



Clay
Campbell

Daily Chronicle questionnaire: Clay Campbell

Primary election: State's Attorney (Republican)

Age: 46

Bio: Served in the U.S. Army; finished undergraduate education at Southern Illinois University; attended Northern Illinois University Law School on a veteran's scholarship and graduated with honors (1991); worked at Prairie State Legal Services, representing indigent clients; opened my law practice in Sycamore in 1991; proud son of a Vietnam War helicopter pilot and the grandson of a World War II veteran; resides in Sycamore with wife Lisa and three children: Kelsey, Jessie, and Carson.

Why are you seeking the office of state's attorney?

I am seeking the office of State's Attorney because I have become increasingly concerned about public corruption. I am continually amazed at the degree to which corruption plays a part in our local governmental entities. Without a strong and watchful prosecutor, public officials often are left without any governance on their behavior. Of particular note is the recent episode in which a Dekalb City Council member was quietly steering business to his own company. Instances of malfeasance should be immediately investigated and prosecuted where the circumstances warrant such action.

What distinguishes you from the other candidate in this primary?

I am the only candidate in this primary, of either party, who has worked daily in the legal community in this county for nearly 20 years. I have represented citizens from all over the county in nearly every sort of legal difficulty. I think this familiarity with the county will be a great benefit in creating solutions to the myriad of problems we encounter as a community. I also think I am the only military veteran. I always have felt that veterans bring a particular value to any challenge they face due to their experience in serving their country.

If elected, what is your top priority?

My top priority is the safety of children. Nothing else matters if our children are not safe. The two biggest threats to our children are gangs and cars. Gangs kill through violence, and cars kill by their misuse. We must rededicate ourselves to ridding our county of gangs and to strictly enforcing our traffic laws. Early education of school children about the perils of these two threats is, in my opinion, the key to keeping our children safe.

What, if any, changes need to be made to modernize the state's attorney office?

Cases take entirely too long to be resolved. Anyone that has been to traffic court in our county knows that the process needs reform. Technology can assist us with this process. By modernizing the processing of cases, not only can we save money but I believe we can also avoid the destruction of our gorgeous courthouse. Our county courthouse is the most beautiful in the state. Rather than spending more tax dollars desecrating it, we should focus on efficiency. Another way to modernize is by using technology to prevent crime. I would like to set up a voluntary e-mail alert system for citizens to join, which would send out periodic alerts concerning threats around the county. It also would allow citizens to transmit information directly to the office with concerns about crime, particularly gang activity. The better the communication with the public, the safer our county will be.

The county has drug court. Is there any other specialty court that should be established?

I have been a consistent advocate of a mental health court. A large percentage of criminal defendants have mental health issues ranging from addictions to depression that, when left untreated, keep them coming in and out of our legal system at a huge expense to the taxpayer. Drug usage generally masks mental health issues. By being proactive in incorporating mental health treatment into our handling of certain cases, we can reduce recidivism. We are fortunate to have many outstanding local

mental health providers like the Ben Gordon Center, Family Service Agency and Braden Counseling. A mental health court could utilize their expertise in putting our legal system at the forefront of crime prevention. In these challenging economic times, crime prevented is tax money saved.