



CANDIDATE SPOTLIGHT

HENRY EICKELBERG

LOUDOUN COUNTY TREASURER

CANDIDATE: **HENRY EICKELBERG**

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What would you like voters to know about you?

The treasurer's office has two principal functions: collecting and safeguarding the County's money and addressing taxpayer questions and concerns. Under Roger Zurn's leadership (for those that don't know, Roger will be retiring at the end of 2023), the treasurer's office has done a great job doing both. And I am blessed to receive Roger's full-throated endorsement.

As voters look towards the election this fall, I want them to know that I am the only candidate that has the in-depth, hands-on financial and customer service management experience this important elected position demands. My career has been blessed with many opportunities to run large financial operations that were responsible for providing outstanding customer service and managing billions in investment dollars. Loudoun taxpayers deserve a Treasurer who is extremely experienced in fiscal management and administration.

Currently, I teach as an adjunct professor of law in the graduate legal programs at two different top-20 law schools – Georgetown and Washington University in St. Louis. I've been an adjunct professor for almost 20 years. And I'm running for Loudoun County treasurer because I want to continue to give back to the community.

There are many working Loudoun County families who find our county an expensive place to live and raise their families. While many things entice people to live in Loudoun County, whether they are working families or own their own business, everyone sees on a daily basis that making ends meet is increasingly difficult.

The treasurer's office should assist where it legally can, but it can also serve as an important voice in helping every citizen understand the policy trade-offs being made with their tax dollars. I want to be that voice.

How long have you lived in Loudoun County and what is your favorite thing about living here?

We moved to Loudoun County in 1997 and have maintained a home here since. We currently live in the Leesburg area. We love the topography and rural atmosphere of Northern Virginia. My wife, Kathy, and I hail originally from the Chicago area. Loudoun County reminds us a lot of New England with its smaller towns and beautiful countryside, but with a much more moderate climate.

Kathy and I have been married for 40 years. We have four grown children, who are all happily married, and they have given us seven grandchildren (four boys and three girls). I am also very blessed to have my 92-year-old mother-in-law (Marie) live with us. She moved out to Loudoun in 2013 and is an incredibly special person. It's great to see four generations all enjoying life in the same general area.

Can you tell us a little about your background in terms of education and how you got started?

I worked my way through college. I received my undergraduate degree in accounting from DePaul University in Chicago in 1979. I then passed the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam in 1980 before returning to law school. I graduated from John Marshall School of Law in Chicago (which is now known as the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law) in 1983 and was admitted to the Illinois Bar later that year. The first three years of my working career, I attended night school at John Marshall Law School and received an advanced law degree in taxation.

While at DePaul, I worked for my dad's company. I started in the maintenance department and later worked in the accounting department doing accounts payable processing, budgeting, and payroll. I basically did everything from making copies to coffee and anything in between. It was a great experience.

Before moving to Northern Virginia, I was a law partner at a major US law firm, Jenner & Block in Chicago.

Do you have any prior political experience?

Yes, I was appointed to serve out a vacancy as a trustee for Ela Township in Northern Illinois. I then stood for and won election before moving to NoVA.

Why did you decide to run for Treasurer?

I am running for Loudoun County Treasurer because I felt called to do so. Given the strength of my work experience, I saw seeking election to Loudoun County Treasurer as an opportunity to put my skills and experience to use for the benefit of all Loudoun's communities. I absolutely want to bring people together.

The current Treasurer, Roger Zurn, has been County Treasurer for close to 28 years. Are there things you feel you would change if you were elected?

My first priority is to make sure that what's working stays working. Roger has assembled an amazing team of dedicated professionals and my job, as the leader, is to support them, especially during any transition. We have all witnessed public offices where the newly elected official acts like they know more and things quickly fall apart. My job is to make sure that doesn't happen, and I have the experience to do just that.

The treasurer's position is way too important. If poorly managed, the treasurer's office can have a dramatically negative affect on the finances of every Loudoun taxpayer, so it is particularly important that Loudoun's treasurer have the necessary deep experience of actually managing a high volume, high touch financial operation.

My philosophy is very simple: (1) every Loudoun taxpayer is a unique and important member of the community; (2) we need to be one community; (3) every single taxpayer deserves to have confidence in how county funds are managed; (4) Loudoun County is one county with a diverse set of communities and each needs to have a real seat at the table. I will make sure that that happens. Everyone wants and should expect fairness. Everyone wants and should expect real inclusiveness. The bottom line is that everyone's interests and concerns need to be heard and considered.

What exactly does the treasurer do?

The treasurer's office is responsible for collecting all county assessed tax revenue. To do this, the treasurer's office works closely with the Commissioner of the Revenue (Bob Wertz). The Board of Supervisors sets the tax rates in a manner that targets sufficient tax revenue to cover its anticipated spending. The Commissioner of the Revenue and the Treasurer then work together to create the tax bills that allocate to each taxpayer their share of the taxes the Board of Supervisors wants to collect. An external vendor produces each taxpayer's real estate tax and then mails them. As taxpayers send in their payments, their checks are processed by a large financial institution that cashes the checks and deposits the funds in the County's bank account (overseen by the Treasurer's office). All tax dollars are held in high quality, very liquid funds (e.g., Certificates of Deposit or commercial paper) until such time as the County needs to pay its bills.

How does the Board of Supervisors fit into all of this? The Board just adopted a \$4.2 billion budget for fiscal year 2024.

It really all starts and ends with the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors (BoS). It is the BoS who decides how much the County will spend and on what. The BoS then literally directs the Commissioner of the Revenue to go out get the money. That results in a tax bill for every resident.

As individuals, we budget by deciding how much we can afford to spend based on what we make. The Board of Supervisors operates differently. The BoS first decides how much it wants to spend and then decides where it can go to get the money. This is not to say that the Loudoun County BoS is insensitive to what that means to working Loudoun County families, but that is only one factor the BoS uses to balance its spending priorities. That has resulted in an increase in Loudoun County expenditures of over 70% since 2017. And – NEWS FLASH! – that has hit Loudoun’s working families hardest. I believe that it’s time for an approach that puts primary emphasis on what Loudoun’s working families can reasonably afford and develops the county spending priorities around that.

As Loudoun County Treasurer, my office coordinates with the Commission of the Revenue (a really great professional, Bob Wertz). I am looking forward to working with Bob and his team. Bob is a dedicated public servant who is very sensitive to the struggles of working families.

What do you like to do when not running for office?

I fancy myself as a decent golfer, but what I really love is spending time with my wife, our kids and grandkids. We also have two standard poodles who are an immense pleasure. To my wife and me, family is everything. We are blessed to have them all in the area, and to see them all grow and have families of their own. It’s an answered prayer.