

Voter Guide
See Reasons for These Selections in Comments

STATE OFFICERS

Governor - Mike Mazzei
Lieutenant Governor - T. W. Shannon
Attorney General - Jon Echols
State Treasurer - Cindy Byrd
Superintendent of Public Instruction - Robert Franklin or Jennettie Marshall (see comments)
Commissioner of Labor - Kevin West
Insurance Commissioner - Bob Sullivan
Corporation Commissioner - Brad Boles

CONGRESSIONAL OFFICERS

US Senator - Kevin Hern
US Representative District 02 - Josh Brecheen

JUDICIAL RETENTION

Supreme Court
John Kane IV - Yes to retain
Travis Jett - Yes to retain
Dana Kuehn - Yes to retain
Richard Darby - No, not to retain (see comments below)

Court of Criminal Appeals
Robert Hudson - Yes to retain

Court of Civil Appeals
Stacie Hixon - Yes to retain
Jane Wiseman - No, not to retain (see comments below)
Deborah Barnes - No, not to retain (see comments below)
James Huber - Yes to retain

STATE QUESTIONS

SQ 845 - Judicial Nominating Commission - Vote YES *** See my comments, very important.

SQ 847 - Slowing down the growth in property tax - Vote YES

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Associate District Judge - Todd Cone

City Council - see Comments for general discussion
Ward 1 - Tim Sherrick
Ward 2 - Cameron Byers
Ward 3 - Josh Lock
Ward 4 - Aaron Kirkpatrick or Joel Rabin – your pick
Ward 5 - Eddie Collins

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Comments:

Superintendent of Public Instruction - Robert Franklin or Jennettie Marshall

Robert Franklin is the Republican in this race unfortunately. He was a registered Democrat until 2023. And I am now more convinced that he is indeed a Democrat who simply changed parties so he could win. In other words, a wolf in sheep's clothing. That puts us in the unenviable position of having to vote for a Democrat who calls himself a Republican or a Democrat who admits she is a Democrat.

I have looked at (not studied) Jennettie Marshall's platform (<https://www.marshallforoklahoma.com/platform>) and it looks pretty good. I fully realize she is a Democrat and brings with her all the negatives associated with Democratic leadership here and throughout the nation. But I like the fact that she fully acknowledges she is a Democrat.

If I were voting today I think I would vote for Dr. Marshall because I do not trust anyone willing to lie to me about their beliefs which is what I think Franklin has done.

Richard Darby of the Supreme Court was appointed by Governor Fallin, a Republican. His most recent public voter registration is Republican. He has taken pro-life positions during his time on the court. He is what I would call a middle-of-the-road conservative. Some conservatives who share their voter guides are voting Yes for Darby; others are voting No. He has voted pro-life when most of the court were taking the opposite position. He is a middle-roader with a OCPA lifetime score of 52. Take your pick – vote yes or no. There is no way he will not be retained.

Wiseman and Barnes of the Court of Civil Appeals are very liberal and should be removed but it is highly unlikely they will be removed. Vote No anyway; we need to send a signal to the other judges that we are watching.

State Question 845 – this is long, but important we get it right

The Judicial Nominating Commission (JNC) nominates three candidates for appointment by the Governor to fill vacancies on the Supreme Court, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the Court of Civil Appeals, and District and Associate District Judgeships (when vacancies occur outside the normal election process). The Governor must make his selection from the three candidates nominated by the JNC, even if all three are liberal Democrats. SQ845 revises the composition of the JNC to allow more conservatives to serve on the commission.

Many publishers of conservative voter guides are recommending a no vote on SQ845. I believe they are wrong and have failed to properly analyze the dire situation we find ourselves in. We must stop Democratic control of our judicial system and SQ845 is a step in the right direction even if it is not the perfect solution. VOTE YES.

