



HOME RULE

HOME RULE COMMITTEE

- David Anderson
- Walt Boothe
- Michael Born
- Mike Broski
- Pat Derry
- Sherry Harlan
- Brent Johnson
- Len LaPasso
- LoRayne Logan
- Susan Maher
- Ray Montelongo
- John Penny
- Peter Provenzano
- Bill Roop
- Dan Ross
- Joe Scandroli
- David Schertz
- Sam Schmitz
- Don Schreiner
- Jan Selander
- Scott Sullivan
- Paulina Sihakom
- Patti Thayer
- Thomas Weightman
- Bill Whitcher

Dear Friend,

These are exciting times in the city of Rockford.

On March 20, Rockford voters can return home rule authority to our city. This election will have a far-reaching impact on our community and we need your help. Most importantly, we need your YES vote on March 20.

Home rule is a tool that allows local people to develop local solutions to local challenges. Without home rule, we are forced to rely on a dysfunctional Springfield to solve our problems. If we disagree with what our mayor and city council are doing, we have the power to hold them accountable on Election Day—we don't have that power when it comes to the Illinois Legislature. **We need more Rockford and less Springfield.**

We're proud to be supporting the *Rockford for Home Rule campaign*, which is a group of community volunteers eager to keep Rockford's momentum moving forward.

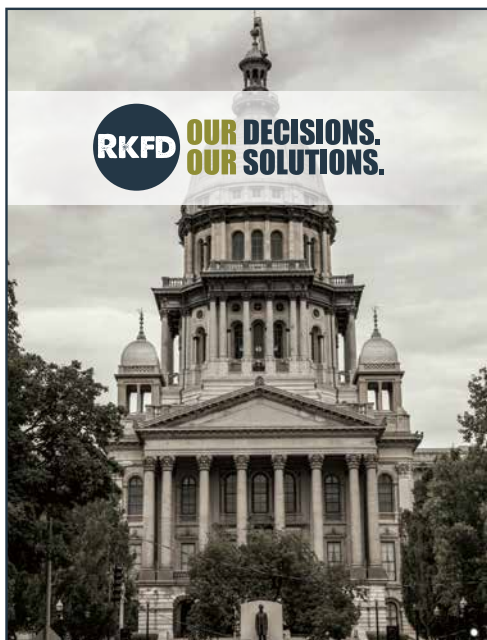
We have a positive outlook on Rockford and it's not often we have an election where we can literally change our future for the better. This is one of those elections, and we hope you'll join us in voting YES for home rule on March 20.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Ken Board
 Bobbie Holzwarth
 Paul Logli

Charles Box
 Brent Johnson
 Bill Roop

Dr. Bill Gorski
 LoRayne Logan
 Dr. Rudy Valdez



Who is Against Home Rule for Rockford? SPRINGFIELD.

Who has poured almost \$200,000 into an opposition campaign against Rockford?
Local Realtors funded by a Political Action Committee based in... **Springfield.**

Who doesn't want local residents making local decisions about local issues?
Springfield.

Are you surprised?
You shouldn't be.

VOTE YES  ON MARCH 20
TO RETURN LOCAL CONTROL TO ROCKFORD AND END OUR RELIANCE ON A DYSFUNCTIONAL SPRINGFIELD.



The Benefits of Home Rule

Rockford is by far the largest city in Illinois without Home rule and our neighboring communities enjoy the freedom of home rule—cities like Belvidere, DeKalb, Elgin and Freeport. Loves Park and Machesney Park are expected to automatically gain home rule in the 2020 Census.

Rockford's status quo of high property taxes, high violent crime per capita and high rates of poverty is not acceptable. We deserve better and we cannot wait for Springfield to act while Rockford continues to suffer.

IF HOME RULE PASSES

• *Decrease our reliance on property taxes to fund City services*

- Since losing home rule in 1983, the City's operating property tax levy has risen 185 percent
- Home rule will diversify our revenue sources so non-residents and visitors who take advantage of our amenities and services share in shouldering the burden of funding

• *Maintain essential services, such as public safety, emergency response, and public works without raising property taxes*

- Almost 86 percent of the City's budget is allocated to police, fire, and public works. Without home rule, the City cannot continue to provide these essential services at their current level

• *Establish a Local Preference Ordinance*

- This ordinance would give Rockford area businesses the opportunity to meet or beat bids coming in from outside the area on City projects, keeping our dollars local

• *Increase Gaming Machine Fees*

- The State allows non-home rule cities to charge a maximum annual fee of \$25 per machine
- Our comparable home rule municipalities charge \$500-\$1,000 per machine

• *1 Percent Hotel Motel Redevelopment Tax*

- Increasing our hotel/motel redevelopment tax by 1 percent increases annual revenue by about \$4.5 million
- Hotel/motel redevelopment taxes are paid overwhelmingly by visitors and tourists, not by residents

