

Election 2018: Illinois Attorney General race

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
November 5 2018 1:00 AM



SPRINGFIELD – With election day coming next Tuesday for the mid-terms, many people across the country are pushing for high voter turnouts.

Social media is full of political ads, voter education, and people displaying their early voting stickers for what is forming into an extremely important election cycle for Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike. Many state and local positions are currently up for grabs, and Riverbender.com's voting guide aims to inform those still on the fence about the candidates from whom they are given choices.

Much of this information is public record, but some of the candidates were able to complete questionnaires sent by reporters. Not everyone responded to those, so research into campaign promises, funding and voting records was conducted in order to properly display the candidates and what each represents.

Three candidates are currently vying for the position of Illinois Attorney General, which is the highest law enforcement position in the state. With items such as House Bill (HB) 40, which would allow abortion in Illinois even if Roe v. Wade is overturned,

immigration and marijuana legalization all being campaign platforms for Democrats and Republicans, the position of Illinois Attorney General is paramount. With incumbent Lisa Madigan, a Democrat, not filing for reelection, three candidates with limited government experience are racing for the title.

ERIKA HAROLD

Harvard Law School graduate and former Miss America Erika Harold is running as the Republican on the ticket. She worked at several law firms, and is currently employed at Meyer Capel Law Firm based in Champaign.

In her campaign, Harold promises to bring change to the state, specifically to help people find opportunity and live their dreams. She said she feels inspired to help others due to racially and sexually motivated bullying she experienced in high school. She even started an anti-bullying campaign after being crowned Miss America in 2003.

She said her opponent, Democrat Kwame Raoul, is “a part of the corrupt system she is running against,” adding he worked closely with current Illinois Speaker of the House Mike Madigan, himself a Democrat, saying Raoul spent years raising taxes and opposing reform.

Harold's top donor is Citizens for Rauner, which contributed \$1.8 million to her campaign. Second highest is Chicago-based hedge fund manager, Kenneth Griffin, who donated \$1.7 million, which is well below his sizable contribution to the reelection campaign of current Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner. The Illinois Republican Party donated more than \$286,000 to her campaign as well.

KWAME RAOUL

State Senator Kwame Raoul, also an attorney, is running against Harold. During his time in the Illinois General Assembly, Raoul sat on the executive, gaming, insurance, and public health committees as well as the committee of the whole. He served as vice chair of the criminal law committee and the chair of the judiciary committee.

One of Raoul's most notable stances and contributions was the appeal of the death penalty in Illinois at the beginning of the 2011 session. The bill was narrowly passed through on Jan. 6, 2011, which extended a 2000 temporary moratorium of the death penalty in Illinois to a complete abolition. He was also instrumental in a 2011 redistricting process through the State of Illinois.

Raoul also sponsored legislation to remove caffeine and other energy substances from alcoholic beverages. He also supported a ban on red light cameras in the state.

Funding for Raoul mostly comes from J.B. For Governor, which contributed more than \$2.9 million to his campaign for attorney general. The Democratic Party of Illinois contributed just over half a million to his campaign. Michael Sacks, the CEO of GCM Grosvenor, a global investment firm based in Chicago, donated \$400,000 to the campaign. Illinois Political Action Campaign for Education donated a bit more than \$330,000, and Chicago Land Operators Joint Labor Management PAC donated just shy of \$330,000.

BUBBA HARSEY

Libertarian candidate Bubba Harsey is running from DuQuoin. He has a bachelor's degree in political science and philosophy from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and a juris doctor from American University in Washington, D.C.

If elected, Harsy said he would get rid of political corruption in Illinois, something he said Lisa Madigan did not make the grade. He said both parties in Illinois are corrupt, accusing each of running “Manchurian Candidates” to run as attorney general who “look nice, smile when they're supposed to, but completely ignore the bipartisan government corruption is destroying Illinois, and has to stop.”

He blames such political corruption for what he described as Illinois's “political ruin,” adding the state needs to hold government employees accountable for criminal acts, take back pensions from undeserving elected officials, make Illinois more business-friendly, institute criminal reform and promote competition among health insurance companies through deregulation.