

# ALLEGHENY COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

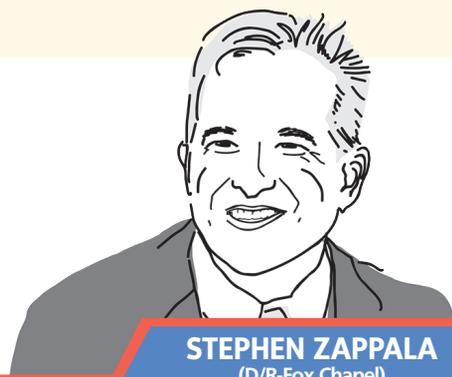
The Allegheny County District Attorney is in charge of directing how people facing criminal charges are prosecuted in the county. The DA's decisions impact cases as minor as disorderly conduct and as major as homicide. The office has a major impact on the county's criminal justice system.

BY RYAN DETO

CANDIDATE



**LISA MIDDLEMAN**  
(I-Highland Park)



**STEPHEN ZAPPALA**  
(D/R-Fox Chapel)

BIOGRAPHY

Running as an independent, Middleman is a public defender and criminal defense attorney, and has been for the past 30 years. Helped organize her public defenders union. Graduated from University of Pittsburgh Law School. A Highland Park native, she entered the race because she says the current administration isn't committed enough to tackling racial and economic injustices happening in the county. Says her progressive reforms will help tackle these issues, as well as reduce incarceration rates, which would save taxpayers millions.

A Democrat, who cross-filed and is also the republican nominee, Zappala has served as Allegheny County District Attorney since 1998. Lives in Fox Chapel, raised in the Swissvale area, and graduated from Duquesne University Law School. Supported efforts to classify hate-driven assaults on LGBTQ individuals as hate crimes. Oversaw the creation of domestic violence and child abuse investigate units. In 2017, publicly supported reinstating mandatory minimum sentences as a tool to investigate serious crimes.

JAIL OVERCROWDING

Wants to the end the practice of over-charging defendants to coerce plea deals. Won't apply criminal charges to cases where lead charge is marijuana possession. Says she'll advocate in the state capital to encourage legislators to eliminate laws like "school zone drug laws," which she says have a discriminatory effect on communities of color. Pledges to not request cash bail in any case and instead utilize release with conditions when necessary.

Says jail population shouldn't be reduced just by transferring long-serving inmates to prisons. His office created 11 diversionary courts to address criminal-justice issues rooted in poverty and a policy entitling defendants to a bail modification hearing within 72 hours. Says he's long worked on reducing cash bail, though a 2015 Pitt study found 81 percent of county jail inmates were held before being convicted of a crime. A recent ACLU report shows Black defendants in Allegheny County were 12 percent more likely than white defendants to be assigned bail.

SECURITY

Bristles at incumbent Zappala's initiative to install investigative cameras throughout Allegheny County, saying that's typically a police role, not a prosecutorial tool; is critical of the Chinese company Zappala has contracted with, which investigative reporting has shown is more accessible to hackers. Says ensuring safety should stem from an understanding of what causes crime and wants to focus collaborations with community members, mental-health systems, and addiction experts to stop crime before it happens.

His office has overseen the installation of more than 450 cameras in 75 locations countywide, including in South Side and near the University of Pittsburgh campus in Oakland. Also procured license plate-reading cameras to track suspects across municipal boundaries. Suggested using GPS to track people accused of crimes after they are released from county jail. Says his security camera initiative reduces local crime rates and quickly helps law enforcement solve open investigations.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Would advocate in the state capital to encourage state lawmakers to create an independent agency to investigate and prosecute police officers suspected of criminal activity. Until that agency is formed, plans to create a unit in DA's office that is "firewalled" from other units. Has advocated for the creation of a countywide citizens police review board. Would request local police departments to release discipline record of officers and publicize racial disparity data on arrests, charges, and sentencing.

Says the current statewide use of force laws are too forgiving for police officers who shoot suspects, and says his office worked with police departments to standardize training and guide a more uniform understanding of use of force. Wants police departments to track use of force instances and says his office will prosecute violations. Supports the creation of a countywide citizens police review board. Says body cameras should be used by all police departments.

FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

Democracy for America, Libertarian Party of Allegheny County, Green Party of Allegheny County, SEIU Healthcare labor union, State Reps. Sara Innamorato (D-Lawrenceville) and Summer Lee (D-Swissvale), Pittsburgh City Councilors Deb Gross (D-Highland Park) and Erika Strassburger (D-Shadyside), Former Allegheny County Medical Examiner Cyril Wecht. Raised more than \$200,000 for her campaign, including \$17,000 from small donor amounts of \$50 or less.

Steel City Stonewall Democrats, Allegheny County Labor Council, Allegheny County Democratic Committee, financial backing from Steamfitters union and Teamsters. Raised more than \$200,000 for his campaign, but only \$164 in small donor amounts of \$50 or less.