

Press Conference Speech November 20, 2025

Good morning, everyone! Thank you all for being here.

Today, I am deeply honored and humbled to stand before you as the endorsed candidate of Forward Independence to be the **Minnesota's 20th State Auditor**. Thank you for your confidence in me. This endorsement is not simply a recognition—it is a responsibility, and one I take very seriously.

My story is a Minnesota story. I was born just blocks from where we stand today, to parents who were still teenagers themselves. My path wasn't always easy, but it was shaped by the community and the support of people who believed that **no matter where you start**, hard work and integrity **can move you forward**.

I grew up on the East Side of Saint Paul in a proud union home. My family lived union values every day. I later became a Teamster myself. It was in those years that I learned **what fairness looks like**. What **accountability feels like**. What it means when people stand together and look out for one another. Those early lessons—about showing up, putting in the work, and doing right by others—are the foundation of **who I am and why I'm here**.

After the attacks of 9/11, I found myself, like so many Americans, reflecting on what I could do for my country. At 31 years old, with a wife and four children at home, I made the decision to enlist in the Army. It wasn't the easy decision, but it was the right one.

Over nearly 17 years of service, I promoted from Private (PV2) to Major (O-4). I deployed to Iraq. I led soldiers, advised leaders, and served at the Defense Health Agency where we used data analytics to support the Military Health System. Those years strengthened my

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belief that service isn't defined by rank or title—it's defined by **character, commitment, and purpose.**

During my service, I pursued my education, earning a Master's Degree in Health Informatics with a concentration in Data Analytics and Data Visualization from the UofM. Data became more than numbers to me—it became a **tool for truth, clarity, and accountability.** It became a way to ensure decisions were **fair, informed, and grounded in reality.**

Then, in 2022, I was diagnosed with cancer presumptively linked to burn pit exposure during my deployment. Like many veterans, I faced a new kind of battlefield—one that tested my **resilience and my faith.** In 2023, I was medically retired. But I stand here today healthy, grateful, and as determined as ever to continue serving—this time in a new mission, for a new purpose: to serve the people of Minnesota.

Today, I live in Victoria, Minnesota. I'm the proud father of six—three daughters and three sons, including one currently serving in the Army. I'm also a grandfather to three beautiful grandchildren who remind me every day why this work matters. And I am blessed to be married to my high school sweetheart, an educator of more than 25 years, who has devoted her life to **lifting up the next generation.**

These personal experiences—growing up in a union home, serving in uniform, battling and overcoming cancer—have shaped me.

Minnesotans deserve a State Auditor who answers to them, not to any political party. Someone who will put **common sense, transparency, and accountability above partisanship.**

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As a true Independent, I bring no political machine with me—only the values I was raised with and the lessons I learned through service. And I believe those values are exactly what this office needs.

Let me share some of the pillars of my campaign—ideas grounded in **practicality, innovation, and real-world experience**:

- **First, a relentless focus on cybersecurity.**

Protecting public information is not optional—it is fundamental. The OSA will stay ahead of threats and safeguard data.

- **Second, the adoption of cutting-edge technology to detect fraud in real time.**

Minnesotans shouldn't have to wait months—or years—to discover when something has gone wrong. By leveraging existing software and supplementing it with industry-leading technology, we can identify anomalies as they happen and stop misuse of taxpayer dollars.

- **Third, a fully interactive and transparent OSA website.**

Minnesotans deserve easy access to information about how their money is being used. We will improve the current site using technology the state already uses, embedding real-time data so every Minnesotan—from reporters to researchers to everyday citizens—can see how funds are allocated and spent.

- **Fourth, streamlined reporting systems to help local governments succeed.**

When reporting processes are outdated or overly complex, it slows down audits and makes it harder for local partners to do their jobs. We will build an interactive submission portal, along with a clear

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prioritization tool aligned to statewide goals. This means faster audits, clearer communication, and fewer administrative headaches for cities, counties, and others.

These are not just upgrades—they are transformations. And each one supports a single mission: **to safeguard the tax dollars of Minnesotans.**

This campaign is about **accountability**. It is about **renewing trust**. It is about ensuring that every Minnesotan—**regardless of party, background, or zip code**—knows their money is treated with respect.

Forward Independence has placed its trust in me. Now, together, we, as a team, **will earn the trust of Minnesotans across this state.**

We have work to do—important work. Work that **ensures transparency**. Work that **strengthens accountability**. Work that builds a **healthier, more honest, more responsive government.**

And I promise you this: I will show up **every single day** with the same dedication I brought to my military service, with the same determination I brought to my recovery, and with the same heart I bring to my family.

Minnesota deserves nothing less.

Thank you for this honor. Thank you for your belief in this mission. And thank you for standing with me as we move Forward—**together.**

People before political party!