

KNOX COUNTY VOTER GUIDE

authored by Kenyon College's

The Center for the
Study of American
Democracy

CSAD

NOVEMBER 2025

*A nonpartisan guide to issues
and candidates*

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For Mount Vernon City Auditor

Daniel Brinkman (R) is running unopposed.

For Mount Vernon City Treasurer

David M. Stuller (R) is running unopposed.

For Mount Vernon City Council President

Bruce E. Hawkins (R) is running unopposed.

For Mount Vernon City Council At Large

Dale Miller (D)

- Rodney “Dale” Miller is a former industrial sales manager at Inland Diamond Products. He is the precinct captain of the Knox County Democratic Party for Mount Vernon Ward 4 B.

Amber Keener (R)

- Amber Keener is a current council member at-large. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Liberty University. Keener is also the regional engagement director of “Americans for Prosperity,” an organization that educates Americans on limited government and a free society. She previously ran for Knox County Treasurer and for the Ohio House of Representatives.

- In a Mount Vernon News interview, Keener said her values include “fiscal responsibility and minimizing government waste, fraud, and abuse while strengthening partnerships with local businesses.”

Mel Severns (R)

- Mel Severns is a current council member at-large. Mel Severns is a graduate of two master’s programs, one from The Ohio State University and another from Mount Vernon Nazarene University (MVNU). He returned to MVNU as a senior-level administrator and as an Associate Professor of Education. He has worked at MVNU for 38 years.
- Severn's main priorities include: relocating the justice center and City Hall, along with establishing a police station. In an interview with the Mount Vernon News, Mel Severns said that he “supports sound fiscal management,” and a “conservative government.”

Alan Reed (Write-In)

- Alan Reed is a content writer for RevLocal and an Adjunct Instructor of Journalism at Mount Vernon Nazarene University. He is also an advisor for the Lakeholm Church of the Nazarene. Reed was a reporter at Mount Vernon News for ten years. He graduated from Mount Vernon Nazarene University with a bachelor’s degree in communications and radio broadcasting.
- Reed has been a resident of Mount Vernon for over 40 years. According to his Facebook, Reed plans to “bring back common-sense conservative principles to Mt. Vernon City Council!”

For Mount Vernon City 1st Ward Council

James Neil Mahan (R) is running unopposed.

For Mount Vernon City 2nd Ward Council

John P. Ruckman (R) is running unopposed.

For Mount Vernon City 3rd Ward Council

Taylor Jacklin (Write-In)

- Taylor Jacklin is a write-in candidate for the 3rd Ward seat on the Mount Vernon City Council. He attended Mount Vernon High School, received his bachelor's degree from Ohio Dominican University, and his master's in Social Work from The Ohio State University. He is a U.S. Army veteran who went on to serve in Veterans Administration hospitals as a therapist and a health program director. Currently, Jacklin runs a private therapy practice in Mount Vernon. Jacklin also has previous experience working for the Director of Elections at the Ohio Secretary of State's Office.
- In an interview with the Knox Pages, Jacklin discussed his strengths, stating, "I believe [my] interpersonal skills will serve me well as a member of the city council, reminding me to be a great listener and a good steward of our human resources."

Jennifer Shoman

- Jennifer Shoman is a write-in candidate for the 3rd Ward seat on Mount Vernon City Council. She grew up in Mount Vernon, graduating from Mount Vernon High School, and has owned a home in the 3rd ward since 2010. Shoman earned a B.A. in business management and economics from Hope College. She has worked at Kenyon College in the library and IT departments since 2009.
- According to Knox Pages, Shoman worked on the Edgewood Road Expansion Initiative and the Vernonview Drive Resolution, where she opposed the rezoning of the neighborhood. Shoman went door to door, canvassing to collect signatures for these initiatives. She has also attended City Council and Municipal Planning Commission sessions. Shoman's campaign is headed by the slogan "Shoman: Showing Up for You." She places an emphasis on her commitment to transparency and to ensuring everyone's voice is heard.
- In a statement to CSAD, Shoman said, "I'll remain accessible to residents and ensure their concerns are heard at council meetings." She also stated that she would attempt to minimize the Council's use of the "emergency clause" and the suspension of the "the three-reading rule." Her goal is to "give the public more time to understand and engage the issues" brought up at the council meetings.

Gregory N. Yashnyk (Write-In)

- According to his personal Facebook profile, Gregory Yashnyk attended Mount Vernon High School and received his bachelor's degree from Ohio University in 1988. He owns a life insurance company located in Mount Vernon.

For Mount Vernon City 4th Ward Council

LeNan C. Hager (R) is running unopposed.

For Brinkhaven Council

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Philip H. David Dial is running unopposed.

Ryan James Meyer is running unopposed.

Kerri Meralene Wyant is running unopposed.

For Centerburg Mayor

Tom S. Stewart is running unopposed.

For Centerburg Council

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Dave Beck is running unopposed.

