



UNDERSTANDING THE REFORM ST. LOUIS INITIATIVE

Common Questions & Answers

St. Louisans deserve a Board of Aldermen that prioritizes our city—not special interests. Currently, inadequate laws in St. Louis allow aldermen to engage in conflicts of interest that are outlawed in other cities. **But it doesn't have to be this way.** Our community coalition is taking a desperately needed reform measure directly to voters to stop gerrymandering, increase transparency at the Board of Aldermen, and make our leaders accountable to ALL St. Louisans. **Together, we will Reform St. Louis:**

- **Prohibit aldermen from taking official actions where they have a personal or financial conflict of interest** related to the legislation being considered.
 - Require that aldermen's financial disclosure statements and conflict of interest statements be posted online and open to the public without having to request them.
 - Prohibit aldermen and their employees from becoming lobbyists to influence city policy for at least one year after leaving office.
 - This will bring St. Louis in line with other leading cities around the country.
- **Give the power to draw ward boundary maps to an equitably selected Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission** so voters can select their officials, instead of the other way around.
 - Require the commission to hold public hearings, maintain transparent records, and keep neighborhoods and communities together.
 - Prohibit lobbyists, aldermen, and others with conflicts of interest from serving on the independent commission.
 - Open the application process for city voters to serve on the commission, which requires at least one applicant from every ward. Retired judges select the first few members randomly, who must then select the remaining members from the pool of applicants to balance racial, geographic, gender, and other diversity requirements.
- **Keep the Board of Aldermen accountable to all voters**, by prohibiting aldermen from changing municipal election laws without permission from voters.
 - Some aldermen want to go back to being able to win with 30%. This provision will protect voters' rights.
- **Remove gendered language in the law** by having all members legally called "alderpersons."

BIG PICTURE

What language will voters actually see on their ballot in St. Louis?

The ballot language is:

Shall Article IV of the City of St. Louis Charter be amended to:

- Prohibit Alderpersons from taking actions on policies where they have a personal or financial conflict of interest;
- Require that Alderpersons' financial disclosure statements be open to the public;
- Have ward boundary maps drawn by an independent citizens commission, which shall have a diverse group of members, hold public hearings, and draw maps that keep neighborhoods and communities together
- ;Prohibit lobbyists, Alderpersons, and others with conflicts of interest from serving on the independent citizens commission; and
- Protect the rights of voters by prohibiting the Board of Alderpersons from overturning the will of the people on voting methods for municipal offices without a public vote?

Who is supporting Reform St. Louis?

We're so proud to have a broad, diverse, and growing coalition of supporters including the League of Women Voters of Metro St. Louis, Missouri Faith Voices, Missouri Health Care for All, the Black Caucus of the Missouri Democratic Party, St. Louis Young Democrats, the St. Louis Association of Community Organizations (SLACO), and Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice. Individuals like Rev. Darryl Gray, Rabbi Susan Talve, former Secretary of State nominee Yinka Faleti, Gena Gunn McClendon, PhD, and Nahuel Fefer are all supporting. Full list of endorsements here: <https://www.reformstlouis.com>

Who funds Show Me Integrity? Is it Rex Sinquefield?

No! We are not affiliated with Rex Sinquefield or the Show-Me Institute in any way. No one has a monopoly on our state motto. We are proudly funded by grassroots donors and we apply for grants, just like any nonprofit. We disclose all donors transparently on our website, www.showmeintegrity.org with full names and exact amounts. Donors to Show Me Integrity Action Fund for ballot initiative work are disclosed on the Missouri Ethics Commission website.

Why not include ethics reform for the Mayor or the Comptroller?

When making a change to the Charter, you are legally required to stay within a single subject. Our attorneys at Stinson LLP advised that we only reform the Board of Aldermen in this initiative. The office of Mayor and Comptroller falls outside of the single subject.

What's the timeline for implementing this policy?

The standard deadline for redistricting is the end of 2021. However, we have included an extension in this charter amendment to allow for time for this to be instituted if it passes.

Does this have to do with ward reduction?

No, we are not taking a stance on ward reduction. This policy is about the process, not the number of wards. Whether we have 28 wards or 14 wards, the people should be heard when it comes to how these ward lines are drawn.

Why is this policy so comprehensive?

When our coalition formed to explore reform at the Board of Aldermen, community leaders suggested a variety of potential reform measures. Redistricting reform was the priority, but other reforms were appealing or were proposed by some of our coalition partners, as well. So, we took it to the people through an extensive public survey and public polling process. We found that the people of St. Louis wanted a bigger, more comprehensive, more transformative approach to reforming the Board. Based on the public's response, redistricting is now part of a comprehensive conflict of interest package to prevent Alderpersons from drawing their own district lines, legislating their own business interests, or overturning voter-enacted reforms on elections without a public vote.

