

# RACHEL ZIMMERMANN SMITH JOHNSON COUNTY ATTORNEY

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## **Rachel Zimmermann Smith to Run for Johnson County Attorney**

Iowa City, IA –March 15, 2022 – First Assistant Johnson County Attorney Rachel Zimmermann Smith announced her candidacy for Johnson County Attorney after Janet Lyness announced she will not seek re-election. As Johnson County Attorney, Zimmermann Smith said she is dedicated, not only to enforcing laws and seeking justice for victims, but to proactive efforts to create a safe and just environment in the community where she was born and raised.

Lyness supports Zimmerman Smith’s campaign, “I’ve known and worked with Rachel for over 20 years. She is a talented attorney and leader. She has been instrumental in implementing diversion programs and working to decrease the jail population while addressing the needs of victims. She will be an outstanding county attorney for our community.”

An experienced trial attorney, Zimmermann Smith has prosecuted cases of sexual abuse, domestic violence, homicide, and other violent crime. She has also worked to improve the justice system, expanding diversion programs, and leading efforts to develop restorative justice practices.

As County Attorney, Zimmermann Smith says she will prioritize Johnson County’s mental health needs by working to expand crisis prevention and diversion programs. “The pandemic hit people hard,” Zimmerman Smith explained, “Our community suffered physically, mentally, and financially. The extra strain on people’s lives is obvious. We see the effects of unmitigated mental illness every day.”

Zimmermann Smith wants to foster positive relationships with the community outside the courthouse. “If people have a better understanding of the different roles we play, more collaboration and programing is possible,” Zimmermann Smith said. “We hope more people will feel invested in our initiatives, like community efforts to reduce gun violence.”

On the criminal side, Zimmermann Smith said she will improve victims’ and their families’ confidence in the legal system and provide extra support to victims. To that end, she created “Open Office Hours” for domestic violence victims, to help connect them with community resources. Zimmermann Smith also helped implement a research-based risk-assessment program for law enforcement to use in domestic violence interventions.

A graduate of the University of Iowa College of Law, she and her husband Dan live in Iowa City with their two children.



Photo credit: Elisha Hamm