



2026 Local Voter's Guide

U.S. House 2nd District

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	Supports tax cuts for wealthy?	Supports Iran war?	How will you fix healthcare?	Supports Trump's approach to tariffs?
U.S. House 2nd District						
Matt Little (website)	DFL; former state senator & Lakeville mayor; owns a law firm representing seniors & those w/ disabilities who have been neglected or abused	Affordability, fight corruption, guarantee health care as a right	No, will close loopholes & make rich pay their fair share	No, it's prolonging conflict & raising prices	Extend ACA subsidies, pass Medicare for all, protect rural access	No, it's a tax on working families that raised prices w/ nothing to show for it
Eric Pratt (website)	GOP; state senator first elected in 2012 & previously on Prior Lake-Savage Area School Board; retired after 30 years in financial services	Affordability, housing, business growth, control spending, functional gov't	You deserve more than slogans; families deserve to keep more	Can't allow Iran to get nuclear weapons, control the Straits of Hormuz, sponsor terrorism	Offer choice & competition, plain-language policies, protect rural access	Tariffs should support free trade, not balance the budget; Every president has used them
Other Offices						
See additional pages for coverage of other local races. There are also races on the ballot for U.S. Senate and state-wide races that we have not covered here.						
Note: All info is summarized by us and not the candidates.						

Election: Tuesday, November 3

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2026 Local Voter's Guide

Minnesota House

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	Supports Flock cameras?	Supports data center restrictions?	Candidate forums?
State House District 52B (most of Mendota Heights, parts of Eagan, and Mendota)					
Tom Lopac (website)	GOP; worked in medical device industry, leader w/ Capital Pray Network	Lopac did not respond to our questionnaire.			1/1
Bianca Virnig (website)	DFL; incumbent first elected in 2023; owns Virnig Consulting & works as a substitute teacher	Strong schools, accessible healthcare, make gov’t work better	No, needs much stronger privacy protections	Yes, we can have them without adverse impacts	1/1
State House District 53A (Southern West St. Paul, most of Inver Grove Heights, Sunfish Lake, Lilydale, and part of Mendota Heights)					
Mary Frances Clardy (website)	DFL; incumbent first elected in 2022; retired teacher	Fully fund education; childcare & mental health access	No, let’s move away from authoritarian gov’t	Yes, but balance environment & union job creation	1/1
AJ Gubash (website)	GOP; litigation paralegal at a nonprofit law firm	Lower taxes, aggressively pursue fraud & cut waste	Yes, w/ strong oversight, strict limits & transparency	Hesitant to restrict private industry, but drain on resources	0/1
State House District 53B (South St. Paul, parts of Inver Grove Heights, and more)					
Rick Hansen (website)	DFL; incumbent first elected in 2004; runs a small business & owns a family farm	Hansen did not respond to our questionnaire.			1/1
Patti Mikulski (website)	GOP; works for Delta Air Lines	Mikulski did not respond to our questionnaire.			1/1
State House District 65B (Northern West St. Paul, West Side, downtown, and more) <i>This race is uncontested.</i>					
Sebastian Ellefson (website)	DFL; works as legal aid attorney for Volunteer Lawyers Network, formerly on West Side Community Organization board	Ellefson did not respond to our questionnaire.			2/2
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Minnesota Senate

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	Supports Flock cameras?	Supports data center restrictions?	Candidate forums?
State Senate District 52 (Most of Eagan and Mendota Heights, Mendota, and more)					
Brady O'Neil (website)	GOP; elevator mechanic & engineering student	O'Neil did not respond to our questionnaire.			1/1
Liz Reyer (website)	DFL; currently a state rep first elected in 2020; works as researcher/leadership coach	Healthcare, climate sustainability, workforce development	Concerned about data sharing & misuse	Yes, need standards on noise/power/water, no NDAs, no tax breaks	1/1
State Senate District 53 (Southern West St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights, South St. Paul, Sunfish Lake, Lilydale, parts of Mendota Heights, and more)					
Paul Cumings (website)	DFL; currently on South St. Paul School Board; works as executive assistant w/ state	Gov't accountability, affordability, funding schools, environment	Serious concerns, need stronger safeguards	Yes, need protections & not near residential	1/1
Todd Podgorski (website)	GOP; currently on South St. Paul City Council; works as peace officer	Fraud, public safety, affordable housing/property taxes	Yes, but open to restrictions	Yes, need reasonable restrictions	1/1
State Senate District 65 (Northern West St. Paul, West Side, downtown, Frogtown, and more)					
Robyn Gulley (website)	DFL; currently a West St. Paul City Council member & U of MN regent; works as a labor educator & coordinator w/ Doctor's Council-SEIU	Costs of childcare, housing, healthcare, college tuition	No, no widespread state surveillance	Yes	1.5/2 (arrived late)
Rocco (website)	GOP; Works in the private sector	Public safety, ending fraud & waste, affordability	Yes, but only with clear limits & rules	Case by case, no blank subsidies	1.5/2 (left early)
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Dakota County

