



Ohio Governor and State Legislator 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.

We request that you insert responses in this Word Document. (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 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.

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:

Candidate for: ___ Governor Ohio House x ___ Ohio Senate

Candidate Mobile Tel: 216-832-3252

Candidate Email: campaignforstokes@gmail.com

Campaign Website: www.vincentestokesii.com

Optional - Mobile Tel and Email for staff:

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

- A. I am a registered Democrat. **X_ 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.

X_ Yes ___ No

- C. I agree not to openly oppose any Democratic nominee in a general partisan election. **X_ Yes** ___ No
- D. I agree not to openly support any opponent of a Democratic nominee in a general partisan election. **X_ Yes** ___ No
- E. I have not violated the above A through and including D during the past five (5) years. **X_ Yes** ___ No

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

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. Please note that certain questions below are posed only to candidates for Governor and others are posed only to candidates for the Ohio legislature. Most of the questions are posed to both categories of candidates. 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. **[For Candidates for Ohio Legislature]** Briefly describe the major reasons why you would be of value as a member of the Ohio Legislature representing the Senate or House District that includes Cleveland Heights.

I am a long-time resident of Cleveland Heights having grown up on Washington Blvd., attended CH-UH Schools, and upon returning home from college I sought this neighborhood out to rear my family. I understand the values and the culture of Cleveland Heights, and I understand the nuances of the politics that embodies the “melting pot” of our community.

As an educator I understand how school choice is a double-edged sword that supports the educational freedom of one aspect of our community at the expense of another demographic of our community. As a taxpayer, I know how much we continue to pay for taxes for education because education is not funded fairly, equitably, or justly in Ohio and the residence are left to carry the load with homes we purchased in our younger years hoping to live in into our older years, but the taxes continue to rise.

As a candidate I am running because on these platforms to support the community I love with fair and equitable educational finances that won't leave us as residence out in the cold that is why I would bring value as a member of the Ohio Legislature representing the House District that encompasses Cleveland Heights.

2. **[For Candidates for Ohio Legislature]** Please list what you regard as the three most urgent problems of the Senate or House District that includes Cleveland Heights. What legislative efforts will you make to address those problems?

1. **High city taxes because of education**

2. **High medical costs.**

3. **Social emotional supports for children in school and in the community.**

As a legislator it is my hope to work with my colleagues in the House to continue the work that began last legislative session regarding fair educational funding through House Bill 1 and work towards a solution that will support our scholars through needed state dollars and not passing the buck down to the various municipalities. With this funding we can expand social emotional learning within school and with community-based programming that will strengthen our young people by providing counseling, jobs, and wrap around services to them.

In regard to the high cost of medical I want to continue the work again that began last legislative session with House Bill 446 which is universal healthcare coverage to all Ohioans. With the rising cost of medical care it is imperative that we are able to give the best care to Ohioans without Ohioans going bankrupt to get care.

3. **[For Candidates for Governor] Jobs and the Ohio Economy** – Voters in Cleveland Heights are concerned about both the local and the state economy and availability of good jobs, jobs that can support a family.
- A. What are your top 3 policies designed to attract businesses and provide opportunities for good jobs in Ohio?
 - B. We know that while big splash business decisions like Intel locating a new facility in Ohio get a lot of press, our small businesses are a critical part of the Ohio economy. Small businesses not only provide jobs, but also tend to spend their money in the local economy. At the same time, we know that the pandemic has been very tough on small business, especially those in more disadvantaged areas. Please describe your top 3 policies to support Ohio's small businesses.
 - C. Urban city centers have also been hit hard by the pandemic. As many businesses switched to remote work, many restaurants and other service businesses have closed and suffered serious economic losses, with job losses. This all translates into less tax revenue for cities. What policies would you pursue to help the urban centers to recover?
 - D. Ohio tax law now allows people working remotely to avoid paying taxes to the city in which their employer is located. This threatens a significant loss of revenue to Ohio cities, not only large cities like Cleveland, but also cities in the suburbs. What is your position on this policy change?
4. Right to Make HealthCare Decisions - Do you believe everyone has the right to access abortion care legally in their community without stigma, shame, delay or medically unnecessary barriers, and without regard to ability to pay?