This is my side-by-side comparison of the JNC under current law and how it would be if SQ845 is passed:

Current Provisions for JNC	JNC if SQ845 is Approved
6 members appointed by the Governor	6 members appointed by the Governor
• Cannot be an attorney licensed in OK	• Can be an attorney licensed in any state including OK
• Cannot have immediate family members who are licensed attorneys in any state	• Can have immediate family members who are licensed attorneys in any state
• One from each 1967 congressional district (6)	• At least one from each of the five current congressional districts. One at-large member.
• 6-year term	• 6-year term
• Cannot succeed themselves	• Can succeed themselves (12 years total consecutive term)
• No more than 3 members may belong to one political party	• No restrictions on number of members from one party
6 attorneys elected by bar members of their congressional district	6 attorneys elected by bar members of their congressional district
• One from each 1967 congressional district (6)	• At least one from each of the five current congressional districts. One at-large member.
• 6-year term	• 6-year term

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• Cannot succeed themselves	• Can succeed themselves (12 years total consecutive term)
• No restrictions on number of members from one party	• No restrictions on number of members from one party
3 at large members	3 at large members
• 1 appointed by Senate Pro Tempore	• 1 appointed by Senate Pro Tempore
• 1 appointed by House Speaker	• 1 appointed by House Speaker
• 1 selected by not less than 8 members of the JNC	• 1 selected by not less than 8 members of the JNC
• 2-year term	• 2-year term
• Cannot be an attorney licensed in OK or any other state	• Can be an attorney licensed in any state including OK
• Cannot have immediate family members who are licensed attorneys in any state	• Can have immediate family members who are licensed attorneys in any state
• No more than 2 members may belong to one political party	• No restrictions on number of members from one political party
• Cannot succeed themselves •	• Can succeed themselves (4 years total consecutive term)

As it exists today when Republicans control the executive branch and the legislative branch, we only get 5 Republican (conservative) members of the JNC. If the Democrats are in control we get 4 Republicans. In either case, we have a losing position on the 15-member commission. (This analysis assumes the 6 members appointed by the Oklahoma Bar Association (OBA) will all be Democrats.) The limitation on number of members from one political party only applies to the 6 members appointed by the Governor and the 3 at-large members. Tellingly it does not apply to

the 6 members appointed by the OBA. This is intentional I am sure and reflects the fact that this 1967 law was passed during a time when we were a one-party Democrat state. They rigged the JNC so that even if Republicans became dominant we would never be able to have a majority of the votes on the JNC. And it has worked for the last 59 years.

If SQ845 were to pass when Republicans are in charge we can get 9 members of the 15-person commission, a winning position when commission votes are taken. If the Democrats are in charge we could have 0 Republicans on the commission. Some commentators moan that Republicans would have no votes on the commission. But I care less whether we lose 11 to 4 (today's JNC when Dems are in control) or possibly 15-0 (under SQ845 when Dems are in control). In either scenario Republicans have very little power on the JNC. **We must change the composition of the JNC so that when 'we the people' elect Republicans we reap the benefits by having effective voting control of the JNC!** Today we already have a nightmare of one-party effective control because the Democrats have 10 members and we have only 5 (and we control the governor's office, the House and the Senate!). This analysis assumes the 6 attorneys "elected" by the OBA have been and always will be liberal Democrats.

I do not believe SQ845 increases the power of the OBA as some conservative bloggers suggest. In fact, I think it lessens their power. SQ845 does not change the number of attorneys that the OBA elects - it remains at 6. Yes, under SQ845 there could be (and probably would be) more lawyers on the commission even when Republicans

are in power, but under Republican control they hopefully will be conservative lawyers appointed by the Governor or the ProTem and Speaker. It is not the intent of SQ845 to simply replace all the non-lawyers with attorneys, but I do believe they would like to replace some of them. As it stands today the only attorneys on the commission are the liberal Democrats appointed by the OBA. And in reality, those 6 lawyers have influence over the other 9 non-lawyers. Having some conservative attorneys on the commission to call out the 6 liberals is important. I also do not share others' concern about having more attorneys on the JNC, even if it were to be loaded with all attorneys. **The real important issue is how many conservatives (lawyers or not) are on the commission, not how many attorneys.** The current system guarantees that there will be no more than 5 conservative Republicans on the JNC, and none of them can be attorneys.