Saundra Dove is running unopposed.

Russell Gregory Myers is running unopposed.

Donald Wallace is running unopposed.

For Danville Village Council

Patrick L. Crow, Jr. is running unopposed.

For Fredericktown Village Council

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Chris Cline (Write-In) is running unopposed.

Richard J. Lanuzza is running unopposed.

Sabrina C. Pugh is running unopposed.

Ryan Shoemaker is running unopposed.

For Fredericktown Village Council - Unexpired Term To End 12/31/2027

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Raymond Paul Brewer is running unopposed.

Scott Allen McKnight is running unopposed.

For Gambier Council

Phil Brooks (Write-In)

- Phil Brooks is an incumbent member of the Gambier Village Council. According to his LinkedIn page, Brooks holds a B.A. in English from Lake Forest College and an M.F.A. in fiction writing from the University of Iowa. He was previously employed in technical, public relations, and freelance writing. Brooks has lived in the village for over 20 years.
- In a statement to CSAD, Brooks said that “With a new village administrator taking over in October, I’ll be part of maintaining stable and experienced leadership in support of Mayor Kessler. I’m also passionate about protecting the village’s natural beauty and would love to see more housing become available for young families.”

Liz Forman (Write-In)

- Elizabeth “Liz” Forman is an incumbent member of the Gambier Village Council and the former Senior Associate Director of Admissions at Kenyon College. Forman has served four terms on the Gambier Village Council. In her statement, she described her involvement in numerous Council initiatives, including updates to water and wastewater management, walkable infrastructure, and green initiatives. She was also involved in the creation of “43022 Day” and the “Winter Lights” annual celebrations. Forman earned a B.A. in history from Kenyon College and was awarded the title of Gambier “Citizen of the Year” in 2014.
- In a statement to CSAD, Forman said that her campaign priorities include planning for the future of Wiggin Street Elementary School and finding ways to “create a more accessible and inviting Community Center.”

Jim E. Lenthe (Write-In)

- Jim Lenthe is a former Gambier Village Administrator. Lenthe received an M.A. in public administration from Valdosta State University and previously served as a city manager outside of Gambier. He has lived in the village since 2001.
- In a statement to CSAD, Lenthe said that his key priority is safety, including improving lighting at crosswalks in the community and working with local deputies to prevent speeding.

Calvin Murphy (Write-In)

- Calvin Murphy is a lifelong village resident and recent graduate of Mount Vernon High School. In a statement to CSAD, Mr. Murphy stated that his priorities for Gambier Village Council include ensuring that Gambier retains its local elementary school and making sure that the voices of younger Gambier residents and Kenyon students are represented.

Alec Wood

- Alec Wood is a current member of the Gambier Village Council. According to Wood's LinkedIn page, he holds a B.A. from the University of Chicago in the history of science. Wood currently works as a Senior Technical Analyst at Protech Solutions. He has lived in Gambier part-time since 2011, and full-time since 2019.
- In a statement for the Village of Gambier Newsletter following his 2020 appointment to fill a council vacancy, Wood stated that he "hopes to make use of his professional experience to promote improved availability of electronic records and data for public use."

For Mayor of Martinsburg

No Candidate Filed

For Martinsburg Village Council

No Candidate Filed

**For Martinsburg Village Council - Unexpired Term To
End 12/31/2027**

No Candidate Filed

For Utica Village Council

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Danielle L. Carter is running unopposed.

Connie Long is running unopposed.

For Berlin Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Matthew Caputo is running unopposed.

J.T. Dechant (Write-In) is running unopposed.

For Brown Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Steven R. Bratton is running unopposed.

Joseph Fritz is running unopposed.

For Butler Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Douglas G. Beckley is running unopposed.

Nicholas G. Beckley is running unopposed.

For Clay Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Bruce Conard is running unopposed.

Dennis L. Dugan is running unopposed.

For Clinton Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Jay Maners is running unopposed.

Terry L. Thompson is running unopposed.

For College Township Trustee

William Nicholson Houston, III is running unopposed.

For Harrison Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Bob Elliott is running unopposed.

John Norris is running unopposed.

For Hilliar Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Eric Cochran is running unopposed.

Jason Rogers is running unopposed.

For Howard Township Trustee

Mark Fritz (continued on p. 15)

- Mark Fritz is the former operations director at Ariel-Foundation Park and a former member of Mount Vernon's Patriotic Memorial Committee. He is also the former Director of Business at Stow-Munroe Falls Central School District. In that role, Fritz was responsible for the district's IT, nutrition, and facilities programs. For his work, Fritz received the 2017/2018 Pinnacle Award from the Ohio Association of School Business officials. Earlier in his career, Fritz taught at Ashland University and Cleveland State University (CSU).
- Fritz earned a B.A. in organizational communications from Cuyahoga Community College and an M.A. in communication theory and methodology from CSU. Fritz is a Vietnam War veteran who served as an air traffic controller.

