

OPINION EXCHANGE

## Attorney general candidate Jim Schultz: As AG, I'll fight crime, support cops

Action is needed to make Minnesotans feel safe once again.

By Jim Schultz | OCTOBER 17, 2022 — 5:45PM

In December of last year, I launched my campaign for attorney general arguing that Minnesota must prioritize public safety at every level of government to address the skyrocketing crime plaguing our communities. That common-sense conclusion was obvious to most then and remains so now, though it continues to elude incumbent Attorney General Keith Ellison.

In response to the historic violent crime that has taken or damaged so many lives and left so many families shattered, Ellison's answer is to sue Fleet Farm and to bring only 50 criminal cases over four years.

In an office of well over 100 attorneys, bringing only 50 cases over four years is an extraordinary admission of failure, yet Keith Ellison actually brags about it. It is like me bragging about running five miles over four years.

I propose something different. In this unprecedented crime crisis, election year half-measures are not enough. We need an attorney general's office with dramatically more criminal prosecutors (it is an outrage the office currently only has three such prosecutors right now) to end the revolving door in which violent criminals are not held accountable for their actions. Unlike Ellison, I will make sure the AG's criminal division is adequately staffed with experienced attorneys.

Moreover, my prosecutors will use legal tools that Ellison has inexplicably refused to use, including [Minnesota Statute 609.902](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/609.902) (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/609.902>), which provides the AG's office direct authority to bring charges.

We also need statutory changes (including increased penalties for carjacking), more resources for our police officers to combat carjackings, and more resources to hire and retain police officers in light of the historic shortage.

As Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Fletcher noted, Ellison has been missing in action on public safety matters at the Legislature. I will use the full influence of my office to ensure that we have the public safety reforms and resources necessary to deliver a safer state.



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"Perhaps more than anything, we need an attorney general who will set the right tone around law enforcement in our state," Jim

## ADVERTISEMENT

Perhaps more than anything, we need an attorney general who will set the right tone around law enforcement in our state. Ellison has vilified and slandered law enforcement and even advocated to defund and dismantle the state's largest police force. His actions have eroded law enforcement morale, driven officers from the job, discouraged others from considering a career in policing and emboldened criminals.

It goes without saying that bad cops who commit crime will be prosecuted in partnership with county attorneys. But the bad cops out there are a small, small number alongside the extraordinary multitude of dedicated men and women in law enforcement who show up for work every day with the goal of keeping Minnesotans safe and serving their communities. I will be an attorney general who has their back. Police officers already know it; it's one of the reasons that the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association, plus dozens of sheriffs throughout Minnesota, have endorsed me.

And it is just a matter of time before the criminals who have been emboldened by Ellison's policies will know it as well.

We all know that there are long-term economic implications to the rise in crime. Businesses see the crime and ask whether they should stay in Minnesota or come to Minnesota in the first place. But the economic consequences of serious crime, while important, are not central.

The deepest problem with the anti-safety policies of Ellison is moral. It is deeply wrong that Minnesotans must live with the current levels of crime. Families should not have to worry whether they will be carjacked on their way to school or if stray bullets will take the lives of their children at football practice. And it is deeply wrong that those who feel this violence most acutely are the most vulnerable among us — the low-income communities, the elderly. There is a reason that north Minneapolis voted over 60% against the Minneapolis charter amendment that would have dismantled the city's police force.

We need an attorney general with the right priorities and with sound judgment, an attorney general Minnesotans can trust. With his failure to do anything meaningful on public safety and his reckless support of defunding the police, Keith Ellison has demonstrated that he does not have such qualities.

January 2023 can be a turning point for Minnesota, and it starts with voting for a new attorney general this November. I ask that you join me in returning Minnesota to normalcy. I humbly ask for your vote.

*Jim Schultz is the Republican candidate for Minnesota attorney general.*