

ACTION 

—St. Louis—

#WokeVoterSTL

BOARD OF ALDERMEN VOTER GUIDE

WARD

18

Paid for by Action St. Louis, Kayla Reed, President
Not coordinated with any candidate or any candidate's committee.
2859 Sidney St. St. Louis, MO 63104

ELECTION TIMELINE

FILING ENDS

01/04/19

**#WOKEVOTERSTL BOA
PRESIDENT DEBATE**

01/26/19

**LAST DAY TO REGISTER
FOR THIS ELECTION**

01/26/19

#WOKEVOTERSTL BRUNCH

02/23

**LAST DAY TO REQUEST
AN ABSENTEE BALLOT**

02/27/19

GOTV TEXT&TOAST

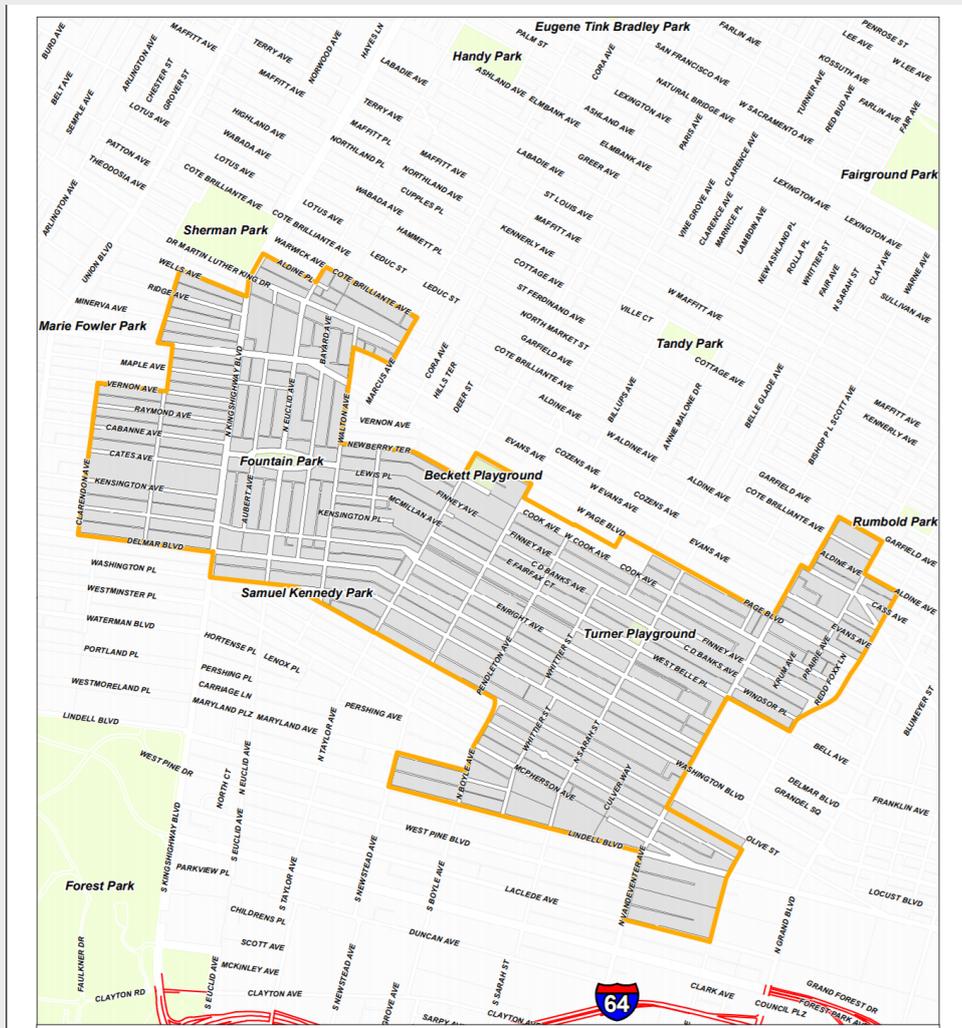
3/4/2019

ELECTION DAY

3/5/2019

WARD 18 CANDIDATES

JESSE TODD
JEFFERY HILL, JR.
DARRYL GRAY
JUDITH ARNOLD
ELMER OTEY



Map of Ward 18

Candidates in bold are those that completed the questionnaire.

Question 1: What do you believe to be the most important role(s) of a member of the Board of Alderman?