Clarence Griffith

- Clarence Griffith is running for re-election. He has been a township trustee for 16 years. Griffith has over 45 years of experience in excavation and trucking. For 30 of these years, Griffith has been self-employed.
- In a statement to CSAD, Griffith said that his top priority as trustee is maintaining the roads. He often assists with snow plowing and storm damage road maintenance. As written on the Howard Township website, Griffith is "always willing and available to assist the township when the demand for public service is the greatest."

Kristin Hornsby

- Kristin Hornsby is a graduate of Mount Vernon High School. She is the owner and founder of Event Setters, which is a party supply and rental store. Hornsby has spent 15 years in the event business.

Gregory E. Lawson

- Gregory Lawson is running for re-election. Lawson worked on highway maintenance at the Ohio Department of Transportation for 30 years.
- Lawson was an employee of Howard Township for four years and served as a township trustee for eight years. He sat on the East Knox School Board from 2004 to 2008 and served in the Ohio National Guard from 1981 to 1991. Lawson has been a Knox County resident his entire life. In a statement to CSAD, Lawson wrote that he has “been a public servant since 1981,” and that he would “like to continue.”

Martha Trese

- Martha “Marty” Trese is the former owner and editor of Knox Pages. In Columbus, Trese worked at two major television stations. She has volunteered at United Way of Knox County and the Mount Vernon High School Academic Booster Club, among other organizations. Now retired, Trese has coordinated the Mount Vernon Farmers Market for five seasons.
- In a statement to CSAD, Trese said that she wants to “explore ways to limit the number of residential building permits issued per year,” in order to “limit road blockages, dirt piles, and trash.” Trese is also interested in scheduling annual meetings with the Apple Valley Property Owners Association to discuss mutual concerns. Trese has lived in Apple Valley for 24 years.

For Jackson Township Trustee

Devin Claggett

- Devin Claggett is running for the position of Jackson Township Trustee for the third time. Claggett ran for the position in both 2019 and 2023. CSAD was unable to reach him for comment.

Scott M. Dugan

- Scott Dugan is an incumbent running for a fifth term. He has served as the board's representative for the county health advisory board and as the Regional Planning Commission's representative for Jackson Township. Dugan has been an employee of the Knox County Highway Department for 18 years. He also works in farming.
- In a statement to CSAD, Dugan said he aims to “preserve the way of life in the community.” He emphasized his family’s long history in the county.

Cody Rager

- Cody Rager is a first-time candidate for the office of Jackson Township Trustee. In a statement to CSAD, Rager said it was “time to make some changes” in Knox County. He plans to address issues related to the “dust on the dirt roads and drainage in the ditches.”

Donald St. Clair

- Donald St. Clair is a first-time candidate for the office of Jackson Township Trustee. CSAD was unable to reach him for comment.

Austin Warner

- Austin Warner is a first-time candidate for the office of Jackson Township Trustee. According to his social media, he attended East Knox High School and has been working for KN Excavation since 2018. CSAD was unable to reach him for comment.

For Jefferson Township Trustee

Larry M. George

- Larry M. George served as a Jefferson Township trustee for over 15 years. His most recent term ended in 2021. CSAD was unable to reach George for comment.

Steven Kauffman

- Steven Kauffman previously served as a trustee for 16 years. His career as a trustee started in the 1990s and ended in 2008, but he hopes to serve again. Kauffman graduated from Danville High School and has been a dairy farmer for the past 60 years.
- During his tenure as a trustee, Kauffman served on the Knox County Regional Planning Commission. In that role, Kauffman helped to establish the Land Use Committee and improved zoning regulations. He also instituted floodplain insurance for at-risk homes. Kauffman was nominated by the Knox County Commissioner to assist in the process of adopting building codes. In a statement to CSAD, Kauffman stated that a township trustee should give everything to their role and the duties that come with it.

- If elected, Kauffman wants to find solutions to zoning and maintenance issues in Jefferson Township. In a statement to CSAD, Kauffman stated that township maintenance needs improvement, especially when it comes to the roads. Kauffman also believes zoning needs to be improved. He states that agriculture is threatened by the increase in housing developments on land that was previously meant for agriculture. Kauffman believes that there needs to be a solution for zoning that would be equitable for all parties.

Matthew Freedom Lord

- Matthew Freedom Lord is running for township trustee for the first time. CSAD could not reach him for comment.

Monica Severns

- Monica Severns is the current chairperson for the Jefferson Township Board of Trustees. Severns has lived in Ohio for 16 years and works as a trucking coordinator for the Kokosing Construction Company. She attended Florida State University, Arkansas State, and North Central Community College.
- In a statement to CSAD, Severns stated that her strengths include her business background, effective communication skills, creative problem solving, and willingness to help others. She explained that she wants to ensure that the members of Jefferson Township have their voices heard and known. She hopes for a positive communal atmosphere and friendly meetings.