Yes ___ No

If you previously held a different position on this question, what caused you to change your mind?

5. Voting Rights –

A. If elected, will you strongly oppose Republican efforts to discourage voting, and work to remove existing obstacles to election participation?

Yes ___ No

B. What measures for facilitating voter participation in elections do you support – same day registration and voting, expansion of early voting polling locations and hours, providing voters with absentee ballot applications, voting by mail, or something else?

As an active member of Vessel Votes, a non-partisan organization that engages in the political process that resonates with faith communities I work diligently towards voting rights in my local church and community. I am in support of same day

registration and voting, expansion of early voting, enfranchisement of rights for those who are currently incarcerated, giving more autonomy to local board of elections to support voting within communities, and limiting policies that impede citizens ability to vote such as requiring voter id cards.

C. In order to encourage voting, would you implement an ongoing program to provide voter registration forms and related information at all state offices open to the public?

Yes No

D. In 2015 and 2018, a significant majority of Ohio voter approved amendments to Ohio's Constitution to reform redistricting practices. The goals included banning partisan gerrymandering and requiring public input and transparency. These requirements have been ignored by Republican members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Do you support further reforms to Ohio's legislative redistricting process?

Yes No

If yes, what specific reforms?

In such an impasse that we currently find ourselves in, I believe it would be prudent to put in place safeguards so as to limit the legislature's ability to hijack the democratic process that leads to and carries out voting. These safeguards could be when the redistricting committee cannot agree, a non-partisan group can draw the maps and upon the approval of the state's highest court can implement the maps and move forward with the work of democracy in Ohio.

E. **[For Candidates for Governor]** As Governor of Ohio, and a member of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, would you refuse to approve a legislative district or Congressional map that was arrived upon by any process that did not satisfy the requirements of the Ohio Constitution?

Yes No

6. Racial Justice –

A. People of color across this country are the targets of escalating levels of racially motivated threats and violence. What would you do to address this?

As a black man I live daily knowing that my skin color places a target on my back. One way I have worked to address this in my city was working on the University Heights Citizens Advisory Committee on Policing Policies. Working in committee on how police respond to citizens in general and citizens of color and how we strengthen our community through getting to know one another more. This is one step that can be used. Legislature in labeling racism as a public health crises and supporting legislature that support communities of color are other ways I would strive to address this grave pandemic of bigotry.

B. Will you fight to ensure that school curricula include the accurate and honest teaching of the history of Black Americans and other American people of color and that works by Black authors and other authors of color be made readily available to students?

Yes ___ No

C. If elected, will you advocate for reparations for descendants of Black people who were enslaved in the U.S.?

Yes ___ No

Please elaborate if you wish.

The Truth and Reconciliation Committee led by late Bishop Desmond Tutu recognized that for South Africa to move beyond the horrors of apartheid people had to admit what happened was wrong and retribution had to be paid for reconciliation to begin. I agree with this model.

7. Equality – Do you oppose all discrimination on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity?

Yes ___ No

8. Education - About one hundred Ohio public school systems have joined a legal complaint against the Ohio EdChoice voucher mechanism that diverts tax based public school financial support to fund private school tuition. Generally, nonminority students use these tuition vouchers. The suit alleges that this program, with recently increased voucher allowances, has contributed to an effective resegregation of some public school systems.

A. Do you support increased State funding for public schools, and elimination of State funding for all privately operated charter schools and all other private schools – religious or not - and any other measures that divert public money away from public schools and/or contribute to public school resegregation?

Yes ___ No

B. Do you oppose efforts to require presentation of religious concepts as alternative theories in the public-school science curriculum?

Yes ___ No

B. Republicans in Ohio's legislature have jumped on the misguided band wagon that mischaracterizes teaching in our K through 12 public schools regarding our country's history as to people of color and women. These measures seek to undermine policies that support diversity, inclusion and honest education of our students. The proposed bills, such as HB 327, further impose punitive and overreaching measures, including fines and other penalties, aimed at intimidating and harassing public school teachers and public school districts. What is your

policy to support our hard-working public school teachers and school districts from these overreaching measures?