JESSE TODD

I believe the most important roles are to provide services and make laws .

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

The most important role of an aldermen is to write legislation that benefits our constitutions and the City as a whole. Aldermen must represent the needs of their constituents at City Hall when they vote and craft legislations. We must also be attentive to the city service needs of our wards and make sure that things like trash and other city services are delivered properly, and when they are not, we must advocate for them to the Mayor's office.

DARRYL GRAY

To do what is in the best interest of the Ward. Depending on the issues, my primary role would be to represent the individual needs and issues of residents, as well as the interest/programs/projects of the various neighborhood organizations in developing and implementing community and economic development efforts; serve in emergency situations to work through issues pertaining to the area; ensure that municipal legislation, policy, and practices are equitable.

JUDITH ARNOLD

The most important role of a member of the Board of Alderman is representing ward residents on issues affecting them when proposing and voting on policies. It is important to stay abreast of the public affairs of the City. Another role is to communicate with residents on a regular basis and represent the City in a transparent and accountable manner.

Question 2: What are your top legislative priorities for the city of St. Louis?

JESSE TODD

My legislative priorities are development, fix up/ tear down abandon buildings and prevent crime.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

PUBLIC SAFETY Every year, St. Louis spends nearly 60% of our budget on public safety, and less than 1% on health and human services. We must re-envision public safety to create a safer St. Louis. • Invest in social services, alternatives to incarceration, and job programs to address the root causes of crime. • Empower our community to develop proactive public safety strategies. • Increase meaningful oversight of police to ensure police practices are fair and effective.

SUPPORTING OUR FUTURE Sixty percent of property taxes fund our public schools. We must be strategic in handing out tax breaks to ensure our schools have the funding they need to operate successfully. • Restore funding for after-school programming. • Support our youth through meaningful summer jobs programs. • Expand youth mentorship programs. **COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT** In the 18th ward, economic development looks different depending on which side of Delmar you consider. We must ensure that development enriches all of our community, without displacement. • Let residents set funding priorities for 18th ward tax dollars through participatory budgeting. • Ensure that development meets community needs. • Create home repair funds for 18th ward residents, without strings.

DARRYL GRAY

- (1) Call for a Comprehensive Public Safety and Crime Prevention Plan; which would include support for the Ethical Society of Police Pre Academy Program; Cross Cultural Awareness and De-escalation Training.
- (2) Call for a 1 year freeze on home foreclosures, for failure to pay property tax, and mortgage in North St. Louis.
- (3) A Study on Predatory Lending, and other Predatory Business practices.
- (4) The appointment/hiring of a Commissioner for Youth and Families.
- (5) An Inclusion and Equity Plan, to secure minority participation (jobs, vendors, subcontractors, and contractors) in the pending \$8 billion development projections.
- (6) Create a Special (Supplementary) North City Housing Rehabilitation Fund, with monies used from the sale of LRA property. This fund would be awarded based on financial need/hardship; and income cases repayable.
- (7) Support Special Election on Ward Reduction
- (8) Increased in Human Services, to allow for increased funding for the in-housed, and other more vulnerable citizens.

JUDITH ARNOLD

Priority 1 is to reduce the tax burden of elderly homeowners by freezing assessment values. Senior homeowners have been paying taxes for a long time, when others have not. Taxes paid by the elders continued public services. The 18th Ward is at a pivotal point of resurgence, elderly homeowners should not fear that they will be pushed out of their homes. They should be able to live in their homes as long as they can. Taxes should not be a burden for elderly homeowners because of redevelopment efforts. Judith will work with the other Aldermen to pass a resolution that goes to Jefferson City. Judith will work with our State Representative and Senator to pass legislation for this important need.

Priority 2 is to reduce crime to make our ward safer. Our St. Louis Police Chief has a successful strategy to concentrate resources in violent areas of the city. However, Ward 18 is not part of this strategy and our neighborhoods show significant increases in crime, 35 percent in the Vandeventer and Gaslight areas and 13 percent in Lewis Place. Residents have voiced for more police presence. The 18th Ward is in Police District 5 and the Commander of the District has considerable authority to devise a patrol plan to apportion his resources for our ward. Judith will continue her personal relationship with the current Commander to insure continuing communication and priority over a design and execution of a policing plan for the ward.

