

How to RESEARCH the candidates on YOUR ballot before you VOTE

Step 1 Get YOUR sample ballot

In “local election years” like this one, these ballots will be very specific to your address and polling place/voting precinct because we have magisterial district judge, township/municipal positions and school board candidates running in some precincts and not in others. You have 3 options:

1. Contact your **Democratic Zone Leader** for a sample ballot that will indicate who all the Democrats are in your precinct, especially in the 3 races that **cross file***. Find your Zone Leader here: <https://chescodems.org/about/zones/>
2. View your precinct’s ballot on the **CCDC (Chester County Democratic Committee) website**. These ballots will indicate all the ENDORSED DEMOCRATS. (Note that there are 2 Democrats running for Court of Common Pleas Judge who are not endorsed: Paige Simmons and Kristine Howard): <https://chescodems.org/sample-ballots/>
3. **Chester County Voter Services** has “specimen ballots” for each party. This resource is a bit clunky as you must first click on the button for your party, then scroll through 462 precincts, listed alphabetically, in order to find yours. Another downside is that a candidate’s party is not identified in the **cross filed*** races: www.ChesCo.org/156/Voter-Services

Step 2 Identify issues of importance or concern to you

Examples: Public education, building and development, open space, taxes, election integrity. (*See the reverse side for a brief description of what each position on the ballot DOES.*)

Step 3 Look up each candidate and read their backgrounds and views on the issues

- Google each candidate on your sample ballot to find their campaign websites and social media pages
- CCDC has a list and links to the websites and social media pages of all **endorsed countywide and statewide Democratic candidates** here: <https://chescodems.org/voterguide/>
- **Contact your Zone Leader** for more information about your municipal/local candidates

***WHAT IS CROSS FILING?**

When a candidate of one party collects enough petition signatures from registered voters of the other party to appear on both party’s ballots in the Primary election, without their party being identified. Only candidates running for these 3 positions *may choose* to cross file:

1. Magisterial District Judge
2. Court of Common Pleas Judge
3. School Board Director

“We don’t have government by the people. We have government by the people WHO PARTICIPATE” – Thomas Jefferson

YOUR VOTE MATTERS



Prepared by Chester County Marching Forward

What's On The Ballot in 2023?

(NOTE: Some of the township/municipal level positions may or may not be on your ballot)

Township/Municipal Positions	What they do
Magisterial District Judge (may cross file*)	First level Judge to hear a case; hears minor cases; makes cash bail decisions
School Board Director (may cross file*)	Decides academic, budget, security, educational support and other key policies
Township Supervisor/Borough Council	Runs the business of the municipality including taxes, zoning, public works
Auditor	Audits how tax funds are handled in the municipality/township
Tax Collector	Collects real estate taxes for the municipality/township
Mayor	Ceremonial head of the municipality; provides civilian oversight of police
County Positions	What they do
Commissioners	Run the business of the County; serve on the County's Election, Prison, Salary and Retirement boards
District Attorney	Chief law Enforcement officer of the county; investigates, prosecutes, and prevents crimes
Prothonotary	Processes all civil litigation documents (passports, divorce papers, emergency protection from abuse orders, new citizen documentation)
Recorder of Deeds	Records, maintains, and preserves permanent legal documents (deeds, liens, mortgages)
Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphan's Court	Jurisdiction over the probate of wills, appointment of guardians, collection of state and inheritance taxes; issues marriage licenses
Sheriff	Chief county law enforcement; protects Courthouse and county buildings; serves and enforces protection of abuse orders, eviction notices
Court of Common Pleas Judge (may cross file*)	Presides over hearings and trials for major criminal, civil and family cases (divorce, custody, DUI, business disputes, protection from abuse orders)
PA Statewide Positions	What they do
PA Superior Court Judge	Hears all APPEALS in criminal cases and most civil cases from the Common Pleas courts (Examples: Drug possession, DUI, Assault, Burglary, Murder, Child Custody)
PA Commonwealth Court Judge	Hears all APPEALS in cases that involve government entities or municipalities (Examples: Utility company disputes, Election disputes, Public School Funding)
PA Supreme Court Judge	The highest Court in Pennsylvania; chooses which cases to hear that are still disputed after appeals courts have ruled, or may step in to hear any statewide case (Examples: Ruled that gerrymandered congressional districts were unconstitutional; ruled that the 2020 Election results were legally certified)