• *Land Bank*

- Create a Land Bank to move vacant foreclosure and abandoned properties to home owners and investors who want to improve the properties

• *Charge private for-profit nursing homes for lift assist calls to our Fire Department*

- Calls for service have risen 50 percent in the last two years because the State prohibits the Fire Department from charging a fee to recoup its costs for lift assist services
- Charge a fee to private for-profit nursing homes for lift assist to offset the cost of the call for service

IF HOME RULE DOES NOT PASS

• *Cuts to public safety, emergency response, and public works*

- About 86 percent of the City's budget is police, fire, and public works. Without the ability to generate new revenue, the City will likely be forced to make cuts to these essential services

• *Higher property taxes*

- City Council has kept property taxes flat for the last five years and reduced taxes by \$400,000 in 2018
- If the home rule referendum does not pass, the City likely will be forced to raise property taxes to meet budget demands

• *Establishment of a Utility Tax*

- If the home rule referendum does not pass, the City would consider a 5 percent tax on gas and electricity, which disproportionately impacts poor and elderly residents

The Basics of Home Rule



In 1970, the Illinois General Assembly updated its constitution and included home rule authority for municipalities over 25,000 in population. They knew Illinois is made up of many different types of communities, from small rural towns to large urban cities and everything in between. Different-sized cities have different issues. They need the ability to govern themselves more effectively.

- Home rule shifts decision making from the dysfunctional State legislature in Springfield to the local level, allowing residents to develop **local solutions to local problems**
- These can include initiatives and ordinances **in a wide range of areas** such as building, public safety, zoning, sanitation, economic development, public health, civil disturbances, quality of life, safety and welfare.
- A non-home rule municipality can only do what the Springfield Legislature allows it to do
- A home rule municipality has the freedom to use almost any tool available to solve its issues, unless expressly prohibited by Springfield

With home rule, nothing happens automatically. In Rockford's case, the Mayor and City Council still must develop and vote on ordinances, budget proposals and new legislation. The **Council recently approved a stringent set of self-limiting ordinances** to help govern itself with home rule. These would:

- **Cap our property taxes** at what non-home rule communities are allowed by state law
- **Require a public notice, a public hearing, and an automatic layover** allowing citizens time to understand what is proposed and why in the case of any tax proposals
- Cap the City's debt limit at a level 20 percent less than required by state law
- **Provide voters the ability to recall aldermen or the mayor**

Home rule allows local leaders to develop local solutions to local problems. **Our elected officials remain ultimately accountable to the voters, unlike the 97 percent of Springfield legislators who are not accountable to Rockford voters. We should not allow Springfield to control our destiny.**

We Must Trust in Ourselves

Home rule is about more than fact and figures. It's **about trust**. Trust in ourselves to make decisions that have a daily impact right here in Rockford. Decisions made here by our aldermen and mayor are made locally by our friends and neighbors who have a real stake in our future. **Our dysfunctional Springfield Legislature rarely acts with the interests of Rockford in mind.** On March 20, a YES vote can change that.

Some are comfortable with the status quo and would rather continue the old approach which has led to Rockford being passed by peer communities. **The time for positive change is NOW.**

Rockford's future can and should be bright. Most importantly, **the drivers of our future should be Rockford residents**, not Springfield legislators with no stake in our community and no accountability.

Current Endorsements

HOLMSTROMKENNEDY
IBEW 364
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 150
IRON WORKERS LOCAL 498
J&M PLATING
LABORERS INTERNATIONAL LOCAL 32
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER ROCKFORD
LINO'S
NEXT ROCKFORD
NORTHERN ILLINOIS BUILDING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
NORTHWEST ILLINOIS BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL
NORTHWEST QUARTERLY
NORTHWESTERN ILLINOIS CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
OLSON ALUMINUM CASTINGS
ORTHOILLINOIS
PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS LOCAL 23
ROCKFORD AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
ROCKFORD AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
ROCKFORD AREA GOOD GOVERNMENT PAC
ROCKFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
ROCKFORD MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP
ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR
TRANSFORM ROCKFORD
VIKING CHEMICAL COMPANY
WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
WORKPLACE

**VOTE
YES** 



“ This is an exciting time for Rockford and we must continue the momentum we’re seeing in our community. I was not elected to maintain the status quo. Home Rule is a vital tool that will allow our city to continue its comeback. With so many people having a positive outlook on our city and an excitement for our future, we must not let the fear of change drive our decision making. I’m confident our residents will join me in voting YES. ”

–Mayor Tom McNamara



**OUR DECISIONS.
OUR SOLUTIONS.**



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Paid for by Rockford for Home Rule Committee.