

Secretary Jay Ashcroft Biography (Full)

John R. (Jay) Ashcroft is Missouri's 40th Secretary of State, elected in November 2016. In each year of elected statewide office, he has visited every one of Missouri's 114 counties and met with local election officials, library executives and business owners to promote the Office's services and learn how he can help improve elections and support Missouri libraries and businesses.

Secretary Ashcroft leads an office with more than 200 employees, taking an active role in its administration. He has fought to make changes to his budget to provide transparency.

Secretary Ashcroft's background in education, engineering, data protection and the law has provided him a unique perspective on election security and has helped shape the forward-thinking efforts of his office.

He is an active member of the National Association of Secretaries of State, and is on the executive committee of NASS. Secretary Ashcroft spearheaded the first National Election Security Summit, held in St. Louis. For the summit, he coordinated a program that included national election security experts, local experts from all over the country and a keynote address from Kirstjen Nielsen, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security. Election officials from 25 states and a bipartisan group of ten secretaries of state attended the event.

Ashcroft's Securities Division has aggressively investigated securities fraud, working to obtain restitution for victims of unregistered or dishonest individuals and firms. He created the Vulnerable Citizens Services Unit within the division, focused on protecting seniors and other vulnerable populations from investment fraud.

Ashcroft has continued to promote the Safe at Home address confidentiality program, which assists nearly 2,000 survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, rape and other heinous crimes. His office has developed outreach programs and training to more widely disseminate information about the program to agencies that help victims of abuse. In Washington, D.C., he worked with federal lawmakers to help them introduce national Safe at Home protections.

While in office, Ashcroft has become an advocate in the Capitol to increase funding for public libraries, which receive grants through the Secretary of State's State Library. He has visited libraries all over Missouri, meeting with library directors and staff to better meet their needs.

Ashcroft has worked to modernize the Office of the Secretary of State's operating systems, statutes and administrative rules.

Personal

Secretary Ashcroft was born in Jefferson City, where he spent his youth and graduated from Jefferson City High School. His wife, Katie, raised in West Plains, is an accomplished attorney. They have four children – David, Samuel, Elise and Benjamin – and reside in Jefferson City.

Ashcroft earned a bachelor's degree in engineering management from Missouri University of Science and Technology (Rolla) and after graduating, moved to West Plains to work for a defense-based engineering company. In this capacity, he oversaw the design, creation and quality assurance of vehicles for the Air Force, working hand-in-hand with an outstanding team

of men and women to develop instruments that would be used to keep the nation safe. While working, he commuted to Fort Leonard Wood to earn a master's degree in engineering management.

In 2000, he moved to St. Louis and began teaching engineering and technology courses at the Forest Park, Florissant Valley and Meramec campuses of 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 a practice of law. He continued teaching courses while he attended St. Louis University School of Law and earned a law degree. He is a member of the Missouri Bar, and he has earned multiple certifications in the challenging arena of citizen privacy and data protection. 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.