




Minnesota State Auditor

Four candidates are running for the office of Minnesota's state auditor. Incumbent Rebecca Otto is not seeking re-election. Candidate Michael Ford did not respond to a request for participation. Candidate answers are in their own words and unchanged.

	Does Minnesota still need a state auditor, at least one elected on a partisan ticket? Many people have said it should be removed from politics.	Are local government audits conducted by private firms as good as ones the auditor's office conducts? Should private audits be allowed?	Explain your approach on balancing training local officials to do a good job keeping financial records and the need for the auditor's office to strictly enforce laws and accepted accounting principles.	Should audits be limited to finances or expanded to include how successful programs and policies are?	Should the auditor's role be expanded to examine state books instead of just local governments?
<p>Julie Blaha (DFL)  Age: 48 Occupation: Math Teacher; Labor Leader Website: blahaforauditor.org Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BlahaForAuditor/ Twitter: https://twitter.com/BlahaForAuditor Family: Julie's Husband is Roger, they have two sons and three Grandkids ...with another on the way!</p>	<p>An elected auditor is directly accountable to Minnesotans, not a political party. In this time of fake news and attacks on those who tell the truth in government, an elected auditor is essential to preserve accountability, integrity, and transparency. I will be an unbiased and trusted partner.</p>	<p>An audit is most trustworthy when no money changes hands between an auditor and the municipality. I will advocate for an office that can provide periodic audits free of charge. This approach would provide a check on private audits, while freeing up local funding when the state completes the audit.</p>	<p>As a math teacher, I know what it means to both accurately assess performance and increase success. The most effective way to help local officials succeed is to provide complete, honest feedback. Enforcing laws and best practices will also increase local officials' success and effectiveness.</p>	<p>A full investigation includes analyzing results. While the office's Audit Division focuses on finances, its Reporting Division can provide a wider look including analysis of the return on investment of a program or policy. Comparing results to costs helps local officials make better decisions.</p>	<p>The state auditor oversees over \$20 billion in local spending - that deserves top attention. When politicians in Washington DC or at the state level can't agree, we turn to our local governments. As auditor, I will give my undivided attention to supporting Minnesotans solving problems close to home.</p>
<p>Chris Dock (Lib)  Age: 52 Occupation: Investment Consultant Website: www.chrisdockforauditor.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/cd4auditor/ Twitter: NA Family: NA</p>	<p>The position of State Auditor should not be a political position. As State Auditor, my responsibility would be to provide fiduciary oversight of government operations on behalf of the people, not to represent any political party. The ideal candidate should be independent of those being audited.</p>	<p>I support the usage of independent auditors whenever that provides a more thorough and cost-effective option in comparison to the State Auditor's office. Increasing options and competition creates the opportunity for higher quality and lower cost services to be available in the marketplace.</p>	<p>It is crucial that local officials keep accurate and transparent financial records. The Auditor's office should not only be reviewing the financial data and adherence to rules and regulations, but should review processes as well to ensure financial operations are handled as efficiently as possible.</p>	<p>My plan is to implement a Report Card system that will enable taxpayers to easily understand how their local government is performing compared to benchmark data. It's one thing to know what was spent on any given aspect of government, it's another to know whether that expenditure was efficient.</p>	<p>Currently the state books are audited by the Legislative Auditor, who is an appointee rather than an independent, elected official. We need more independence in this role; the Auditor of the State should not be appointed by those he/she is auditing.</p>
<p>Pam Myhra (R)  Age: 61 Occupation: CPA, Republican Endorsed Candidate for MN State Auditor Website: pamforauditor.com Facebook: @pamforauditor Twitter: @pamforauditor Family: Husband, Chuck, of 37 years and three adult children</p>	<p>Yes, Minnesotans need a State Auditor elected and accountable to them alone. The Legislative Auditor serves at the directive of the Legislature and therefore can be influenced by the political Party in power. Minnesotans need an independent State Auditor answerable to them.</p>	<p>2018 MN Supreme Court affirmed 2015 law passed by Dem controlled Senate and Rep House and signed into law by Dem governor to allow counties same choice cities have, to engage a private accounting firm to do their audit. The choice allows for greater local control to better serve public interest.</p>	<p>The State Auditor's Office should not be doing both consulting/educating and auditing since these are conflicting roles, challenging the auditor's independence and objectivity according to Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards.</p>	<p>I believe the public would be better served if the State Auditor's Office was expanded to include performance reviews of the effectiveness of programs and policies.</p>	<p>Yes, since the Legislative Auditor is at the directive of the State Legislature, (part of state government), state government agencies should be audited by the independent state Constitutional Office of State Auditor which is at the directive of the people and accountable to them alone.</p>

*denotes incumbent