Judith has also prioritized the formation of the North Central Special Business District to bring additional resources to reduce crime in the Vandeventer and Gaslight Square areas. This is a 5-year test for impact. If successful, the district will be offered to other areas of the ward.

Judith wants to use public funds from the police department to put cameras in 3-4 critical spots in the ward on a rotation basis.

Judith has prioritized the removal of neighborhood blight (either through renovation or removal) to reduce opportunities where criminal activity is likely to take place. She will insist that the ward receive its fair share of PropN funding. Judith was on the front-line of the Vacancy Initiative.

Judith believes that every public safety dollar must be used effectively including the ability to positively redirect minor criminal behavior. We cannot incarcerate our way to becoming a safer community.

Judith believes that proper incentives should be in place to attract and retain police officers. An example would be to pay down student loan debt in exchange for living and working in the city.

Judith also believes that the Civilian Oversight Board is important to ensuring community confidence by enabling transparency and accountability of the St. Louis Police Department.

Priority 3 is to increase public improvement to make Ward 18 more sustainable and attractive and not allow improvements to displace residents. Judith convinced the Great Rivers Greenway officials to study the Hodiament Track for funding for a greenway to tie directly to the new Chouteau Greenway. When completed, this will be the first greenway to tie together neighborhoods north of Delmar..

Judith will work with City Development Officials to create a strategic improvement plan with resident input from the ward. She supports the formation of the North Central Special Business District as a tool to increase revenue for public improvements. Judith will continue to advocate and add her voice to the voices of residents to transform the vacated Hodiament Track into an attractive asset for the Ward. She will support resident-driven initiative to decrease the number of vacancies in the ward. She will lend support for new resources to retain and attract businesses affecting the ward.

Priority 4 is to enhance support services for children and youth by providing opportunities to flourish and succeed. Judith will support summer work programs and promote more financial support for after school programs, parks, and recreation centers.

Priority 5 is to unite the various neighborhoods in the 18th Ward. Beyond the Hodiament Greenway tying the neighborhoods together, Judith plans to promote equitable services in all seven neighborhoods of the ward.

Question 3: In what ways will you create ongoing feedback and collaboration structures between constituents and your office to ensure responsive policies, decisions and accountability?

JESSE TODD

I will have ward meetings, small group meetings , individual meetings, a news letter , E-mail , and telephone calls .

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

I want to implement participatory budgeting with our ward capital funds. This will give my constituents a direct say in setting the budget priorities for our ward. I also will start sending quarterly newsletters to people in the ward to ensure all people, even those who cannot attend neighborhood meetings or are not on social media know what is happening at City Hall. Through ongoing communication with my constituents I can ensure that I am representing their needs and they can hold me accountable to the decisions that I am making.

DARRYL GRAY

(1) Monthly Meeting with Community Stakeholder Leadership (Neighborhood Associations, Block Associations, Religious Leaders, and Business Leaders)

(2) Quarterly Newsletter (mailed to households).

(3) Active and Updated Social Media

(4) Regular attendance at Ward and Community (Block) Meetings

JUDITH ARNOLD

Again, Judith will arrange regular town hall meetings in each precinct of the ward and distribute surveys for residents to provide feedback to ensure responsive policies, decisions, and accountability. Here starts the planning process of resident input into the spending of the ward budget. Residents will help set the priorities for spending.

Question 4: Displacement has taken place in countless neighborhoods across the city, with the Black population decreasing by 60 percent in some of the most severe cases. What do you attribute to this decline and if elected how would you combat displacement?

JESSE TODD

I attribute this decline to poor city services. I will make sure all citizens get their fair share of services.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

The displacement of the black population in some areas of our City is because of the misuse of tax incentives. These tax incentives seem to be used mostly to support high income housing in areas that were once diverse. We need to stop using these in areas of the City that are stable and wealthy, and use them in areas where development is not happening. The 18th ward is right on the cusp of where a lot of this development and displacement is happening. We need to have a plan both for the 18th ward and for the city that enables development to happen but also ensures that such development is led by the communities that are impacted by it, and benefits the people who have lived in neighborhoods, rather than displacing them.

DARRYL GRAY

Gentrification is a real concern in the 18th Ward and throughout North St. Louis. Displacement is a result of this effort (Inadequate and non affordable housing; high property taxes; inability to pay rehab cost, which results in municipal penalties; allowing crime to increase, without adequate prevention measures; sub standard and/or deteriorating living environments; all contribute to this problem. I would call for a Comprehensive Review on the Causes of Displacement in North St. Louis, and make the information public, in order to identify solutions.