- Severns' top priority is improving the maintenance of the roads in Jefferson Township. She also hopes to bring more attention and better handling of tourism around the Mohican River. Stevens also wants to ensure that organizations, like the local church camps, are a part of the community.

For Liberty Township Trustee

Marta L. Hill

- Marta L. Hill is in her second year as chair of the Township Zoning Commission and as Liberty Township's representative on the Regional Planning Commission. She has participated in development activities for the County Comprehensive Plan. Before her public service, Hill pursued careers at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), in retail banking, and in office management.
- In a statement to CSAD, Hill named road maintenance as a "high priority for Liberty Township residents." She emphasized the "urgent need to ensure continued effective management of township roads," by replacing recently retired staff or "collaborating with external entities."

Darren Lee

- Darren Lee is running for Liberty Township Trustee for the second time. CSAD was unable to reach Lee for comment.

Douglas Ray Scarberry

- CSAD was unable to reach Douglas Scarberry for comment.

Coty Shellenbarger

- Coty Shellenbarger is a Mount Vernon firefighter and lieutenant. Shellenbarger coaches local sports teams and received departmental awards for his accomplishments. In 2024, he received the “Master for Disaster” award, given by the City of Mount Vernon to the employee who handles emergencies and crises with exceptional safety measures. Information regarding his civic engagement shows active community involvement.

For Middlebury Township Trustee

Tyson Armstrong

- Tyson Armstrong is a first time candidate. He operates Armstrong Farms, a beef cattle ranch in Fredericktown. CSAD was unable to reach Armstrong for comment.

Mike Gearheart

- Mike Gearheart served on the Fredericktown Fire District Board in 2018. CSAD was unable to reach Gearheart for comment.

Kim L. Hathaway

- Kim Hathaway is a first time candidate. CSAD was unable to reach Hathaway for comment.

For Milford Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Chase T. Cochran is running unopposed.

Jeremy Charles Netting is running unopposed.

For Miller Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Roger A. McConnell is running unopposed.

Lynn G. Rowe is running unopposed.

For Monroe Township Trustee

James Chris Lepley

- James “Chris” Lepley has over 25 years of experience as a small business owner in construction fields. He has served three years on Monroe Township’s zoning appeals board.
- In a statement to CSAD, Lepley said that his campaign priorities include improving roads and strengthening communication between local government and the community. In addition, he stated that he would “represent our community with accountability and work to ensure taxpayer dollars are used effectively for needed improvements.”

John E. Popham

- According to his personal LinkedIn profile, John E. Popham is a production planner at Siemens Energy. He received a trade certificate from the Knox County Career Center. CSAD was unable to reach Popham for comment.

Douglas Smith

- Douglas Smith is a retired teacher from East Knox High School. CSAD was unable to reach Smith for comment.

Wayne T. Zollars

- Wayne Zollars is an incumbent trustee. According to his business website, Zollars has owned and operated Smithhisler Meats in Mount Vernon since 1998. He also serves on the Board of Directors for The Energy Cooperative, a member-owned electric and gas utility supplier in central Ohio.

For Morgan Township Trustee

Nicholas Cockrell

- Nicholas Cockrell has worked for the city of Mount Vernon for over 15 years. Previously a volunteer fire chief in Bladensburg, he is now a firefighter at the Mount Vernon Fire Department. Cockrell is a graduate of East Knox High School. He studied to become a paramedic at Central Ohio Technical College.

Alan L. Doup

- Alan L. Doup is running for re-election. He is an elder at the Utica Church of Christ and a sales representative for Keystone Cooperative (with the Ohio Propane Gas Association).

- As a Morgan Township trustee, Doup oversaw the construction of new buildings and upgraded township vehicles and equipment. In a statement to CSAD, Doup stated that, if re-elected, he would bring public awareness to the necessity of property taxation: “If you don’t have property taxes, you eliminate townships.” Additionally, he would work to maintain and fix township roads. Doup emphasized that he wants “to do something good for the township.”

Joshua Sichina

- Joshua Sichina is Morgan Township’s current zoning inspector. Beyond this role, he is a math teacher and intervention specialist at Utica High School, where he has taught for the past 16 years. In 2023, he was named a Transcendia Teacher Award winner. Sichina received a bachelor’s degree in sports management from Mount Vernon Nazarene University and a master’s degree in special education from Grand Canyon University.
- In a written statement to CSAD, Sichina highlighted “alternative forms of energy” as an issue that, if elected, he would address. His goal would be to “limit [the] impact on the environment and [the] burden on the township residents.” Sichina emphasized that, as the current zoning inspector, he is working “to modify our Zoning Resolution to... hold companies accountable in any way that the township can.” Additionally, Sichina stated that “the potential abolishment of property taxes will have a big impact on townships and their ability to provide services to the local community.” He hopes to work with the community to “benefit the citizens in Morgan Township on these topics and many more.”

