lincoln Party ticket. Ballard called Engling's comments "ridiculous" and stated he supports verifying voter citizenship but argued the current system is secure.

Ballard said, "The [county] clerks would take great offense that the Republican Party's implying this is having an effect. The only election that was in danger of being overturned is the one they created with the Deery-Copenhaver case."

Democrat Beau Bayh questioned the lack of prosecutions following a voter fraud investigation by Republican Secretary of State Diego Morales and Attorney General Todd Rokita. That probe identified 21 instances of noncitizens voting in Indiana over several years.

Libertarian Lauri Shillings argued Engling is attempting to force Indiana to follow the proposed federal Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, which she warned could disenfranchise voters who changed their names due to marriage, divorce, or adoption.

Engling defended his position.

"I have said very often, and now my opponents have come along too, that even one instance of illegal voting is too many. You're not hiring me to be a legislator; you're hiring me to be the chief election officer for the state of Indiana. You have to have confidence that

See *Clash* . . . Page 15



ADLER attorneys

136 SOUTH 9TH STREET
SUITE 400
NOBLESVILLE, IN 46060
317-773-1974

1010 WEST 8TH STREET
SUITE 5
ANDERSON, IN 46016
765-642-2080

CONTACT US

RENTAL SPACE AVAILABLE
at the Historic Adler Building.
Contact Kim Watson at
317-773-1974 for details.



Sharp

from Page 14

large donors and has looked at unexplained world travel and hiring relatives, and not taken action."

Voting change priorities

Bayh highlighted his support for ending straight-ticket voting and allowing citizen-led ballot initiatives — both issues that Democrats have unsuccessfully pushed for several years in the Republican-dominated Legislature.

"We're one of only six states in the country which has a straight-ticket voting system," Bayh said. "What this means is that the first page on your ballot won't have a list of names or offices on it. It'll have political parties — red team, blue team. That reinforces some of the worst instincts of tribal politics."

Engling said after the debate that he believed voters should have the option of casting a straight-ticket ballot.

He derided citizen ballot initiatives as "a way for folks that cannot work an issue through the Statehouse to try and evade the Statehouse."

"Very often what we've seen is that ballot initiatives are sponsored by folks with millions and millions of dollars to try and do something that the state didn't want to do through their elected legislators," Engling said.

Ballard pressed his desire to **revamp the state's Recount Commission and Election Commission**, both of which are now controlled by appointed Republicans and Democrats.

Ballard faulted the setup for the lack of investigation into complaints about possible improper campaign donations.

"Because there's two Republicans and two Democrats on that Election Commission, they're not meeting either because they don't want to meet," he said. "Those duties should be handed off to administrative law judges."

*This story was published on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026, at **indianacapitalchronicle.com**.*

Clash

from Page 15

I am going to root out corruption, fraud, wherever it happens," Engling said.

All four candidates agreed on the need to investigate Morales, who faces accusations of hiring family members, awarding no-bid contracts, and using taxpayer funds to purchase a luxury SUV. Ballard said he has spoken to law enforcement regarding a possible criminal probe but did not provide details. Shillings called for a full review of the office's budget, while Engling suggested the state's inspector general investigate the office.

Bayh repeated his call for an independent audit.

He said, "Certainly, if we uncover evidence of potential criminal wrongdoing, I will work with law enforcement and prosecutors to hold people accountable. But there's something important here, and I want to bring up an important point. Max Engling brought up the inspector general, OK? The inspector general was appointed two years ago by the governor, who is Max Engling's biggest supporter."

While the debate focused largely on electoral and business functions, the candidates also discussed the potential for artificial intelligence to be used for securities fraud or election law violations. All four candidates said the office should address those risks.

Shillings said, "I think we need to have somebody on staff full-time that can monitor this or work with a trusted partner who can ensure that AI is being used effectively to flag these instances, to prevent it and to work and test our election machines and our business systems over and over again."

*This story was originally published by WISH-TV at **wishtv.com/news/election/engling-noncitizen-voting-debate**.*



When weather is unpredictable, you can trust
Your Hometown Weatherman!