The rules about limiting the Governors appointment to only 3 Republicans simply works against us. We need to eliminate that requirement. When we are in power we need to be able to use the Governor's appointment power to appoint 6 conservative Republicans to the JNC.

Allowing JNC members to succeed themselves is in fact a good change. On most state boards and commissions we already allow succession because it allows the Governor to reappoint good folks to a second term. And it increases institutional knowledge.

Some are bothered by the fact that the six JNC members appointed by the Governor and by the OBA would be selected from the current congressional districts (5) rather than the 1967 congressional

districts (6). This is, I believe, simply done for convenience. No one knows what district they were in according to the 1967 maps. It is far simpler to make appointments according to the current district maps. As far as I am concerned it is a minor point and should not be a reason to fail to support SQ845.

And I do not believe it is reasonable to argue that we should reject SQ845 until the legislature puts on the table for our vote a proposal to eliminate the JNC (or radically change it). As my Senator, Senator Daniels says, "That's a heavy lift." What she doesn't say, but I believe, is that the trial lawyers have the votes in their pockets to prevent such a change, even on our side of the aisle. So what we are left with is to take the bird in the hand (i.e., pass SQ845 now), and forgo two birds in the bush (something better at some unspecified future date and in the meantime allow the Democrats to continue to pack the courts with liberal justices.) That does not mean that we can't push for elimination of the JNC process in the future, and it may well be that if we pass SQ845 and the Democrats absolute control of the JNC is destroyed, then the Democrats might be more amenable to getting rid of the JNC and replacing it with the federal system.

I hope you will consider my arguments as you prepare to vote on SQ845. If we don't pass SQ845 then the Democrats win and will continue to pack the courts with liberal justices.

Senator Daniels gave an explanation of SQ845 on Bartlesville radio this past weekend and I thought it was excellent and recommend that you listen to it.

https://www.bartlesvilleradio.com/sen-julie-daniels-talks-state-questions/video_eb67de72-8f90-4406-9f72-ac40ba485585.html

State Question 847

SQ 847 proposes lowering annual property assessment caps:

- **Homesteads and agricultural property:** From 3% to 1.75% per year
- **Non-homestead/commercial properties:** From 5% to 4% per year
- Replaces current senior property valuation freeze with an income-based sliding scale

Importantly for most of us it would reduce the annual growth amount for homestead exemption from 3% to 1.75%. Critics of the SQ say that slower growth in assessed values translates into reduced funding for local schools and services. I say we should not have any tax on our homesteads at all. People should not have to leave a home they own because they can't pay the taxes on the home. SQ 845 does not solve this problem, but it does slow down the growth of the property tax. Vote YES on SQ 847 and elect Mike Mazzei as Governor for he will try to eliminate this burdensome tax for homeowners.

City Council

The Issues

There have been four hot topic issues in recent times in our city - drag queens in public spaces, automatic license plate readers or "Flock cameras", Council rules for who and when people may speak during

Council meetings and what topics they may speak about, and most recently selection of a new city manager.

First a general comment. The world is divided and so is our city. For most issues there are two positions - one side is totally for something and the other side is totally against something. There is no middle ground. The four issues above broadly follow this same pattern. I believe that for most issues truth can often be found somewhere in the middle (but probably less so for the drag queen issue).

All the candidates are for growth and diversified economic development (i.e., they are all for motherhood (I think) and apple pie). Where they tend to divide is on the social issues (i.e., drag queens), Constitutional issues (i.e., growing government surveillance of the populace and the right of citizens to address their city leaders), and responsible government issues such as selection of a new city manager.

