Written by Jeff Ignatius
Wednesday, 22 October 2008 02:35

(***Author's note:*** River Cities' Reader *Publisher Todd McGreevy is a volunteer for and donor to the campaign of Michael D. Elliott.)*

Michael D. Elliott was asked a question about closed sessions of the Scott County Board of Supervisors, and it didn't take long for the conversation to go in another direction. While Elliott speaks eloquently about his plans for the Scott County auditor's office, many discussions come back to the U.S. Constitution.

"Where can you freely exercise any rights that you supposedly have?" he asked. "You can in your own home, but I think that's about it. ... If you have to ask permission from the government to exercise a right, it's no longer a right. It's called a privilege. And we live in a world of privileges now. The Bill of Rights doesn't exist. It's a fairy tale, really, in today's world."

This is what makes Elliott the most intriguing local candidate in next month's election. He's an independent running for the type of office that's typically reserved for a loyal party soldier. His larger interest - upholding the Constitution - is much bigger than the Scott County auditor position he's seeking, but it reflects his seriousness as a candidate.

And considering that the right to vote *is* a constitutional right, there's a significant overlap between the two.

He called the auditor's office "the position that has to provide the most amount of honesty and integrity and transparency." He said in an interview that as the commissioner of elections, the auditor should be nonpartisan. "The auditor's office specifically is the hub to all of the government - all local government. Everything that occurs in the local government goes through the auditor's office."

Seeking the position vacated when Karen Fitzsimmons died in April - after serving more than three decades - Elliott is running against Democrat Roxanna Moritz and Republican Steve Ahrens. Even if you live in Illinois or think the position doesn't merit much attention, Elliott is still worth getting to know.

Put simply, he's turned a campaign that was bound to be about personality and party into one about issues and political philosophy.

"If you want to allow people to be citizen advocates and get them more involved with the government, you have to have somebody ... in that position that can actually provide all the transparency that's needed so citizen advocates can actually make decisions like holding their local officials more accountable," he said. "If we can't see what's really going on, then we're really powerless."

The Last Stand for a Citizen Advocate

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