I am a public school teacher who is certified to teach English and Social Studies. I have been teaching a series on the death of Emmet Till for the last five years to my middle school students. I refuse to water down or redact American History to appease the fragile egos of those who feel ashamed that them and their ancestors' actions were and are racists! I support teachers teaching without interference from the State House on how to teach it.

- C. What other legislative effort would you make to better enable Ohio's public schools to attract and retain qualified teachers?

I would support better wages for teachers, paid parental leave for teachers and spouses for the birth or adoption of children, loan forgiveness programs, and strengthened STRS benefits.

Yes No

9. Labor Rights -

- 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?

It is my position that the minimum wage is too low and exactly why no one is trying to work in the jobs or applying to those jobs whose minimum age is so low.

- B. Do you favor raising the Ohio minimum wage from \$9.30 per hour?

Yes No

If yes, to what value? In a single increment, or incrementally over what period of time?

- C. Do you support the right of workers to collective bargaining, and their right to form or join labor unions?

Yes No

10. Public Health -

- A. Do you oppose Ohio Senate bill S215, which proposes to eliminate Ohio's permit requirement for concealed carrying of firearms?

Yes No

- C. What reforms do you support to reduce the epidemic of gun violence in Ohio?__

I am open to suggestions.

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- D. **[For Candidates for Ohio Legislature]** As an elected legislator, would you oppose legislative efforts that countermand the advice of scientists and directives of knowledgeable public health officials during an ongoing epidemic of infectious disease?

NO! We have professionals who are highly qualified in these areas, and it is the job of the legislator to listen to those persons and make the best decisions for the citizens in which they represent.

- E. **[For Candidates for Governor]** As Governor of Ohio, would you veto legislation described under Question C immediately above?
- F. The pandemic has exposed the underfunding of Ohio's public health system. Do you support increased funding and other support for Ohio's public health system?
___ Yes ___No

11. Green Energy Transition –

- A. Do you support legislative and regulatory measures that facilitate development of utility scale solar and wind electrical power generation projects across Ohio, including (for State legislature candidates) in your district? **__x__ Yes** ___No

- B. In 2014, Ohio adopted wind turbine setback requirements that effectively eliminated development of utility scale wind generation projects. Do you support legislation to restore reasonable setback requirements and other measures to encourage wind electrical generation in Ohio? **__x__ Yes** ___No

- C. Do you support legislative measures to enable owners of homes and commercial buildings to install small - scale photovoltaic arrays, and to sell any excess electrical power from those projects? ___ Yes ___No **unknown**

- D. **[For Candidates for Governor]** Ohio law provides that the Ohio Public Utilities Commission board of directors may consist of no more than three members of one political party. The present board consists of four Republicans and one Democrat. Decisions of the PUCO during the last 10 years have consistently protected the interests of fossil fuel and nuclear power plant operators at the expense of utility customers. If elected Governor, would you replace PUCO board members as opportunities for that arise with individuals with genuine interest in consumer protection and vision for green energy transition in Ohio? ___ Yes ___No

12. Green Transportation Transition –

- A. Do you support meaningfully increased State expenditures for public transportation in urban and in rural areas? **Yes** ___No
- B. Do you favor any legislation or regulatory measures to encourage adoption of electric vehicles in Ohio? **Yes** ___No

If yes, what measures - tax incentives, construction of charging infrastructure, modifications to state building codes to require installation of EV charging station outlets, or something else?

Carpool lanes that favor electric or hybrid vehicles like in CA. Tax rebates for those buying these cars and rebates on charging stations and entities that will allow charging ports to be on their property.

- C. Do you support legislative effort and public expenditure to facilitate and improve safety of bicycle and pedestrian commuter movement in urban and suburban areas? **Yes**
13. Traffic cameras –
- A. Do you favor or oppose expanded use of traffic cameras by Ohio municipalities? ___ Yes ___No **oppose**
- B. What limits on their use would you require or accept?
14. Campaign Finance - Do you confirm that you have not, and will not, accept financial support from any corporate PAC or the NRA? **Yes** ___No
15. Democratic Solidarity - If you are not the winner of the Democratic primary election, do you commit to supporting the winner and to urging your supporters to support the winner? **Yes** ___No