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	Supports Flock cameras?	Grade for county gov't?	Candidate forums?
Dakota County Attorney					
Kathy Keene (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2022	Public safety, implementing MN African American Family Preservation & Child Welfare Disproportionality Act	Takes no position	A	1/2
Jeff Sheridan (website)	Attorney in private practice in Dakota County for 39 years	End score-keeping culture & reduce harm to residents	Absolutely not	B+	2/2
Dakota County Sheriff					
Bobby Lambert (website)	Sergeant in the Dakota County Sheriff's Office	Department turnover, mental health, training	Yes, w/ recent updates to data security & management	C	2/2
Joe Leko (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2022	Mental health, drug & overdose epidemic, rapidly changing technology	No, tried cameras but stopped over data privacy concerns	A	2/2
Dakota County Commissioner District 2 (West St. Paul, South St. Paul, and parts of Inver Grove Heights) <i>This race is uncontested.</i>					
Joe Atkins (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2016; works as an attorney	Affordability, protecting public safety & human services, improving local infrastructure	No, not w/o strict, enforceable & transparent safeguards	A-	NA
Dakota County Commissioner District 3 (Mendota Heights, Lilydale, Mendota, Sunfish Lake, and most of Eagan) <i>This race is uncontested.</i>					
Laurie Halverson (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2020; previously served in MN House from 2013-2020	Halverson did not respond to our questionnaire.			NA
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West St. Paul

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	Supports prevailing wage?	Supported removing Flock cameras?	Candidate forums?
West St. Paul Mayor (<i>This race is uncontested.</i>)					
Dave Napier (no website)	Incumbent first elected in 2018 as mayor and 2012 as Council; general manager of a plumbing & HVAC company	Fiscal responsibility, infrastructure, extending local sales tax	No, not our role	80% supportive	1/1
West St. Paul City Council Ward 1 (<i>This race is uncontested.</i>)					
Pat Armon (no website)	Incumbent recently elected in 2022 and previously served 2013-2016; manages a unit at DEED that implements capital projects	Redevelopment, biz retention/ attraction, litter clean up	Supports negotiated exceptions	Yes	1/1
West St. Paul City Council Ward 2 (<i>This race is uncontested.</i>)					
John Justen (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2018; owner of Eclipse Music	150 Thompson project including park, keeping property taxes under control	Yes, why don't neighbors?	Yes	1/1
West St. Paul City Council Ward 3 (<i>This race is uncontested.</i>)					
Wendy Berry (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2018; interim co-president of Literacy Minnesota	150 Thompson project, planning large-scale projects w/ a sensible plan to pay for them	Yes, people should be paid fairly	Yes	0/1
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Mendota Heights

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	Supports new city hall?	Has a library card?	Candidate forums?
Mendota Heights Mayor					
Stephanie Levine (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2020; former actuary	Efficient/effective city services, listen to residents & experts, use tax dollars responsibly	Yes, clear need & must invest wisely	Yes	1/1
John Mączko (website)	Currently on Council first elected in 2024; works a civil engineer; retired fire chief	Authentic engagement, fiscal responsibility, protecting local control	No, need to further explore options	Yes	1/1
Mendota Heights City Council (vote for two)					
Neil Garlock (website)	Former mayor; retired police officer, bus driver	Fiscal responsibility & public safety	No, renovate & expand existing building	No	1/1
John Larrive (no website)	Retired police officer	Larrive did not respond to our questionnaire.			0/1
Sally Lorberbaum (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2022; worked as math teacher, training manager, project manager	Safety & security; fiscal responsibility; planning, development & community building	Need more info to make decisions	Yes	1/1
Jerome Mulvihill (website)	Engineer	Affordability, maintain strong city services, do better listening to residents	Need to look at remodeling & fairly compare w/ new construction	Yes	1/1
Michael Oxley (website)	Assistant vice president at U.S. Bank	City hall & anything carried over from this year	No, need to reduce cost	No	1/1
Will Stein (website)	Transportation engineer	City hall, restore city's natural resources, help young people afford housing	Yes, support new construction where can control cost overruns vs. remodel	Yes	1/1
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South St. Paul