For Morris Township Trustee

Richard Kershner

- Richard Kershner is an incumbent and the Regional Planning Commission Alternate Representative for Morris Township. CSAD was unable to reach Kershner for comment.

Randall Miller

- CSAD was unable to reach Randall Miller for comment.

Timothy J. Smith

- Timothy Smith is an incumbent and the Regional Planning Commission Representative for Morris Township. CSAD was unable to reach Smith for comment.

For Pike Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Curtis N. Bechtel is running unopposed.

Bill Belton Jr. is running unopposed.

For Pleasant Township Trustee

Chad A. Sims is running unopposed.

For Union Township Trustee

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Darryl E. Frazier is running unopposed.

Tyrel Samples is running unopposed.

For Wayne Township Trustee

Matthew Ashcraft

- Matthew Ashcraft is an incumbent township trustee running for a second term. He is a corn, soybean, and produce farmer. Ashcraft is also an alternate representative for the Knox County Regional Planning Commission.
- In a statement to CSAD, Ashcraft stated that he is not running on a specific platform. Rather, he aims to be open and approachable, to better serve constituent needs.

James D. Everett

- CSAD was unable to reach James Everett for comment.

Mark R. Phillips

- CSAD was unable to reach Mark Phillips for comment.

For Wayne Township Trustee - Unexpired Term To End 12/31/2027

Lewis W. Canter is running unopposed.

For Knox County Educational Service Governing Board

Vicki Bechtel (Write-In)

- Vicki Bechtel is an incumbent and the Vice President of the Knox County Educational Service Center Board. She has been a member of the board since January 2021.

Kenneth Boeshart (Write-In)

- Kenneth Boeshart had a 30-year career working in the Danville School District, including 18 years as an elementary school teacher, seven as a school principal, and five as superintendent. Boeshart has been honored by the Ohio School Boards Association for his dedication to public education.

Thomas Groshong (Write-In)

- CSAD was unable to reach Thomas Groshong for comment.

Rebecca Nourse (Write-In)

- Rebecca Nourse is a candidate for the Knox County Educational Service Center Board. According to her LinkedIn, Nourse's background as a parent motivates her to push for improvements in teacher retention and transparency.

**For Knox County Educational Service Center Gov. Board -
Unexpired Term To End 12/31/2027**

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Laurie Gallwitz (Write-In) is running unopposed.

Robert Bruce Gregg (Write-In) is running unopposed.

**Licking County Regional Educational Service Center Gov.
Board - Unexpired Term To End 12/31/2027**

Marc D. Guthrie is running unopposed.

**Licking County Regional Educational Service Center Gov.
Board**

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Matthew Clark is running unopposed.

Robert D. Essex is running unopposed.

For Clear Fork Board of Education

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Lori McKee is running unopposed.

Brian Johnson is running unopposed.

Rick Kvochick is running unopposed.

For Centerburg Board of Education

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Joshua E. Jackson is running unopposed.

Kris Weldy is running unopposed.

For Danville Board of Education

David A. Dusthimer

- David Dusthimer is a returning candidate for the Danville Board of Education. He served as vice president of the Board from 2019 to 2023. Dusthimer graduated from Danville High School in 1968. He earned a B.S. in business administration, with a major in finance and management and a minor in accounting, from Ashland University. He earned an associate's degree from the University of Cincinnati. He is also a graduate of the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science.
- Dusthimer is the retired owner of Dave's Place, a convenience store that he founded in 1985 and sold in 2006. Additionally, Dusthimer has over 50 years of management experience, including working as a manager at Tandy Corp and an account executive at AT&T/Ohio Bell.

- In a previous statement to CSAD, Dusthimer stated that he enjoys working “to provide the current students and future students with the best educational program available.”

B. J. Miller

- B. J. Miller is a candidate for the Danville Board of Education. A 1999 graduate of Danville High School, Miller also studied at Ashland University and Walsh University. After college, he returned to Danville as a math teacher and has since served as the Athletic Director and Dean of Students at Danville High School.

Paul R. Stover

- Paul Stover is an incumbent on the Danville Board of Education. According to Facebook, he owns The Hangout in Danville. He volunteered for the Salvation Army in Mount Vernon. CSAD was unable to reach him for comment.

Alan Swendal

- Alan Swendal is an active member of the Zion Lutheran Church and a graduate of Danville High School. According to Facebook, he and his wife operate an Airbnb rental in Danville. CSAD was unable to reach him for comment.

For East Knox Board of Education

Joshua D. Beltz

- Joshua D. Beltz is a graduate of East Knox and a father of three East Knox School District students. Beltz has a career as a public servant, where he was awarded Knox County Public Utilities Employee of the Year in 2024.
- In a statement to CSAD, Beltz wrote that he seeks to “expand academics, raise teacher pay, strengthen transparency, and improve student and staff retention.” Part of this solution will be through the use of meeting livestreams and monthly newsletters.

