



# 2018 Voter Education Guides

## County Attorney

**Role:** The County Attorney's job is to serve as the County Board's legal counsel and to prosecute crimes.

**Impact:** The County Attorney has immense power when it comes to deciding whether to charge an individual with a crime or to pursue other options (such as "diversion"), what types of charges to bring, and how much bail to demand. Few other countries elect prosecutors. Because of the political nature of the office, prosecutors have often campaigned on being "tough on crime." Yet prosecutors have little accountability for the costs – whether human or economic – of their charging decisions. In addition, the County Attorney advises County Board on policy issues, such as their power to limit ICE activity while on County-owned property such as courts and jails.

**Our Agenda:**

- Maximize ways to keep people out of "the system" such as diversion, ending charges for low level drug offenses, and expungement of records
- End the use of cash bail
- Increase transparency in charging decisions
- Protect local families by preventing County officer collusion with ICE

## Sheriff

**Role:** The Sheriff's job is to keep and preserve peace of the county, pursue and apprehend persons suspected of felony crimes, investigate certain accidents and search for lost persons.

**Impact:** For too long, too many law enforcement officers have been guilty of inflicting violence on people of color. Especially in large counties such as Hennepin, where the Sheriff has a budget of over \$100 million and a staff of nearly 800 people, the Sheriff can set the tone for how safe communities feel. The Sheriff's office should not collude unnecessarily with federal immigration police or collect unnecessary information that places residents in danger, such as

demanding country of origin information on booking forms. The Sheriff's office should also not deploy our resources to quash peaceful protests in surrounding states.

**Our Agenda:**

As the County's top peacekeeper, the Sheriff should

- Acknowledge and work to reverse a history of law enforcement violence towards people of color and indigenous people
- Refuse illegal and/or unfunded federal requests, and cease unnecessary collusion with ICE
- Cultivate and maintain positive relationships with the diverse communities within the county
- Steward our local resources wisely and not use them to participate in actions outside or inside our county for political gain

## County Commissioner

**Role:** County Boards are made up of elected Commissioners (7 in large counties, 5 in smaller counties). County Commissioners are responsible for making policy and also for delivering many services, such as healthcare, human services, transportation, and corrections. Hennepin County is the most populous in the state with nearly one quarter of the state's population and a \$2 billion budget. Ramsey is the second most populous and has a budget of roughly \$700 million.

**Impact:** County Boards are more obscure than many other elected offices, but they play an important role in delivering services and managing our common resources. They tend to be less partisan than other governments, yet they can be an important springboard for other offices or place where former state legislators go for further public service. County Commissioners set the budget for County Attorney and Sheriff's offices.

**Our Agenda:**

County Commissioners should

- Hold the County Attorney and Sheriff accountable for acting in the interests of the local communities they serve
- Protect public safety by setting policy limiting ICE activity on county property
- Advance the health and welfare of all County residents, with priority given to racial equity
- Steward our common resources wisely, and ensure that public contracts are not awarded to companies with ethical problems or those who seek to profit from incarceration, detention or border wall construction