JUDITH ARNOLD

Attributable to the decline of the Black population in countless neighborhoods is benign neglect of housing and services across the spectrum. An aging and vulnerable population is what is left. Also, the public school system discouraged many families from remaining in the city. Combating displacement is never easy, but Judith plans to freeze real estate assessments of elderly homeowners to alleviate fears of displacement. This is a successful tool of other cities and is used even as the area is built up.

Question 5: Do you support the upcoming city ward reduction? What will you do to ensure a just and equitable process?

JESSE TODD

No. I will suggest an independent company draw the boundaries.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

I do not believe that there should be another public vote on ward reduction. The City voted already, and over 50% of voters in the 18th ward want reduction. I believe that the process should be to utilize evidence-based 2020 Census data and an inclusive, diverse, representative committee—who specializes in equitable redistricting—to create the new wards based on the democratically articulated needs of residents in the 18th ward and the City of St. Louis at large.

DARRYL GRAY

I do not support Ward Reduction, without a Comprehensive Study on the Impact that such action would have on North St. Louis.

JUDITH ARNOLD

Judith does not support the upcoming city ward reduction. However, in light of our current situation, ward reduction should be a public process to ensure a just and equitable outcome. As Judith observes the process, she will ensure an equal population in each district. Further, I am very concerned about any recommendations that result in cracking or packing when redistricting.

An example of cracking splinters minority populations into small numbers across city wards, so that a big group ends up with very little chances of affecting any single election. An example of “packing” pushes many minority voters as possible into a few super-concentrated wards. If either of these situations exists, the city would be in violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 because the new boundaries deny minority voters and equal opportunity to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice. It applies if the denial is intentional, or an unintended result. A law suit would be inevitable.

Question 6: What is your stance on the privatization of Lambert Airport?

JESSE TODD

I oppose privatization. It hurts unions. It lacks oversight by the citizens. It has not worked in other cities.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

At this time, I do not support the privatization of the airport. Lambert brings the City about 7 million dollars annually, and it would thrust our city backward to eliminate one of our biggest assets. It is also unclear to me how the City would benefit from privatization. It would likely mean that we would lose control, and the revenue generated by, our largest asset.

DARRYL GRAY

I support a special city-wide election on the privatization of Lambert Airport. I would not vote on the approval of this project without project Public Information/Education focused on the "impact to North City residents; and/or the benefit to North City residents.

JUDITH ARNOLD

There are a few problems with the arguments of those in favor of privatization. There are no outstanding renovations or expansions needed at Lambert. In fact, much of the airport's current debt is left over from an airport expansion project in the 90's that ended up being pointless when TWA (a now nonexistent airline) and American Airlines rescinded its “hub” status in 2003. Since then, however, the airport has seen consistent and significant growth in the quantity of cargo and passengers travelling through it, as well as the revenue it generates for the city. In 2016, the airport generated \$6.5 million in revenue for the city and in 2017, logged over 14 million passengers—both figures have been increasing every year, with the number of passengers increasing by 5.5 percent since 2016. This also makes the airport the single most valuable asset owned by the city in terms of how much revenue it generates. Additionally, the airport was able to refinance most of its debt recently, as creditors and bond agencies took note of the airport's continual growth and competent management. There is no crisis of competence in the management of our airport and no need to change from a public asset.

Question 7: What is your position on the use of TIFs and other tax incentives in the city of St. Louis?

JESSE TODD

I think TIFs and other tax incentives should be given to individuals to buy /repair house not big developers.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

I would like to see the BOA create better regulations for tax incentives. Because of how the programs are designed, people are allowed take advantage and misuse them. When it comes to Tax Increment Financing (TIF), I believe that it should prioritize needs north of Delmar, so we can correct decades of development neglect by the City. I also believe that Land Reutilization Authority (LRA) should also create more programs that help residents with rehabbing, without unnecessary restrictions that stymie access to public resources.

DARRYL GRAY

Tax Incentives are necessary to create, support, solicited, and sustain business in the City; it is necessary for job creation; but there must be a significant and long term benefit to the taxpayer, and City. There must be public input and a public impact study requirements to TIF request.

