

Biography for Secretary of State

John R. "Jay" Ashcroft

John R. "Jay" Ashcroft is Missouri's 40th Secretary of State, elected in November 2016, and again in 2020. Each year Secretary Ashcroft makes it a priority to visit all 114 counties in the state to thank Missourians for their hard work and dedication. "From county officials to students, business owners to farmers, Missouri is a great place to live, work, and raise a family. It's a privilege to represent the hard-working people of our state."

Secretary Ashcroft leads an office with more than 200 employees taking an active role in its administration. Divisions in his office include: administrative rules, business services, elections, publications, the state archives, the state library and securities.

As the state's chief election officer, the secretary oversees federal and state elections, provides guidance to local election authorities and maintains and secures the Missouri Centralized Voter Registration system. As election integrity has always been a top priority, Ashcroft spearheaded the first National Election Security Summit held in St. Louis in 2018.

The Business Services Division of the secretary of state's office answers over 2,000 phone calls every week and maintains more than 1.2 million business registrations. Ashcroft has helped streamline this registration process, making it easier and more convenient for entrepreneurs. The division also handles notaries and commissions, UCC and the Safe at Home address confidentiality program.

Through his Securities Division, Ashcroft created the Vulnerable Citizens Services Unit to help protect seniors and other at-risk populations from investment fraud.

During his tenure, Secretary Ashcroft has worked closely with members of the state legislature to secure resources vital to better serve Missouri, including library funding. Over the last five years, Ashcroft was able to administer over \$9 million in grant funding to help expand library access and improve resources. He believes funding public libraries is one of the most efficient means to increase learning opportunities for all Missourians. In 2021, Ashcroft announced a new program - the first in the nation - to give adults the opportunity to earn a high school diploma through their local library.

As well, Ashcroft is a Hunt-Kean fellow and initiated the first Hunt Education Summit to be held in Missouri. This bipartisan meeting, now held each year, emphasizes the need for education reform. Over one-quarter of Missouri's legislators participated in the 2021 summit.

"By working through the divisions within my office; visiting schools, farms, businesses; promoting our products and our people - I am excited about the future of this great state and truly humbled to serve the people of Missouri. Thank you." – Secretary Ashcroft

Personal

Prior to being elected, Secretary Ashcroft worked as an engineer, professor and attorney. Secretary Ashcroft was born, raised and educated in Missouri. He and his wife, Katie, have three sons and one daughter.

Ashcroft attended Missouri University of Science and Technology (Rolla) where he earned degrees in engineering management. After graduating he moved to West Plains, Missouri, to work for a defense-based engineering company where he managed an outstanding team of individuals who worked to develop instruments used in vehicles for the Air Force.

In 2000, Ashcroft moved to St. Louis and began teaching engineering and technology courses for Saint Louis Community College. Many of his former students carried their enhanced engineering capacities into their jobs in St. Louis' auto manufacturing industry.

After a decade devoted to engineering, Ashcroft sought to bring his technical experience into the practice of law. He graduated from St. Louis University Law School in 2008 and went to work for a legal firm in their Intellectual Property division. Later, he went on to work with his father in the Ashcroft Law Firm, specializing in helping businesses comply with the impact of government regulations. He practiced law for eight years in St. Louis County, counseling clients on legal issues ranging from regulatory compliance to patent prosecution and election law.