



County Executive Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate:

The Cleveland Heights Democrats will hold its endorsement meeting at 7 PM on April 7, 2022 via Zoom. We invite you to participate in our endorsement process.

Prerequisites for participation:

- (1) The candidate must be a registered Democrat.
- (2) Per our Bylaws, the candidate must confirm agreement with the “purpose statement/conditions to endorsement” set out below.
- (3) **Deadline: The candidate must submit a completed copy of this questionnaire not later than 5 PM on Saturday, March 26 by email to president@clevelandheightsdems@gmail.com.** Receipt of your questionnaire will be acknowledged; if you do not receive an acknowledgment promptly, please text Linda Striefsky at 216-533-6941.

This is a Word Document, and we request that you insert responses in the appropriate spaces in the questionnaire. (The document will allow you to expand the space if needed.) In addition to your contact information, you also may provide a telephone number or email for a staff member, but we will need your email address for purposes of sending you a link to participate in the endorsement meeting. Candidates’ answers to the questionnaire will be shared with our members prior to the meeting.

You are encouraged to attend the virtual endorsement meeting on Thursday, April 7 at 7 PM via Zoom, but attendance is *not* mandatory for endorsement. If you choose to attend, you will be given an opportunity to speak to the Club for 2 minutes prior to the endorsement vote. Each candidate also will be given 5 minutes to respond to questions from the Zoom audience. Candidates will speak in the order in which questionnaires were returned to us.

With respect to the endorsement meeting, only Club members in good standing and on the official membership roster for thirty or more consecutive days prior to April 7 may vote on the endorsements. **An endorsement requires the vote of 60% of those members in good standing present and voting.**

Name: Chris Ronayne

Candidate Mobile Tel: (216) 225-8450

Candidate Email: chris@chrisronayne.com

Campaign Website: chrisronayne.com

Optional - Mobile Tel and Email for staff:

David Razum, campaign manager: david@chrisronayne.com (216) 346-6734

Purpose statement/conditions to endorsement: By completing and returning this Candidate Questionnaire, I affirm the following:

- A. I am a registered Democrat.
✓ Yes ___ No
- B. I agree to comply with the purpose of the Club as stated in Article 1, Section 2 of the Constitution, that is:
- The purpose of this organization shall be to provide a means by which residents of Cleveland Heights can organize to promote and develop the highest principles of the Democratic Party, to improve the administration of government, and to work for the good of all citizens. This organization shall endorse and support for public office all candidates whose election will, in the judgment of the membership, best advance the Purpose. In pursuing its Purpose, this organization may also cooperate with the National, State, and County Democratic Committees, and pursue other programs of benefit to the community.
- ✓ Yes ___ No
- C. I agree not to openly oppose any Democratic nominee in a general partisan election.
✓ Yes ___ No
- D. I agree not to openly support any opponent of a Democratic nominee in a general partisan election.
✓ Yes ___ No
- E. I have not violated the above A through and including D during the past five (5) years.
✓ Yes ___ No

If you cannot affirm as to items B, C and D above, please explain your reasoning here: N/A

Per the Club Bylaws, the Screening Committee may require candidates to sign an agreement to comply with those conditions during the candidate's term in the office for which the endorsement is given.

Please answer each of the following questions. Some require only a 'Yes' or 'No' answer. For others, you may take a few sentences to express your response. Out of respect for your time, we are not asking for lengthy answers.

1. Do you support the right of women to make their own healthcare decisions?
 Yes No
 - A. Do you oppose all legislation that reduces or restricts access to abortion care?
 Yes No
 - B. Do you oppose granting employers a religious conscience exemption to cover abortion care and birth control through company health insurance plans?
 Yes No
2. Do you support expanding early voting? Yes No
 - A. Do you support automatic voter registration? Yes No
 - B. In order to encourage voting, would you implement an ongoing program to provide voter registration forms and related information at all county offices open to the public? Yes No
3. There have been many concerns raised about the management and staffing of the county jail, particularly with respect to deaths of people in custody. What is your plan to reform management and operation of the county jail?

As County Executive, addressing the current deficiencies in Cuyahoga County's criminal justice system will be one of my top priorities. First, I will conduct a thorough investigation of the county jail and its current operations. Immediate changes are needed to increase Justice Center staffing, expand training for Corrections Officers, reduce the inmate population, and improve the quality of food served. Providing justice is more than just building a new jail and these changes and improvements must be made immediately.

In addition to changes in the jail, I believe our justice system needs to emphasize diversion, reentry and rehabilitation before incarceration for nonviolent offenses. I also believe that oversight of our jail needs to be consistent and transparent to maintain safety for its occupants. There have been too many incidents of deaths and inhumane treatment in our county jail and in the juvenile justice detention center and as County Executive I will lead an open and accountable process to reform jail management.

I will also work to fully utilize the Cuyahoga County Diversion Center, expand access to expungement and other community support programs and work with judges to examine bail reform. I will introduce a Justice Expediter position at the jail that will work closely with the jail's counseling and medical staff, the County Prosecutor and Chief Public Defender, the judiciary, and others to connect those in custody with resources and determine if there are better programs or placements for certain inmates.

- A. What is your recommendation for the location of a new jail?