The drag queen issue boils down to one's willingness to hold to a Biblical perspective, that is, is the Council willing to spend the time and effort to find a workable way to prevent drag queens from performing in our public spaces (and address similar type issues)? From my perspective, Curd, Dorsey, Colaw, and Austin all seem to be far more socially liberal than Sherrick, Byers, Lock, Collins and possibly Kirkpatrick, Velej and Rabin. I want a city council that is willing to openly oppose situations and events that are not conducive to a family oriented, neighborly but Biblically focused community culture.

The Flock camera issue is the current flash point issue for Bartlesville (as well as cities across this nation as numerous cities large and small wake up to just how sinister all this surveillance is becoming). Curd and Dorsey have openly supported increased surveillance and (one of them)

has even been quoted as saying "You just have to get used to trusting government." (I think a re-reading of *The Federalist Papers* is in order). Kirkpatrick flits from one side to the other, always finally landing on the side of more surveillance. Only Sherrick on the current council has maintained a position against Flock cameras. Byers, Lock, and Collins are definitely for less surveillance (and thus more freedom and privacy). The Flock camera issue is a prime example of most people being on one side or the other - either get rid of them or buy more of them. I remain at odds with both sides, believing that truth lies somewhere in the middle, but under a completely different paradigm than the current Flock surveillance methodology. I wrote to the Council and the Police Department a couple of years ago suggesting a way forward and received exactly zero interest in discussing how one might go about discovering how to "have our cake and eat it too." I plan on writing again to the Council, but only after the new Council is elected. Hopefully the new Council will be more receptive to thinking outside the box.

The third issue, rules for Bartians (however that is defined) to express comments directly to the Council, also exhibits the bifurcation rule - either they hate the rules or they love the rules. I thought our previous mayor, Dale Copeland, did a wonderful job of maintaining order, promoting a smooth operation of council business and even proposing on-the-spot solutions to concerns raised by upset citizens. And he did all this without seventeen pages of rules. I have not studied this issue in depth, but I feel that it too will lend itself to the idea that what is best for council business as well as best for citizen rights will lie somewhere between where we are today and the abolition of all rules.

On the existing Council, Curd, Dorsey and Kirkpatrick supported the existing plethora of rules while Sherrick proposed changes to diminish the extent of the current rules. Collins, Byers, Lock and Rabin would most certainly want to moderate the existing rules and expand the rights of citizens to address the Council.

The latest issue is the selection of a new city manager. The existing Council led by Curd, Dorsey, and Kirkpatrick want to select the new city manager before the upcoming City Council elections and to do so they did not want to give personnel outside the city the opportunity to indicate their interest in the job. Sherrick, Collins, Rabin, Byers and Lock all prefer allowing the new Council to make the selection of the new city manager.

The Candidates - Ward by Ward

In Ward 1 Sherrick has served the city well, although it has been a tumultuous process. He researches issues in detail and asks probing questions. Sure he ticked off some of the elites by asking too many questions, but their attempt to remove him through recall was not only stupid but also ill advised. In my opinion recall should be limited primarily to issues of corruption or moral turpitude. Scheduled elections are the right place to remove officials you disagree with. (FYI - I also disagree with the grassroots trying to remove three Council members because they did not vote exactly like some thought they should on the LGBTQ contract. That recall effort was stupid and ill-advised as well). Sherrick's videos advising citizens about each upcoming Council agenda are something every Bartian should be watching for they provide an easy way to find out what is happening in our town. His opponent, Colaw, is too socially liberal for my Biblically oriented tastes.

Ward 2, where I will actually place a vote, is an easy pick. Cameron Byers is a strong mature Christian, a family-man, a thinker, one who listens to others' ideas and concerns, quiet and reserved but willing to take a stand to do the right thing. I think he will make an excellent City Councilman, and am honored that he is willing to devote the time and effort to give back to his community. One of his very first priorities is to do what he can to solidify a long-term water supply for Bartlesville. Although I do not know his opponent, David Austin, I do know that David is a liberal Democrat and you don't attach a label of Democrat in today's world to yourself unless you believe some or all of what they are selling. And nothing the Democrats are selling today in their "big tent party" (i.e., we have no values so come one and all) is of any interest to me. I know little about his specific views except that he is unwilling to challenge the current surveillance contract, preferring instead to wait until the contract is over (5 years I believe).