Ronald J. Bostic

- Ronald J. Bostic is a former member of the East Knox Board of Education and a retired small business owner. He served as the board’s president and has been a resident of the district for over 40 years. He has previously volunteered for the East Knox Junior High basketball team.
- In a statement to CSAD, Bostic said that his campaign priorities include reviewing recent departures of experienced teachers and staff, finding ways to retain current employees, and making sure that the district provides more resources to special education students and staff.

Randy Reese

- CSAD was unable to reach Randy Reese for comment.

Jared D. Stein

- Jared Stein is a real estate agent and former business owner in Knox County. Stein served as president of the Howard Youth League, a local program supporting student extracurricular activities, for the last eight years. In addition, he has volunteered with Food for the Hungry and the East Knox Junior High football team. Stein has lived in the East Knox School District for 13 years.
- In a statement to CSAD, Stein said that his priorities include increasing a sense of community in the district and creating transparency between staff, parents, and students. Stein also noted fiscal responsibility as a campaign priority.

Melissa Tomlinson

- Melissa Tomlinson is a parent-teacher organization officer and community volunteer in the district.
- In a statement to CSAD, Tomlinson said her priorities include “ensuring rigorous learning standards, supporting teachers, and encouraging collaboration between families and staff.” She also noted the importance of creating a supportive, positive culture alongside strengthened academics for the district community. Tomlinson emphasized that she has experience with organizational leadership and would bring “collaboration, accountability, and problem solving skills” to the board, if she were elected.

For Fredericktown School Board

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Nathan Bellman is running unopposed.

Donald Falk is running unopposed.

Paul Napier is running unopposed.

For Loudonville-Perrysville Board of Education

Michelle D'Amico

- Michelle D'Amico is the current president of R.F. McMullen Elementary School's parent-teacher association. D'Amico is a Loudonville High School graduate. She earned a B.A. in communications from Bowling Green State University. She continued her studies at Central Michigan University, where she coached the public speaking team. D'Amico previously lived in Maryland, where she worked at Morgan Stanley. D'Amico currently co-owns and operates Secluded Cabins Events Center in Lakeville.
- All three of D'Amico's children attended McMullen Elementary. During the COVID-19 pandemic, D'Amico fought for the increased protection of students and staff. She also supported the creation of an outdoor classroom.

Steve Goines

- Steve Goines is the current mayor of Perrysville and a candidate for school board. Goines' mayoral term is set to end on 12/31/2027. According to the Office of the Ohio Attorney General, one may simultaneously serve as village mayor and on the village school board. Previously, Goines worked as a truck driver for Skybox Packaging in Mansfield. He also volunteered at OhioHealth and at the American Association of Retired Persons.
- From 2022 to 2024, Goines sat on the Perrysville Village Council. According to the Village of Perrysville website, Mayor Goines "oversees the day-to-day administration of village affairs, enforces local laws, and serves as the official representative for the village."

David M. Hunter

- David Hunter is the current president of the Loudonville-Perrysville School Board. He sits on the finance and policy committees in addition to the Career Center Board.
- Hunter is an attorney specializing in estate and family law. He has practiced in Ashland County since 1996. He ran for Ashland County Juvenile and Probate Court judge in 2020.

Wende J. Lance

- Wende Lance is a real estate agent who has worked with RE/MAX Showcase, Coldwell Banker, and Howard Hanna. Early in her career, Lance worked as an English teacher at Loudonville-Perrysville Exempted Village Schools. Additionally, she has previously been employed as a coach, journalist, business consultant, and associate pastor. She received her bachelor's degree in education from The Ohio State University, her masters degree from Ashland Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Northern Seminary (Illinois).
- In 2019, Lance received Ashland County's Woman of Achievement Award. According to Ashland Source, Lance previously served as treasurer for the Ashland Church Community Emergency Shelter System's (ACCESS) board of directors; she also sat on the boards of the Mohican Area Chamber of Commerce, the Mohican Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Loudonville Community Help Mission, and the Mohican Area Community Fund. Additionally, she was the Executive Director for Park Street Brethren Church, where she continues to serve as a small-group leader.

Tyler McCaskey

- Tyler McCaskey is a respiratory therapist at University Hospitals in Ashland, Ohio. He is a graduate of Loudonville High School and a donor to the Loudonville School Foundation. McCaskey received his bachelor's degree in applied management from Ohio University and studied respiratory therapy at North Central State College.

John W. Temple

- John Temple is running for re-election. Temple is a native of Loudonville. He served in the Air Force. Temple is currently a Pastor for Trinity Community Church, where he has served for the past 17 years.
- As the Vice President for the Loudonville-Perrysville Board of Education, Temple is the OSBA Student Achievement Liaison and a member of the Curriculum Committee, Finance Committee, and Transportation Committee.

For Mount Vernon Board of Education

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Mary C. Rugola-Dye is running unopposed.

Jeffrey K. Ward is running unopposed.

