



## Meet Jennifer Brunner

Jennifer was born in Springfield, Ohio, the child of an insurance agent and a teacher with roots in the small, rural town of South Charleston. Her parents taught her to work hard, respect every person and stand up for what was right. She has continued to fight for those values as a wife and mother, small business owner, judge and Ohio's Secretary of State.

The oldest of four children, Jennifer moved to Columbus with her parents when she was just over a year old. She graduated from the Columbus public schools in 1975, and then studied hard to receive her B.A. cum laude from Miami University and later, going to school at night, a J.D. with honors from Capital University Law School.

After law school, Jennifer chose a career in public service, working in the Ohio Secretary of State's Office during the administration of Sherrod Brown. Starting out as an attorney in the business records section, she was quickly promoted to deputy director of the agency handling legislative matters. As legislative counsel, Jennifer worked with the Ohio General Assembly to improve fairness, openness and accountability in campaign finance and election law.

After more than four years in the Secretary of State's office, Jennifer moved to private practice. As the mother of three small children aged 7 and younger, she started her own law practice out of the corner of her bedroom, focusing on election law and campaign finance. Four years later, her husband left his firm to join the growing business. For 12 years, Jennifer led her firm in representing clients on issues ranging from election law to corporate and administrative law. The Brunner Firm continues to serve the community and provide jobs for Ohioans today.



In 2000, Jennifer returned to public service when she defeated a governor's appointee in a largely conservative county for an unexpired term on the Franklin County Common Pleas Court. After her 2002 reelection, Judge Brunner created and managed a drug court to reduce crime and save taxpayer dollars.



In 2006, in the wake of Ohio's troubled 2004 election process, Jennifer was elected Secretary of State, pledging elections that were free, fair, open and honest.

As a small business owner, she recognized the need to improve Ohio's job creation climate by providing better service to businesses. She returned outsourced customer service jobs to the office, created a customer task force, made the website an easier and more effective place for business filings, and created a life quality index to attract new and better jobs to Ohio. As a former judge, Jennifer recognized the dangers of criminal identity theft. She removed private information from business filings online and ordered boards of elections

to protect private information on voter registration forms from public disclosure. Cracking down on corruption and cronyism, Jennifer exposed 2 billion in illegal school construction contracts.

One of Jennifer's most significant accomplishments as Secretary of State was to overhaul the operations of the troubled Cuyahoga County Board of Elections in Cleveland, ensuring a smooth 2008 presidential election. As part of an overall effort to restore trust to elections, Jennifer spearheaded a massive voting machine study to solve problems with the security and reliability of voting machines.

Tests of all five voting systems used in Ohio revealed major flaws in security, reliability, and local election procedures. Working with a bipartisan team of election officials, Jennifer helped strengthen security while improving the services and accessibility of the state's election system - all in time for the March 2008 primaries.

During the contentious 2008 presidential election in which Ohio was a key battleground state, Jennifer defended Ohioans' voting rights in numerous cases in both state and federal court, eventually winning in the United States Supreme Court to protect voters and their ballots from being targeted for election challenges by partisan operatives.

Her achievement in reforming Ohio's election system resulted in a markedly improved process, with a record number of Ohioans voting in 2008. Her efforts earned her a Profile in Courage Award from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.



Jennifer and Rick Brunner have been married for 30 years, have three adult children and still live in Columbus.

**[www.JenniferBrunner.com](http://www.JenniferBrunner.com)**

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