I read an editorial that said you all are proposing adding at-large/citywide Alderpersons. Is this true?

No, we are not proposing this and it is not in the policy ([which you can read here](#)). This is one of the policies that we polled on at the suggestion of community partners, but we are not including it in this proposal. We have asked the Editorial Board to correct the record.

Is this going to be the only thing on the ballot in November?

No, there will likely be two or three other initiatives on the ballot in November, already triggering a special election for voters.

When will this be on the ballot for voters?

Our goal is to turn in 30,000 signatures in June and to get this on the ballot for voters in November.

INDEPENDENT CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

What's wrong with the current process?

Right now, the Board of Aldermen draws their own ward lines and then approves their own ward lines, leading to political games and lines drawn to ensure re-election. We have spoken with individuals who have witnessed past redistricting processes and have seen straight lines be made crooked to include Alderperson's campaign managers and friends in their ward. It doesn't have to be this way.

How is the Citizens Commission picked?

The Commission is picked in two parts. First, the Oversight Committee - a group of five individuals made up of three retired judges, 1 representative from the Comptroller's office, and 1 representative from the Dept of Planning and Urban Design - convenes to pick **at random** the first four people of the Commission. Then, those four people pick the final five individuals who must be representative of the diversity of St. Louis.

Why is there no "non-partisan demographer" model like Clean Missouri?

Proposition R for Reform does call for a professional staff member from the Planning and Urban Design Agency to help draw the maps. The Independent Citizens Commission model is the preferred model for local areas and is being used in San Diego, Austin, and other areas. There are a few reasons. The first has to do with the cost - the Independent Citizens Commission is significantly less expensive than the demographer mode. We are not allowed to require the city to appropriate funds for a new position without levying a new tax. St. Louis does not have a demographer, whereas the state of Missouri already

did before Clean Missouri. Additionally, local redistricting reform is simply about keeping neighborhoods together, not complicated partisan competitiveness algorithms. And finally, the goal here is to ensure adequate community input and engagement in the process of redistricting. An Independent Citizens Commission does this well.

Does the Board of Aldermen still have power over the commission?

Nope! The Board of Aldermen does not pick the Commission and cannot stall the process. They can provide feedback on the maps, but cannot vote them down or make changes to them. The process is independent from the Board.

Are there requirements for how the maps are drawn?

Yes! The Commission is required to draw a map that (1) minimizes the division of and maintain the geographic integrity of any local neighborhood or local community of interest, (2) is compact in form, (3) uses geographically identified boundaries.

Can Alderpersons or Lobbyists serve on the Commission?

No, Alderpersons and others with conflicts of interest (lobbyists, those elected to or running for office, paid city employees, and appointed positions) are NOT allowed to serve on the Commission.

TRANSPARENCY + ETHICS REFORM

Are Alderpersons already required to disclose personal financial records when they run?

Yes, they are, and they turn these disclosures in when they run for office. But, the general public is only able to access these records with a Sunshine request, which can be difficult and logistically challenging. This would make the records publicly available on the Board of Aldermen website.

Why didn't you have the Missouri Ethics Commission as the enforcement body for this portion?

When making a change to the Charter, you are legally required to stay within a single subject, per the advice from our attorneys at Stinson LLP. The Missouri Ethics Commission lies outside the single subject that we are legally required to stay within.

REMOVING GENDERED LANGUAGE

Why not use the word "Alders" rather than Alderpersons?

Although "alders" is commonly used by people in the City of St. Louis, it is not used in other cities. In fact, Alders means a type of tree and could cause legal confusion if used in the Charter. Alderpersons was agreed upon as the best possible change we could institute.

Why does this matter?

The Charter was written when only men were allowed to serve on the Board, and now with a Board that is over half women, times have clearly changed. Moving to Alderpersons creates gender equity and inclusion for folks who identify as nonbinary or transgender.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF VOTERS

We just passed approval voting last year. Why do we need to include this?

Approval voting passed with over 68% support in the City of St. Louis. Now, some members of the Board of Aldermen want to overturn this, and they can with a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote one year after passage. This simply changes the ability for the Board to overturn voting measures that the people supported - with this, changes to voting laws must go to a vote of the people.

Does this mean we can't change the runoff/nonpartisan elections/other piece of current system?

Nope! Changes can still be made to the election system with a simple majority vote of the people.