For North Fork Board of Education

Where the number of seats equals or exceeds the number of candidates, CSAD considers the candidates unopposed.

Daniel Pargeon is running unopposed.

Farrah Lynn Cooperider is running unopposed.

Rob Krueger is running unopposed.

For Northridge Board of Education

Jessica Cermak

- Jessica Cermak is a first-time candidate. According to social media, her daughter currently attends Northridge High School. Cermak previously taught kindergarten at Licking Heights West Elementary. She holds a master's degree with a reading endorsement. CSAD was unable to reach her for comment.

Rachel Smith

- Rachel Smith is the parent of a Northridge ninth grader. CSAD was unable to reach Smith for comment.

Andrew Williams

- CSAD was unable to reach Andrew Williams for comment.

Jeffrey Schrock (Write-In)

- Jeffrey Schrock currently serves as vice president of the board. He also sits on the board's facilities and policy committees.

Local Issues:

Knox County, proposed tax levy (renewal)

- Voters are asked to renew a property tax that pays for mental health and recovery programs and facilities in Knox County. The levy would pay for mental health treatment, crisis response and prevention services, addiction recovery, and family support services. These programs would be both school- and community- based.
- As in previous years, the tax will be 1 mill. This renewal would be in effect for 10 years. For a home with an appraised value of \$100,000, the taxpayer would pay \$35 annually.

Centerburg Village, proposed tax levy (renewal)

- The levy is used to pay for general expenses, primarily the maintenance and operation of streets and public rights-of-way within the village.
- This is a renewal of an existing property tax. The tax rate would not exceed 3 mills, which amounts to \$105 for each \$100,000 of the property's appraised value. If approved, the renewal tax would last five years, commencing in 2026 and first due in 2027.

Fredericktown Village, proposed tax levy (renewal)

- This levy would pay for the maintenance of police department vehicles, communication equipment, and building infrastructure. It also contributes to salaries of part-time police and other employees. In an informational flyer given to CSAD, the police department stated that this levy “enables the village to maintain current staffing levels to respond to emergency calls and patrol.”
- The tax rate will be 3 mills, which amounts to \$105 for each \$100,000 of property value. This rate would be in effect for five years starting in 2026, with the first payment due in 2027.

Howard Township, proposed tax levy (renewal)

- The levy provides dedicated funding for the general construction, resurfacing, and repair of roads, streets, and bridges in Howard Township.
- This is a renewal of an existing property tax levy. As in previous years, the taxpayer will pay \$35 for each \$100,000 of property value. The first payment will be due in 2026.

Liberty Township, proposed tax levy (renewal and increase)

- Liberty Township asks voters to renew the existing levy of 4.4 mills and increase it by 0.1 mill, making the total rate 4.5 mills. This would mean an approximately \$3.50 increase per year for a property with an assessed value of \$100,000.

- The tax levy would fund fire and emergency medical services (EMS) equipment, maintenance, and facilities. If approved, the new property tax would last 4 years, commencing in 2026, with the first payments due in 2027.
- In response to CSAD's inquiry, Township Trustee Donald Rine stated that this tax will fund the expenses of the fire department, EMS, and law enforcement. Trustee Tyler Dennis, told CSAD that the increase is meant to bring the millage of Liberty Township's fire department levy into parity with other townships in the area.

Liberty Township, proposed tax levy (additional)

- Liberty Township asks voters to pay for an improvement levy to fund road and infrastructure maintenance as well as bridge and culvert repairs. The levy would also pay for the maintenance crew and cover expendable items such as road salt. Township Trustee Donald Rine informed CSAD that this levy will contribute to public safety through infrastructure improvements.
- Voters are asked to approve a levy of 1.1 mills, approximately \$39.00 per year for a property with an assessed value of \$100,000. If approved, the new property tax system would last four years, commencing in 2025 with the first payments due in 2026.

Monroe Township, proposed tax levy (replacement and increase)

- This levy would be used to provide and maintain fire fighting equipment, appliances, and buildings. This would also include EMS and paramedic services, the purchases of ambulance equipment, and other emergency medical costs.
- The current rate of 2 mills would be renewed and supplemented with an additional 3 mills. In sum, the tax totals 5 mills, for each of the next 5 years. The tax payer would owe \$175 per \$100,000 of assessed property value. This process would begin in 2026, with the first payment due in 2027.

Central Ohio Joint Fire District, proposed tax levy (renewal)

- The Central Ohio Joint Fire District tax renewal would fund staffing and general operating costs for the Joint Fire District. General operating costs would include equipment, buildings, and rescue gear. The Joint Fire District serves Hilliar and Milford Townships along with Centerburg Village. This property tax renewal amounts to \$207 for each \$100,000 of the assessed property value. The tax would last four years, commencing in 2025 and first due in calendar year 2026.
- In 2024, the Central Ohio Joint Fire District proposed a replacement levy of 6.5 mils from the previous 4.05 mils. According to Knox Pages, the replacement levy failed with 48.06% voting in favor of the replacement levy.