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	Supports Flock cameras?	Has a library card?	Candidate forums?
South St. Paul City Council (vote for three)					
Gusta Carr (website)	Assistant property manager & caregiver	Inclusion, accessibility, affordability	Mixed feelings, want limits on data sharing, strong privacy protections, transparency, regular review	Yes	1/1
Brian Ducklinsky (website)	School bus driver	Reduce taxes & regulations, help small biz, start flea market for hobby biz & startups	Yes, but limit use & increase oversight	No	1/1
Margaret Durenberger (no website)	Geologist	Durenberger did not respond to our questionnaire.			1/1
Tyler Fehrman (website)	Director of operations for small energy cooperative based in Twin Cities	Public engagement, strengthen local economy, long-term planning	No, risks outweigh benefits	Yes	1/1
Joseph Kaliszewski (no website)	Incumbent first elected in 2018; semi-retired, part-time science teacher at a private school	Infrastructure, fiscal responsibility, continue excellent city services	Yes. There's no misuse here, continue discussions as they arise	Yes	1/1
Matthew Thompson (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2022; correctional deputy	Economic development, renovating parks, infrastructure	Concerned about data privacy, key to partner w/ state & fed	Yes	0/1
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Inver Grove Heights

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	Supports data center moratorium?	Has a library card?	Candidate forums?
Inver Grove Heights City Council (vote for two)					
Matt Mills (website)	Director of supply chain	Reassess large capital projects, affordable housing	Yes	Yes	1/1
Tony Scales (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2022; engineer	Economic development, diverse housing development, public safety	Yes	Yes	1/1
Kevin Sethre (no website)	Consultant	Sethre did not respond to our questionnaire.			1/1
Mary T’Kach (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2022; part-time ecological affairs consultant	Housing for all incomes & stages of life, climate readiness	Yes	Yes	1/1
	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	What sets you apart?	Supports the levy?	Candidate forums?
Inver Grove Heights School Board (vote for three)					
Shana Dukes (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2023; program director	Safe schools, transparent decisions, ensuring families have a voice	Board experience, background in leadership, conflict, & organizational systems	Yes	1/1
Sarah Larsen (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2021; recreation programmer for Eagan	Hiring a new superintendent, finances, passing voter levy	Strong connection w/ & investment in community	Yes	1/1
Amy Reynertson (website)	Stay-at-home parent	Fiscal responsibility, teacher retention, technology use	Experience, fiscal responsibility, willingness to listen	Yes	1/1
Michael Wakefield (website)	Supervisor w/ the State of Minnesota	Budget stability, class size, teacher retention	Process-driven approach shaped by experience in project management, policy work & leading teams	Yes	1/1
Inver Grove Heights Schools Levy Renewal					
Basics: Renewal of a capital levy first approved in 2017 that will generate nearly \$1.2 million per year. (website)		Vote Yes: Taxes stay the same.	Vote No: Taxes decrease an average of \$78 per year, but \$1.1 million in budget cuts.	Comparison: Among the lowest tax burden among neighbors.	
More					
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2026 Local Voter's Guide

ISD 197 School Board

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	What sets you apart?	Supports the levy?	Candidate forums?
ISD 197 School Board (vote for three)					
Marcus Hill (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2021; works as a senior product manager	Budget stability, protecting staff & resources, preparing for emerging tech	Analytical rigor, lived commitment to inclusion, community-based creativity, hands-on board experience	Yes	2/2
Sarah Larsen (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2021; works as a manager of the MN Pollution Control Agency Petroleum Remediation Program	Budget, remain destination district that inspires pride in community	5 years on board, 3 as chair means depth of learning on curriculum, finances, policies	Yes	2/2
Dwight Larsen (no website)	Retired business owner/operator of Larson Irrigation, gambling manager for West St. Paul Commercial Club	Reliable & consistent funding, retaining & attracting quality staff	Background as biz owner & managing charitable organization	Yes	2/2
Jon Vaupel (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2021; works for the MN Department of Education in the Early Education Division	Diversity, equity, inclusion; community; budget	Breadth of experience in education: local, state, fed & research, teacher, admin, policy	Yes	2/2
ISD 197 School Board Levy					
Basics: A new capital levy will bring in \$4.6 million per year. Will fund ongoing expenses, allowing the district to shift funds. (website)		Vote Yes: Taxes go up an average of \$168 per year. Vote No: Taxes stay the same, but \$2-4 million in cuts required.	Comparison: Lowest tax burden among neighbors and 7th lowest out of 47 in metro.	Cuts?: The district already cut \$3.2 million over the last two years.	
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South St. Paul School Board

