

SUSAN'S SUGGESTIONS FOR THE MAY 2018 PRIMARY ELECTIONS

BY SUSAN EFROYMSON

OVERVIEW

As a primary election, you will be asked to choose a ballot based on party or "Issues only." Only the tax and state issues are actually resolved now. Candidates who win this election will still have to compete against other parties and win in the open election in November to hold the office.

Below you will find my suggestions for the Democrat and Republican ballots, only for the contested races, unless there is strong reason to voice support for another candidate. As for which ballot to choose, there is more on that in the expanded comments.

As always, the most important thing is to show up and vote so that politicians don't take our community for granted. We will only be valued as a constituency if show up and vote. Voter turnout in our community, although higher than average by some, still needs to improve. Whether by absentee or at the polls, please take the time to vote. The more of our votes they count, the more we count.



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SUMMARY

However you choose to vote, know your vote counts and is being counted. Make our community count for more by voting on Tuesday, May 8, 2018.

ALL BALLOTS

- State Issue 1 – State Constitutional Amendment – Anti-Gerrymandering Law: **YES!!!**
- Cuyahoga County Issue 9 – Tax Renewal for Health and Human Services: Yes

DEMOCRAT BALLOT

Governor and Lieutenant	Richard Cordray and Betty Sutton
Member State Central	Jeff Johnson Sandra Williams
State Senator	Sandra Williams OR Bill Patmon
State Representative	Janine Boyd
Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas	Ashley Kilbane William McGinty Michael Rendon OR Emily Hagen William Vodrey
County Executive	Armond Budish
Member of County Council	Cheryl Stephens

REPUBLICAN BALLOT

Governor and Lieutenant	Mike DeWine and John Husted
Attorney General	Dave Yost
State Auditor	Keith Faber
Secretary of State	Frank LaRose
Treasurer of State	Robert Sprague
United States Senator	Jim Renacci
Representative to Congress, 11th District	Beverly Goldstein

IN DEPTH

WHY CHOOSE A BALLOT AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

This is the time that Ohioans register party affiliation. It is perfectly legal to change parties or even vote in the November election against the party you chose in May. So you are not married to your choice, but your affiliation is determined by the ballot you choose and cannot be changed until the next primary ballot. You also have the option of voting without choosing a party by opting for the Issues Only ballot.

Our values may be represented in greater part by the Republicans, but that is not the only consideration. No Republican has been elected county-wide in Cuyahoga County since the 80's. It is a strongly Democratic region for all local elections, and therefore since it is highly improbable that a Republican will win in November, the actual candidate to be elected is really being selected now in this run-off election within the Democratic party.

Thus, if one wants to make a difference with their vote, he may choose to vote as a Democrat. The opposite calculus is true at the State level where Republicans are favored to win in November more often than Democrats, but at this time, those races are undeclared.

My suggestions: I endeavor to offer you my best choice by recommending the best person for the job in each contested race. Occasionally, it has been necessary to post a protest recommendation against a certain candidate, but that is not the case on this ballot. Even then, I do not engage in the practice of suggesting a weaker candidate of one party so as to strengthen the chances of the opposing party in the fall, a strategy that doesn't really work but is often talked about. I take each race on its individual level and make the best possible choice based on their relationship to our community and our issues at that time. Ultimately, we want good relationships with whoever is in the office and someone to pick up the phone when we call.

FIRST THE ISSUES - THEY APPLY TO ALL VOTERS

ISSUE 1 – THIS LAW IS THE ANTIDOTE TO GERRYMANDERING.

What is Gerrymandering? Following each census, changes in population offer an opportunity to redraw the districts to adapt to the new trends. Gerrymandering is a practice that attempts to establish a political advantage for a particular party or group by manipulating district boundaries to create partisan-advantaged districts (Wikipedia). The word was first infamously used (originally written Gerry-mander) in the Boston Gazette on March 26, 1812. The word was created in reaction to a redrawing of Massachusetts state senate election districts under Governor Elbridge Gerry. Typically, the party in



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power at the time of redistricting will be in a position to Gerrymander. It is legal, but it is also distasteful in its obvious partisan stacking of the deck.

How is it done? Two principal tactics are used in gerrymandering: “cracking” (i.e. diluting the voting power of the opposing party’s supporters across many districts) and “packing” (concentrating the opposing party’s voting power in one district to reduce their voting power in other districts). A recent example is the state district in Ohio that stretches in a narrow band along the border of Lake Erie from mid-Cleveland to Toledo.