JUDITH ARNOLD

For years, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) has been controversial. This resource reduces a developer's property taxes, or directs them solely to his or her project, has the effect of transferring taxpayers' money to the bottom line of private, for-profit ventures.) Proponents cite a "benefit" – essentially the existence of the developer's project – while skeptics list a rather substantial list of the costs and burdens they believe more than outweigh any such benefit under any rational benefit-cost analysis. At a minimal the following questions should be asked before a TIF is approved. These are:

- 1) What is the city's past record, when we compare promised results with ultimate return or loss?
- 2) Why is this proposed project needed?
- 3) Why does that need exceed all conventional needs for public funds?
- 4) How will citizens benefit, a small segment or primarily the recipient?
- 5) How much money is involved?
- 6) Why are those who will profit unwilling to invest what is needed?
- 7) Are their reasons equally applicable to taxpayer funding?
- 8) Does the business plan indicate financial success, or reveal risks of failure?
- 9) If and when the recipient fails, skips town, goes bankrupt, or misses deadlines, how will taxpayers be protected?
- 10) What relationships are there between the potential recipient and the officials approving the funding?
- 11) Will competitors be harmed?

Question 8: Do you support the demand to close the Medium Security Institute? Please explain.

JESSE TODD

Yes . If people need to be institutionalized they need to be locked up in a home like setting : emphasizing crime prevention , rehabilitation , Education/training and conflict resolution. Professional staff should be available to treat patients/inmates.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

Yes. I was part of organizing the first Workhouse action that happened in 2017 around the air conditioning issue that was in the Workhouse. I have been aware of the inhumane conditions that exist in the Workhouse since I moved to St. Louis. I do not believe that a facility that can barely support air conditioning, nor a facility that busses in food every day, is adequate for any human being's rehabilitation. This facility needs to be closed, and cash bail eliminated.

DARRYL GRAY

I would support closing the Medium Security Institute, as it current exist as a "warehouse". I would support a Commission (comprised of government and community partners, and professionals) to review options.

JUDITH ARNOLD

Not at this time. It isn't feasible to close an institution that houses hundreds of people facing felony charges. The building is old, but functional. A total of \$6.5 million is earmarked for repairs and upgrades to St. Louis' correctional facilities, including permanent air conditioning at the workhouse.

Question 9: What is your stance on the city/county reunification, specifically the plan released by Better Together?

JESSE TODD

I am against city /county merger. It might eliminate the earnings tax. It is a third of the city's budget. City Services would be reduced. Elected officials would be less accessible and accountable.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

Ideally, a merger of the City and County sounds like a good idea, but I'm concerned about the loudest voice pushing this issue, i.e., Rex Sinquefield. I'm want to know what his motivation is, and ensure that any merger benefits the City and historically marginalized communities.

DARRYL GRAY

I do not support the merger of the City and County at this time. I do support the merger of certain government services, that would contribute in decreasing the government expenditures, without compromising services. I support a vote ONLY by the City and County residents.

JUDITH ARNOLD

The possible merging of the city and county of St. Louis has not come to a vote, but this may change thanks to the work of Better Together St. Louis. I cannot support this merger. I worry about the effect a merger would have on citizen relationships with elected officials. Big government would enable City residents to lose their voice on issues affecting them. The City is not in a bargaining position, what government has to offer is deficits and underfunded pensions. City residents should not have their hands out for crumbs.

Question 10: Did you support Proposition P? Why or why not?

JESSE TODD

No. Almost half of the city budget is spent on law enforcement. We need to spend more on preventing crime. Poverty is the main reason for a high crime rate.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

I did not support Prop P. The City already spends too much on policing. Over half of the City budget goes to public safety. We have the third highest staffed police department per capita in the country. The number of police is not our problem. The problem is that we do not invest enough in social services to reduce crime.

DARRYL GRAY

I didn't support Proposition P. I don't believe that increasing officers help to deter or decrease crime in the City. I believe that we need to spend more of the government dollars in Human Services. We need to focus more on addressing the issues that contribute to crime.

JUDITH ARNOLD

No comment.

Question 11: Do you support the legalization of recreational marijuana? Explain your answer.

JESSE TODD

Yes. Some People are currently smoking marijuana. Laws enforcement should focus on violent crime.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

Yes I support the legalization of recreational marijuana. First off, in the City of St. Louis people who are black are 18 times more likely to be arrested and incarcerated for marijuana than people who are white, even though people who are white use marijuana at the exact same rates as people who are black. The majority of people who are behind bars are there for low level drug offences. This is inhumane and immoral.

