

# Johnson County Voting Coalition



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## What is the Johnson County Voting Coalition and where did it come from?

### **Purpose**

The Johnson County Voting Coalition (JO VOTES) is a grassroots effort to facilitate communication and coordinate resources among like-minded not-for-profit organizations to maximize mutually-agreed election outcomes, i.e.- to un-elect problematic legislators, especially those with a taste for ALEC advice. And to elect those we prefer!

### **Origin**

The 2014 ACLU of Kansas statewide outreach effort, "Where Freedom Stands in Kansas," also promoted establishing an ACLU presence in interested Kansas communities based what resident ACLU members favored. Projects were initiated in Wichita, Manhattan, Topeka, Kansas City and Lawrence. In Johnson County, ACLU members prioritized "voter engagement" in a visceral response to behaviors of the Kansas Secretary of State.

The ACLU of Kansas "Johnson County Task Force on Voter Engagement" was organized in Leawood, September 3, 2015. ACLU members agreed to invite representatives of like-minded not-for-profit organizations to join monthly coalition meetings and agree to, at minimum, remain in contact through our listserv. The main purpose of the coalition was, and remains, to share resources and information with each retaining their identity.

### **Morphing**

By February, 2016, the Task Force was moving in a direction threatening ACLU's tax exempt status, that is, toward overt political activities such as candidate recruitment and get-out-the-vote.

There was a no-fault separation of Jo Votes from ACLU as JO Votes delegates chose to become an independent entity. Steve Lopes resigned his position as ACLU Field Coordinator and agreed to serve as JO Votes Coordinator.

### **A Caveat about our Partners**

Nota Bene: JO VOTES does not speak on behalf of coalition members, but rather facilitates sharing information among and with members.

Organizations that have chosen to engage with JO VOTES affiliates and are on our listserv include: NAACP; Sierra Club; True Blue Women; Women For Kansas; Move On; Planned Parenthood; Mainstream Coalition; Save Kansas Coalition (which includes Kansans for Republican Values, Reroute the Roadmap, Traditional Republicans for Common Sense, Kansas Moderate Party, "KAW" Kansas Advancing Women); League of Women Voters; National Council of Jewish Women, Grandparents Against Gun Violence; Johnson County Democrats; Game On; Johnson County Educators; Bleeding Kansas; Kansas NEA; ...and more to come.