

Chapter Spotlight: Confluence SSN Highlights State Election Changes

NOVEMBER 8, 2022

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"Election rules keep changing. So there's always new things to try and explain to people," David Kimball, Confluence SSN co-leader

As voters all across the nation cast their ballots for the midterm elections, some may notice a few changes to voting procedures in their state. Such is the case in Missouri, where a new voting law now requires showing a photo ID both for those going to a polling booth as well as those voting by mail. Mindful of the need to keep their St. Louis community informed of changes in election law, Confluence SSN co-leaders [David Kimball](#) and [Rebecca Clendenen](#), along with [Anita Manion](#), have been hard at work ensuring that their election program – Promoting Participation and Trust in St. Louis Elections – increases voter education and encourages voter turnout.

How can key updates to voting information be disseminated in an engaging and attention-grabbing way? Confluence SSN decided to get creative, producing [several YouTube videos](#) that straightforwardly lay out important election changes that community members need to know.

Kimball shared the chapter's secret to creating professional videos featuring music, animation, and high quality graphics: "We discovered that art and design students [at our university] need projects to work on." And so, the three election program leaders decided to recruit the help of artistic and tech-savvy undergraduates. "We thought, there's lots of election related content. Maybe they'd like to help us with some of that."



David Kimball



Confluence SSN's youtube videos update the public on important voting requirements for St. Louis County

Focusing on communication strategies remains a top priority for Confluence SSN's election program – and that includes communicating with elected officials leading up to an election season. The chapter has maintained close contact with two [St. Louis Election Board](#) directors, Gary Stoff and D. Benjamin Borgmeyer.

“In the past [Stoff and Borgmeyer] contacted our department from time to time when they wanted something analyzed for them or mapping things when they were drawing new ward and precinct boundaries in St. Louis County. So this time around, I contacted them and asked, ‘Are there things we can analyze for you around the election?’” said Kimball.

Kimball got a quick response – and an ask that had nothing to do with research-based expertise. “In St. Louis County, they're always looking for poll workers. And so when we've asked can we help with things, one of the things they frequently say is, ‘We'd love to have more students sign up to be poll workers,’” he said. He also shared this story as a reminder to other chapters looking to build or maintain relationships with elected officials: “It's important to be ready to sometimes help them with something that maybe you're not expecting, or not necessarily an expert at.”

With plenty of midterm elections prep, the past few weeks have been especially busy for Kimball, Clendenen, and Manion – sharing their election information videos; handing out flyers; recruiting student poll workers; and connecting with local groups, nonprofit organizations, and municipalities engaged in election work.

According to Kimball, while Election Day will come and go, Confluence SSN's election program isn't going anywhere. “Election rules keep changing. So there's always new things to try and explain to people.”

Beyond their election program, the chapter is also working on a legislation monitoring project focused on tracking legislation at the state level as well as a community project focused on addressing the opioid crisis in Missouri communities. Learn more about the Confluence chapter [here](#). You can also check out [this list](#) of all our SSN chapters currently engaged in election projects.