I believe any decision on a new jail must be based on clear criteria. Whatever the solution, it must make our community safer and:

- a. Be the right size and with the right spaces for effective corrections work
- b. Provide safe, constructive, humane, and accountable conditions and corrections programs for inmates
- c. Fit coherently in system that also includes appropriate community based corrections, diversion, behavioral health care, and state corrections programs.
- d. Be located where it is an asset or at least a neutral community influence, and not an impediment to (re)development plans
- e. Have an all-in cost to taxpayers and county government that won't raise taxes or force cuts in health, justice, or human services

4. There also have been many concerns raised regarding management and operation of the juvenile detention center. What is your plan to reform management and operation of the juvenile detention center?

The juvenile detention center is in crisis. I support recent measures to raise wages for Corrections Officers to help with the center's long standing staffing shortage. We also need to see greater accountability and transparency for treatment in the detention center. There have been too many instances of illegal non-disciplinary lockdowns, mental health issues going unaddressed and unchecked violence within the center.

As County Executive, I will work with judges, defense attorneys, prosecutors, and advocates to build a better system for our youth. The system must focus on rehabilitation, education, trauma reduction, and employment to support children that interact with the justice system. We must end the cycle of recidivism in our youth justice system.

5. Public transit service in Cuyahoga County is under par and underfunded. This adversely affects both social equity and environmental issues. Many residents with low incomes are dependent on public transit to get to jobs, markets and doctors. Reliable, extensive transit systems in metropolitan areas provide alternatives to use of private cars, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. What role do you believe elected County officials can play in promoting improvement in our RTA's services?

Over 60% of jobs in Cuyahoga County aren't transit accessible and 25% of households in Greater Cleveland don't have access to a car. Our public transportation system in Cuyahoga County does not sufficiently serving our residents. As we transition to a more green economy and a goal of complete communities, this needs to be addressed. First, I plan to introduce a Division of Mobility within county government to develop community partnerships in transportation. I will advocate for increased funding for

GCRTA from the State of Ohio and the Federal government. I will work with GCRTA and nonprofits like Senior Transportation Connection to ensure that we are making sure all Cuyahoga County residents have mobility options. Building on existing partnerships, I plan to work with regional employers on more transit-based support for workers and will advocate for Transit Oriented Development. I also support measures to lower the cost of public transportation for low income riders.

6. Do you support The Ohio Fairness Act, which was reintroduced as SB 119 in 2021 session of the Ohio Legislature? Yes ___ No
- A. Will you lobby federal elected legislators to add sexual orientation and gender identity to federal protections already in place as to housing, employment, and public accommodations? Yes ___ No
- B. Do you support marriage equality for same-sex couples? Yes ___ No
7. Do you oppose all discrimination on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity? Yes ___ No
8. Do you support increasing Ohio's \$9.30 per hour minimum wage? Yes ___ No
- If yes, to what value? \$15 an hour
- In a single increment, or incrementally over what period of time? In a single increment.
- A. The labor shortage in some service, retail, and transport job sectors is expected by economists to persist through 2022. In your view, what effect has the Ohio minimum wage of \$9.30 per hour contributed to the shortage of applicants for these jobs?
- A minimum wage of \$9.30 is simply not enough to meet basic needs. By raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, we can bring back the service and retail industry. A higher wage will give people an incentive to work in these industries and will pull thousands of families out of poverty. I will continue to advocate in the State house for home rule authority for Greater Cleveland communities to set a higher minimum wage than required by State law. A higher wage could spur our county's comeback by attracting new talent and industries to our region.
9. Do you support the right of workers to collectively bargain for benefits, wages and working conditions? Yes ___ No
- A. Some employers prohibit employees from discussing their salaries or wages with co-workers, which impedes the ability of women to determine if they are being paid equal pay for equal work. Do you agree that employees should be free to discuss their salaries or wages with co-workers? Yes ___ No

- B. Employers often require job applicants to disclose their salary history, which often has a discriminatory impact on women. Do you agree that employers (including counties) should be prohibited from requiring that job applicants disclose their salary history? Yes ___ No
- C. Will you work to improve the FBE and MBE requirements used for county contracts? Yes ___ No
- 10. A. The plastic bag ordinance is being implemented after a pause due to the pandemic. Do you support the plastic bag ordinance?

Yes, I do support the implementation of a ban on single-use plastic bags. Banning plastic bags is an important step towards addressing the negative effects of plastics in our environment, in our waterways and in the litter that we see around our county.

- B. What would you support as the three next steps that the county can take to be more environmentally conscious?

First, I will invest in solar and wind power to decrease our dependence on energy imports and lower energy bills for constituents. Second, I will strive to attract clean energy jobs to Cuyahoga County and provide a pipeline from schools to the clean energy industry for students. Third, I will elevate our county to be a freshwater capital of the world by expanding our water industries, protecting our freshwater from pollution and preparing our county climate resilience.

- 11. Has a claim of sexual harassment or assault ever been made against you?
___ Yes No

- A. Are you in favor of creating a separate office to address complaints of sexual harassment? Yes ___ No

- 12. If desired, you may provide additional comments here regarding any of your responses to this questionnaire (optional):

This race matters and with over 1.2 million Cuyahoga County citizens, experience, results and vision matter. I believe I am the candidate with a proven track record. I have spent my career building partnerships across Cuyahoga County and am ready to move our county forward. I am running for Cuyahoga County Executive because I believe our County needs a fresh start and a chance to get back on track. I will bring bold, dynamic change to our county and will leverage our unique opportunities and assets to benefit all county residents. I am not a politician but a leader who is ready to listen and lead with transparency.