Ward 3 is troubling for me, because I consider Jim Curd a friend. However, I cannot agree with Jim on the Flock camera issue nor on the 'rules for citizens' issue (I can understand his possible arguments for why he voted the way he did on the LGBTQ contract and be willing to let bygones be bygones). Josh Lock and I somewhat disagree on Flock, for I am a moderate while he is totally against them. However, I totally agree with Josh that until the Council is able to devise (if ever) a realistic workable way to utilize the technology in a Constitutional manner, then the only option is to totally remove the cameras. We cannot live with the technology while waiting for a way to bring it under control - it will eat us alive; even begin predicting crime before it ever happens and who knows what that surveillance state will look like. Remove them now, develop a workable plan to safely and securely use the technology, then reintroduce the technology later. The first step is key, and Josh Lock will

work to accomplish that step. Josh is also an intelligent thoughtful person and will bring much to the Council. His financial skills will be much appreciated. I heard Ingard Curtiss speak one time and she was quite articulate about her one issue - grow Bartlesville. I totally agree, but all the other candidates probably agree with her too.

Ward 4 presents a quandry for me. Veley has some good ideas, but *The Wiley Post* documents that Veley apparently misrepresented herself in her filing documents. That is very troubling for me, and I cannot support Veley. Rabin, a fly-fishing club friend, primarily it seems is running to remove Kirkpatrick, who he views as the primary cause of the current City Council problems. Rabin declined to answer the questions posed by *The Wiley Post*, but he has posted a series of videos on his personal facebook page addressing various city issues he is concerned about (Blue Whale, city manager selection, and Council rules.) Kirkpatrick had the ability (as the swing vote) to kill or to moderate the surveillance state, but in the end deferred to the desires of the police department (and the mayor and vice mayor who are surveillance lovers) and jumped from Flock to what I am sure will end up to be an even more invasive provider of surveillance technology. Bottom line, I am not sure we have a really good candidate in Ward 4, but if Flock cameras, Council rules, or city manager selection concern you, then Rabin would be your choice, even if he has a history of challenging the Council in the past.

Ward 5 is also a no-brainer for me. Eddie Collins is a fighter for righteous causes. He led the battle (which is still on-going) to remove pornography from our public school libraries. He has been on the front line regarding the drag queen issue and he is a stalwart in the fight to restore freedom from the Flock surveillance state. I will admit that his

"damn the torpedos, full speed ahead" approach isn't always the way I would approach an issue, but he gets the job done or goes down fighting. He has the heart of a servant - he volunteers to help one and all. His opponent, Trevor Dorsey, I thought might be a good councilman when he first joined the Council, but he has been a terrible disappointment. He is combative, and he doesn't listen to his constituents. Trevor is unapproachable and I see no signs of servant leadership. I often disagree with his Council votes (i.e., Flock cameras, Council rules, city manager selection, etc.) I do not know Angela Utley.

Considering all the above I think the best Council for Bartlesville would be Sherrick, Byers, Lock, Kirkpatrick or Rabin, and Collins. I believe this group would listen to all the people - those they agree with and those they don't agree with, work to bring a more diversified economy to Bartlesville, promote family values and neighborliness, hold to the rule of law, be transparent in their dealings, question the need and justification for items in the budget while maintaining and improving infrastructure, promote freedom, and work to remove for the time being the presence of Flock-style cameras. We might even begin to develop a plan to envision the 'city on a hill' that has been promoted by myself and others (but to little avail due to lack of interest by the city administration).

Gary

I enjoy publishing this voter guide and hope that it provides some help. Thank you for reading. Feel free to distribute to others. If you no longer wish to receive these emails, just so notify me and I will remove you from the distribution list.