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	What sets you apart?	Supported the levy?	Candidate forums?
South St. Paul School Board (vote for four)					
Anne Claflin (website)	Incumbent first elected in 2022; research scientist for the state	Financial stability & student achievement	4 years on board, former legislator, been on both sides of contract negotiation	Yes	1/1
Ann Counihan (no website)	Former board member, 2009-2018	Did not respond to our questionnaire.			1/1
Sanderia Davis (website)	Senior, housing development officer at Minnesota Housing	Declining enrollment, staff recruitment/retention, absenteeism	Experience leading teams, managing finances, partnering w/ stakeholders	Yes	1/1
Christine Estee (website)	Human services & community advocate	Student mental health, improve engagement/attendance, support staff	Mental health professional experience, lived experience, community involvement	Yes	1/1
Tim Felton (no website)	Incumbent first elected in 2022	Did not respond to our questionnaire.			0/1
Wendy Felton (no website)	Incumbent of 24 years	Did not respond to our questionnaire.			1/1
Andrew Hoffman (no website)	Territory sales manager	Rebuilding trust, supporting levies	Business background: goals, growth, metrics, contract negotiations	Yes	0/1
Kim Humann (website)	Board chair, incumbent first elected in 2023; infant teacher	Share facility needs w/ community & financial shortfalls w/ state legislators	3 years on the board, kids in elementary, middle, high school	Yes	1/1
Lisa Moore (website)	Baker, previously worked for South St. Paul Schools & ran a Montessori school	Declining enrollment, academic achievement, individualized learning	Lifelong connection to SSP, firsthand experience working in schools	No	0/1
Nick Schaefer (website)	Owner of DNS Heating & Cooling	Higher student proficiency, long-term budget for maintenance, more value	Business owner, 25 years experience in industry where district needs maintenance	Yes	1/1
South St. Paul School Board Special Election (<i>This race is uncontested.</i>)					
Amy Wardell (no website)	Incumbent appointed in 2026; PE/health coordinator-St.Paul	Strong community relationships	Experience in schools as educator & district leader	No	NA
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2026 Local Voter's Guide

West Side

	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	County's greatest weakness?	Grade for county gov't?	Candidate forums?
Ramsey County Commissioner District 5 (West Side, downtown Highland Park, and more)					
Maria Isa Perez-Vega (website)	Currently a state representative; musician & producer	Social supports, revitalize downtown, community engagement	Visibility & public engagement	B	1/1
Rebecca Noecker (website)	Currently St. Paul City Council president	Standing up for people, affordability, homelessness	Policymakers not moving quickly enough	B-	1/1
	Candidate summary	Top priorities?	What sets you apart?	Has a library card?	Candidate forums?
St. Paul School Board (vote for three)					
Stephanie Anderson (website)	U of MN grad student in literacy education, previously taught Spanish & Portuguese at U of MN	Declining enrollment & inequity	Parent & region lead, leader w/ mutual aid, experience with SPPS Envision facilities plan	Yes	2/2
Teresa Glass (website)	Temporarily retired after 18 years w/ St. Paul Schools as occupational therapist & assistive tech lead	Increase academic expectations, better use of resources, fiscal responsibility	Longtime SPPS employee, values diversity, fluent in Spanish	Yes	2/2
Tamara Mattison (website)	Retired and self-employed	Strengthen literacy, math, career readiness; close gaps; engage families	Taught restorative practices to school administrations, offers culturally responsive youth programming	Yes	2/2
Michael Schell (website)	Special ed para at Simley High School, architectural & interior designer, business owner	Student/staff retention, responsible budgeting, ensuring resources reach classrooms	Perspective of working in schools, approaches problems from multiple lenses & emphasizes listening	No	2/2
Omar Syed (website)	Small business owner of Chilly Time	Close gaps, community engagement, safe & supportive schools	Lived experience of immigrant communities, small biz fiscal management, grassroots organizing	No	2/2
Kris Taylor (website)	Currently self-employed & working on a start-up	Turmoil from federal level & tech use	15 years of experience in and around education, master's in counselor education	Yes	2/2
Uriah Ward (website)	Incumbent board chair, first elected in 2021; union organizer	Student literacy, implement new strategic plan, facilities review	Dissertation on board governance, created current governance model & budget process, helped shift district's relationship w/ unions	Yes	2/2