Fredericktown Community Fire District, proposed tax levy (renewal and increase)

- The levy allows the department to purchase emergency medical equipment, maintain fire alarms, part-time firefighters, EMS, and other employees. In an informational flyer provided to CSAD, the fire department described this levy as a “prudent and cost-effective way to maintain the ability to provide effective fire protection services for the community.”
- The tax rate will be 1.35 mills, which equals \$47 annually per \$100,000 of property value. If approved, the levy will be in effect for five years beginning in 2026. The first payment would be due in 2027. This is a renewal from the previous levy of 1 mill and an increase of 0.35 mills.

Precinct 003 - Mount Vernon 1-C (local option)

- The Rite Aid, at 4 Newark Road in Mount Vernon, requests a wine and mixed beverages license. Mixed beverages refer to any alcoholic beverage between .5% and 21% alcohol by volume. Mixed beverages are a mix of spirits and flavoring materials. The license would allow the sale of wine and mixed beverages for consumption off-premises.

Precinct 004 - Mount Vernon 2-A (local option)

- Those who own Fiesta Mexicana seek voters' approval of a license to sell wine, mixed beverages, and spirituous liquor for an event venue at 101-103 South Main Street, Mount Vernon. Spirituous liquor refers to any alcoholic beverage containing over 21% alcohol by volume. Mixed beverages refer to any alcoholic beverage between .5% and 21% alcohol by volume. Mixed beverages are a mix of spirits and flavoring materials.
- Mount Vernon Mayor Starr explained to CSAD that the space on South Main Street “will likely draw more people to the downtown area.”

Precinct 007 - Mount Vernon 3-A (local option)

- The Kroger supermarket, at 855 Coshocton Ave in Mount Vernon seeks voters' approval to establish a State of Ohio Liquor Agency building upon its premises (within the supermarket), selling spirituous liquor for off-premises consumption. Spirituous liquor refers to any alcoholic beverage containing over 21% alcohol by volume.
- Mount Vernon Mayor Starr explained to CSAD that, “The impact for the City will be interesting to see as less people will travel to Danville or other areas to purchase spirituous liquor. Kroger may see a bump in sales.”

Precinct 027 - Centerburg (local option)

- Longs Branch Pizza at 7 West Main Street in Centerburg requests voters approval for a beer, wine, mixed beverages, and spirituous liquor license. Spirituous liquor refers to any alcoholic beverage containing over 21% alcohol by volume. Mixed beverages refer to any alcoholic beverage between .5% and 21% alcohol by volume that is made with spirits mixed with flavoring materials. This license would allow sale for consumption either on or off the premises. Longs Branch Pizza also requests voters' approval for a license for the aforementioned sales to be conducted on Sundays.

Precinct 027 - Centerburg (local option)

- Longs Branch Pizza at 7 West Main Street in Centerburg requests a beer, wine, mixed beverages, and spirituous liquor license. This license would allow sale for consumption on or off the premises on Sundays in addition to the other Centerburg local option.

Find the definitions of elected positions and other relevant terms here.

Q: How do I get an absentee ballot?

A: Absentee ballots must first be requested from Knox County Board of Elections (104 E. Sugar St., Mt. Vernon, OH 43050). Ballot requests must be submitted at least one week prior to the election on November 4. You will then receive a ballot to complete and then mail or deliver to the county board of elections. Your completed ballot must be postmarked by November 3, or hand delivered by 7:30 p.m. on November 4, 2025.

Q: How do I know where I should be voting?

A: Voting locations are assigned by precinct. The street address used on your voter registration form determines your precinct. You can check your registration details at the [Ohio secretary of state's website](#). Using your voting address, you can find your polling location through [the Knox County Board of Elections' website](#).

For all Gambier residents, regardless of precinct, your voting site is the Gambier Community Center on Meadow Lane.

Q: When are the polls open on election day?

A: For the general election, polls open at 6:30 A.M. and close at 7:30 P.M.

Q: I am a Kenyon student and want to vote in person. Do I need to bring any documentation to the polling station?

A: Yes! Valid forms of ID include an Ohio driver's license, State of Ohio ID card, Interim ID form issued by the Ohio BMV, a US passport, a US passport card, US military ID card, Ohio National Guard ID card, or US Department of Veterans Affairs ID card. If you do not have one of those forms of identification, you should request an absentee ballot and vote by mail.

Q: How do I know if I am actually registered to vote in Ohio?

A: Registered voters may check their voter information online at <https://voterlookup.ohiosos.gov>. The site shows your registration address, precinct and polling location, and a sample ballot.

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What is CSAD?

The Center for the Study of American Democracy (CSAD) is Kenyon's nonpartisan public affairs institution. We promote student participation in democracy and provide nonpartisan services to educate newer voters about the process. CSAD hosts panels and lectures related to democracy and public policy throughout the academic year, which are free and open to the public.