DARRYL GRAY

I support the decriminalize of recreational marijuana. I am concerned about the discriminatory abuse of law enforcement in administering the laws on this drug; chemical elements of the drug, and would like to ensure proper government control for health purposes.

JUDITH ARNOLD

No.

Question 12: Do you believe homelessness is an issue in St. Louis. If so, what concrete steps will you take to alleviate homelessness in the City of St. Louis?

JESSE TODD

Yes . The city should build more houses.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

Yes I do believe that it is an issue. The City needs to have a walk in shelter. Larry Rice was closed without the City opening a shelter that could fill the same need. The Board of Aldermen can make sure that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund has the money that it needs each year to operate homeless services. I also think that we should not be using police to address our homelessness issues. The money that the police department is not spending due to not filling vacant officer positions should be used to hire social workers or provide other services to alleviate homelessness.

DARRYL GRAY

Yes. Allocate more funding from Public Safety to Human Resources. Designate a senior staff person to be solely responsible for coordinating programs/efforts that would address the safety, security and shelter for the un- housed

JUDITH ARNOLD

Yes homelessness is an issue in St. Louis. I propose four simple things -more housing, services, socialization, and prevention. I will vote for funding support programs that provide these components.

Question 13: More than 60% of the City's General Fund budget is currently devoted to Public Safety, with the vast majority of those funds allotted to police, prosecution, and jails. Do you agree with this budget allocation? If not, how would your budget priorities differ?

JESSE TODD

I disagree with how tax payers money is currently being spent. I would spend more money on preventing crime.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

Every year, St. Louis spends nearly 60% of our budget on public safety, and less than 1% on health and human services. We must re-envision public safety to create a safer St. Louis. To do this, we must Invest in social services, alternatives to incarceration, and job programs to address the root causes of crime. Proactive public safety strategies that have been very effective elsewhere need to be implemented here, with real community input to tailor them to the unique attributes of our city. We also need to increase more meaningful oversight of the police, to ensure that their practices are fair and effective for all people in the region.

DARRYL GRAY

Answered previously.

JUDITH ARNOLD

Big budgets are needed for big problems. I do not understand how the personnel budget grows year after year and the number of personnel decreases and is at an all-time low. The budget should prioritize recruitment and retention. Perhaps the City should help pay down student loans of officers who live in the city.

Question 14: Given that safe, quality, affordable transit is a lifeline for so many city residents, as well as the mark of a world-class City, and given that federal funding for transit seems to be diminishing, how do you think funds from Prop 1 should be used?

JESSE TODD

I think some of the money should be spent for safe, quality, affordable transit.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

When Prop 1 was passed, voters were told it would go toward a N/S Metrolink expansion. I think that we need to honor what voters were told the money would go toward. If Federal funds are not available, I think that we should still support a N/S route, even if it means we have to collect tax revenue for a longer time to have the funds to expand Metrolink.

DARRYL GRAY

If monitored and used for the purpose requested from tax payers, Propositions to raise monies could be beneficial. The City could use these funds to support the purchasing and maintenance City properties and equipment, increasing transportation options, and infrastructure needs. Unfortunately, this was not the specific case for Prop 1. The Prop was not expanded to allow for funding for public transportation, particularly for North end resident to travel to the surrounding suburbs for more favorable employment opportunities.

JUDITH ARNOLD

Funds should be used to create north south linkages to employment opportunities.

Question 15: How do you plan to address the issue of crime in the city of St. Louis?

JESSE TODD

I plan to address the issue of crime in the city by providing jobs , training, supervised activities, drug treatment, block units/neighborhood associations, beatifying the community, and making sure the police are doing their job.

JEFFERY HILL, JR.

I plan to reduce crime by advocating for more social services to handle drug addiction, mental illness, and poverty. I also want to identify block captains and community liaisons to empower the community to de-escalate issues before there is a need for police to get involved in situations. I also want to install more lights in the 18th ward. We know that adequate lighting decreases crime.

DARRYL GRAY

Crime has a reason, or a why. We need to do more to honestly identify, address, and aggressively work towards solutions to these questions.

JUDITH ARNOLD

We need to recruit and retain police officers. Judith plans to propose the paying down of student loan debt as an incentive for police officers that live in the city.

CANDIDATES ANSWERS WERE COPIED VERBATIM.

**VOTE
MARCH
5TH!**