Didn’t we already pass a law to prevent this? Yes and no, actually. The law we passed before applied to state positions. This one is for the congressional (federal) offices effectively eliminating OH gerrymandering.. The effects of both laws will be seen only after the next census and redistricting that follows assuming this one passes too.

Who is backing it? It is an imperfect compromise where both parties worked together and neither side got all they wanted, but it certainly beats the alternative of status quo by a long shot. Both state houses passed this overwhelmingly in response to a citizen led initiative, and it shares strong bipartisan support.

Pro (heavily quoted from state website) Currently, it is too easy for one political party to gerrymander safe seats in Congress by dividing local communities and drawing a map without bipartisan support.

Voting YES on Issue 1 will limit gerrymandering by requiring that congressional districts be drawn with bipartisan approval in order to be drawn for 10 years, or utilizing strict anti-gerrymandering criteria and fair criteria. It will also keep communities together by limiting splits of counties, townships and cities and promote geographically compact districts.

Issue 1 will require multiple public meetings before adopting a proposed plan for congressional districts, making it more transparent than the previous back room deals and will also guarantee public participation by allowing members of the public to submit a plan for congressional districts. Also, it will preserve citizens’ right to referendum and the veto power of the Governor when the General Assembly passes a plan for congressional districts.

Con – The current process for drawing new congressional districts is adequate and has served Ohio well for many years. Although the current system allows for one-party control, the voters can hold their state legislators responsible and vote against them if they believe those legislators are too partisan. Even when this process is controlled by a single party, it is still representative of the people’s will since any map is passed by statewide officials, who were themselves elected by popular vote. Historically, one party’s control doesn’t last forever. The current process can be trusted to maintain fair district lines; a “no” vote maintains the status quo. (written by the office of the Secretary of State after the General Assembly declined to do so due to widespread support).

A perfect solution? No. But far better than the alternative. **Vote Yes**

ISSUE 9

The Department of Health and Human Services is requesting that we keep on doing what we’ve been doing. This is not a new tax. It is a renewal. This department funds a variety of county-wide chessed-type projects some of which we hope never to need and others people in the community rely on heavily, including Metro Health Hospital System and Early Childhood Intervention programs and more. They serve some of the neediest in our county. It’s something we should support, and not only because the void would be so much worse, according to County Executive Armond Budish. **Vote Yes.**

DEMOCRAT BALLOT

GOVERNOR

Richard Cordray: Has a strong resume and was a proponent of increasing Ohio’s purchasing of Israel bonds.

OH STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: (CHOOSE ONE OF TWO)

Sandra Williams: Has supported our community’s requests and issues especially in the area of school choice and so deserves our support. As the incumbent she is favored to win,

OR

Bill Patmon: A more conservative Democrat candidate positioned even more centrist presenting interesting possibilities. He is even more aligned with our issues.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Cheryl Stephens: Former mayor of Cleveland Heights and currently serving on its City Council has been a strong friend of our community showing support for our issues and needs. It is a pleasure to back her. Supporting her in her bid for county council shows we reciprocate that support her and we can hope for her to continue to support us from whichever office she holds.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Janine Boyd: Former Cleveland Heights councilwoman and friend to our community. I have found her to be a thoughtful individual with the kind of mindfulness you want to see in government. Though uncontested, like Stephens, her support for us earns a check in her box.




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JUDGES

Based on Judge4yourself.com ratings which is a combination of various bar associations.

Of note, **Michael Rendon** received a stellar rating, but those who know **Emily Hagen** say she is bright and honest, a good resume, but doesn't have actual bench experience.

REPUBLICAN BALLOT

GOVERNOR

Mike Dewine & John Husted: Received the party endorsement making them favored to win as governor.

Our community does have good ties with the other candidate, **Mary Taylor**, as well and supporting her is also a good choice. Mary Taylor served as Governor Kasich's Lieutenant Governor but is not as well-known as DeWine and Husted, factors making Dewine/Husted stronger candidates in the fall as well.

They all have strong resumes in general and good records on areas we care about.

THE MAIN THING

As always, the important thing is that you vote. I hope these suggestions are helpful, but however you choose to vote, know that your vote not only counts, but helps our community count more in the eyes of those who count. Politicians pay attention. Please cast your vote in this primary.