

Susan's Suggestions for the Election – Primary- Tues. March 17, 2020

Due to the Coronavirus containment protocols, all polling places that are usually located in senior citizens housing will be moved. Those who normally vote on Warrensville Rd or Severance will be voting at City Hall.

This is a primary. That means that each party is electing the candidates that will square off in the November elections to determine then who will actually hold office. No matter who you support at this juncture or which party you vote for, you can still vote for whomever you choose come November and are not tied to your choices now.

In a primary you must choose to vote either as a Republican or as a Democrat (or Issues Only) and your choice defines your party until you change it by voting under a different party in another primary. Practically speaking, in our area only Democrats are elected for the lower state and county offices, therefore voting Democrat in the primaries is where the selection for those offices is made and that is why I recommend that many of us do so. Your choice now has no bearing on the general election in November.

Republican Ballot:

In this election there are almost no contested Republican races. The sole race of interest is:

11th District Congressional Representative: Vote **Laverne Gore**

Democratic Ballot:

President: **Joe Biden**

11th District Congressional Representative: **Marcia Fudge**

Court of Appeals 8th District: Rinni, Forbes

State Representative 9th District: **Janine Boyd**

Common Pleas: O'Donnel, Realli

County Council District 10 : **Cheryl Stevens**

All Ballots:

Issue 26: School District tax increase : if passed, will add \$277 in annual property tax per \$100K home value, for a new total of \$4077, aside from any other increases.

Issue 33: Health and Human Services Renewal and small tax increase: **Yes**

Expanded Version

Democratic Presidential Candidates:

When the ballots went to print, there were eleven candidates. Today, the race is only between Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders. So Moderate vs. Socialist: Choose Moderate – Joe Biden.

Biden is endorsed by the mainstream candidates like Kamala Harris, Buttigieg, and Klobuchar. Sanders is endorsed by Jesse Jackson. Sanders surrounds himself with known anti-Semites like Susan Rice and Linda Sarsour, and is endorsed by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. Biden has the more friendly relationship with our community. The ties go back longer and stretch through his career, and despite his position on the Iran deal, he has been supportive of Jewish causes and values at other times in way that cannot be said of Sanders. Vote **Joe Biden**.

Lower offices:

Congressional Representative 11th district. Marcia Fudge has stood with our community when it came to securing anti-terrorism funding and it is our hope she will continue to respond positively when called upon.

Laverne Gore running for the same office on the Republican side has some interesting support in this district and will be worth following if she wins the nomination.

State Representative: Janine Boyd began her career in our city and comes home to Cleveland Heights Blvd., a hop skip and jump from us. As such, she is well aware of our community and its needs and was supportive of the Elected Mayor initiative at the beginning of the discussion before citizens took over. We should continue to support her because of the strong support she's given our neighborhood when she was on City Council and continues to take our calls and support us in Columbus. Please vote for Janine Boyd.

County Council: Cheryl Stephens started her career in Cleveland Heights, retiring as Mayor before assuming County office. In her own words, “I am committed to supporting community and economic development protecting services for children, seniors, and veterans safety and sustainability and being responsible with taxpayer dollars.” She reaches out to learn of issues relevant to our community. Stephens played a role in bringing the Metro Emergency Room and hospital wing to our neighborhood and as a friend to our community deserves our support.

Judges: All selections have been solely based on Judge4yourself.com which is an amalgam of ratings of various bar associations. Because it has its biases, I try to get corroborating information from local attorneys. However this time I was unable to obtain such information and am passing along the website’s recommendations as-is.

Issues:

There are two tax levies to consider. Out of order, the easiest one first.

Issue 33 – Cuyahoga County Health and Human Services tax renewal and increase of .8 mills adding \$41 annually to your bill per \$100,000 in home valuation

This supports the neediest in the county and many within our community have children with special needs that benefit. It is the right thing to support and frankly we wouldn’t want to live in a county devoid of these important services.

Issue 26 –CHUH School levy raising taxes 7.9 mills. At nearly 8 mills, that would add \$277 annually to your tax bill bringing it up to \$4077 – per \$100,000 valuation. Double that if your home is valued at \$200,000 etc. Most of that goes to the schools.

Aside from the Human Services Levy which is likely to pass, there are other costs coming up. In September the CH contract for recycling services expires. Unlike the previous contract which made a profit for the city, the recycling will instead begin costing \$40-\$80 per ton. Additionally, they will no longer take the blue plastic bags. The city is looking at providing bins for both garbage and recycling and automating our pick-ups. The costs associated with that will likely be a \$2-\$4 monthly increase assessed on you water bill as a landfill fee, currently at \$11.50

per month. The current recommendation is that the city will provide one container each and the homeowner may purchase additional containers at the bulk pricing. Keep these other increases in mind when assessing whether to support the School Levy.

PRO

Vouchers have created a deficit in their budget making it difficult to negotiate contracts. That shortfall has caused contracts to have fallen to one year instead of three, the much stronger position to be in.

There is discussion in Columbus about rejiggering the method of school funding, which could result in more funding for the district. The Board of Education has therefore offered not to collect the tax in the event that happens however, that remains an unlikely outcome.

CON

There is a growing movement among the citizenry to contain costs at the district level and bring them in line with similar districts. They claim that a no vote will send that message to the board of education. Some of their arguments include:

The district, in recent years went far over budget when building the high school and has failed to bring per pupil costs into line with comparable districts. Salaries, benefits and other capital costs have left our per pupil cost about 1/3 higher, despite a declining student population. They also are maintaining underutilized buildings that don't generate revenue for long periods of time. The fact is that many homeowners are struggling to pay their tax bills and take care of their own families, while the school district employees' salaries are continually raised. Businesses, whose revenues would raise funds for the city, choose instead to locate in other nearby cities where rates are lower.

How many seniors who planned to live out their days in their homes will be forced out? Cleveland Heights has a very low rate of seniors living within its borders because this has become the frequent worry of empty nesters.

For more information, please see the Cleveland Heights University Heights School Board website. A counterpoint view can be found at Tignation4lowertaxes.com