

# Tennant

## Secretary of state

**W**EST Virginia's secretary of state is mostly a records-keeping official: supervising elections, filing charity disclosures, posting business charters, licensing private detectives, etc. The job is partly ceremonial, with duties such as "keeper of the state seal." The office probably should be appointive, not requiring a statewide election. But when Gov. Gaston Caperton sought that streamlining in his 1989 Better Government Amendment, voters overwhelmingly killed the notion.

So, the state constitution still requires an elected secretary — and we think the enthusiastic Natalie Tennant is best for the post. She's a buoyant public figure, full of eagerness and ideas.

Raised in Fairmont, she earned bachelor's and master's degrees from West Virginia University. She was WVU's first female "Mountaineer Mascot." She worked in television news at WCHS and WBOY. She's married to state Sen. Erik Wells, D-Kanawha, and they operate a small publicity firm from their home.

Tennant almost won the Democratic nomination for secretary of state four years ago. After losing, she worked on the state treasurer's staff.

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She has some interesting proposals, such as ways to solve shortages of election precinct workers. Maybe volunteers from civic clubs could be appointed, she says, and they could donate their poll-worker pay to their organizations. Or perhaps high school students over 18 could serve and get a civics lesson.

We endorse her for the Democratic nomination in voting that begins April 23 and ends May 13.

Incidentally, her chief rival is tainted. State Sen. Billy Wayne Bailey, D-Wyoming, used his legislative post to funnel many taxpayer dollars to the notorious Wyoming County senior agency that was wracked by prosecutions — while Bailey was on the agency's payroll.

Bailey wasn't charged with any wrongdoing, but he's hardly an admirable example of responsible government. We recommend voting for Tennant instead.