

KATHERINE WATT FOR STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

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PRESS RELEASE – MARCH 6, 2019

State College independent journalist Katherine Watt is running a write-in campaign for State College Borough Council. Voters registered Republican or Democratic may write her name on the Republican or Democratic primary ballots on May 21, 2019. Any voter, including unaffiliated voters, may write her name on the general election ballot on November 5, 2019.

Watt is a writer, editor, community organizer, paralegal, wife and mother of two. She earned a philosophy degree from Penn State in 1996 and has worked as a reporter and columnist for newspapers in Massachusetts, Arizona, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and as a paralegal doing legal research, document analysis, document management and legal writing for attorneys. She has lived in State College since 2008.

In 2011, Watt helped launch Spring Creek Homesteading Fund to organize community potlucks and workshops in homesteading skills. In 2011 she also supported the citizen-led Groundswell campaign for the State College Community Bill of Rights, adopted by Borough voters on Nov. 8, 2011.

In 2013, she worked on the community campaign to Stop the PSU Pipeline, a citizen-led campaign that forced Penn State's Board of Trustees to re-route a 12" diameter, 400-psi natural gas transmission pipeline for the West Campus Steam Plant across the university campus instead of through a residential neighborhood. She served as Board Treasurer for Friends & Farmers Cooperative from December 2013 through January 2015, and helped organize and launch the Friends & Farmers Online Market between July 2014 and January 2015.

From March 2015 to December 2018, she worked on the Save State College Water campaign – a citizen effort to stop luxury student housing development from destroying productive farmland in the groundwater recharge area for the two primary State College Borough Water Authority public water wells, located in the Slab Cabin Run sub-basin of the Spring Creek Watershed. She also worked on the 2018 Stop Nestle campaign – a citizen effort to stop Nestle from extracting groundwater from the Logan Branch sub-basin of the Spring Creek Watershed in Spring Township.

In January 2016, Watt founded KW Investigations LLC, and in September 2016, she launched *Bailiwick News*, an independent newspaper offering investigative reporting and critical analysis of Centre County public affairs, focused on government accountability, public corruption and ecological resilience.

“I would like to be elected by voters who usually don't vote because they believe government is the servant of corporations, doing corporate bidding on behalf of corporate donors and lobbyists, and screwing individuals, families, small businesses and communities in the process,” Watt said. “If elected, I intend to cast my one vote on Borough Council and at the Centre Region Council of

Governments General Forum to disrupt business-as-usual: redistribute political power by increasing the power of individual human citizens and communities and disempowering corporate ‘persons,’ including corporate Penn State and local government bureaucracies.”

Specific measures Watt supports:

- Using the authority granted to Borough Council, by voters, through the Community Bill of Rights, to override state preemption of local land use planning exercised through the Pa. Municipalities Planning Code;
- Withdrawing State College from the Centre Region Council of Governments, which she views as a highly-manipulated tool used by corporate Penn State, through managerial elites, to control and disempower the voters within each constituent municipality;
- Helping State College lead a comprehensive overhaul of the regional Act 537 Plan (governing sewage management) to cap the total population served by UAJA’s sewage treatment plant at current levels, based on per capita nitrogen load.
- Drafting and adoption of a local Right to Know Law, modeled on the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law of 2008, but fully applicable to Penn State and any other “state-related university” located within the State College municipal boundaries, requiring transparency and disclosure of all records that must be disclosed by municipal and state government entities under the state law, from which Penn State and the other state-related universities are almost entirely exempt;
- Renegotiating the 2004 PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreement between Penn State and the Borough of State College, which expires in 2024, using the authority of the Community Bill of Rights in the Home Rule Charter to assess property taxes on corporate Penn State for the full value of its property holdings within the Borough, generating \$3.8 million (or more, depending on property holdings and effective millage rates) in annual tax revenue per year to support public services such as community policing, a paid fire department, community-based alcohol addiction treatment programs, road maintenance and water and sewer pipeline maintenance;
- Merging the privately-operated Penn State police force (49 officers as of 2018) with the public State College police department (61 officers), to create a single public police department of 110 officers under the control of the State College Police Chief, that protects public safety and enforces criminal laws uniformly across the entire State College jurisdiction, on-campus and off-campus; and
- Increasing the power of Penn State faculty, staff and students to convert Penn State from a closely-held private corporation governed by unelected trustees, to a worker-owned corporation governed by a board of directors comprised of elected representatives of faculty, staff and students.

For more campaign information, please visit:

<https://bailiwicknews.com/2019-borough-council-campaign/>