2024 PRIMARY ELECTION Races to Watch

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Hannah News Races to Watch: Senate District 4

One newcomer and a familiar face are challenging incumbent Sen. George F. Lang (R-West Chester) in the Republican primary for Ohio's 4th Senate district in March.

During his time in the Senate, Lang has sponsored or co-sponsored several bills to limit regulations on businesses in Ohio. In January 2024, Lang joined Sen. Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City) in introducing SB216, which would phase out Ohio's personal income tax and the Commercial Activity Tax. Reps. Adam Mathews (R-Lebanon) and Brian Lampton (R-Beavercreek) have a companion bill, HB386, in the House.

Lang has listed on his Facebook page the endorsements of his campaign by Buckeye Firearms Association, Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC, the Butler County Republican Party, the Associated Builders and Contractors of Ohio and the 9th Congressional District campaign of Craig Reidel.

Mark Morgan is challenging for the seat after returning to his native Ohio in 2018. Morgan had been a commissioner in Washington, D.C., representing the LaDroit Park community. Prior to that, Morgan worked for the Maryland Republican Party and the Maryland Environmental Services state agency.

Morgan's campaign is focusing on responsibility and accountability with taxes, especially the issue of increasing property taxes and their effect on seniors. Morgan is also campaigning on broadening the tax base in Butler County, which comprises most of the 4th Senate District. Morgan's campaign website calls for a "more collaborative approach" to public safety that includes "not only the local law enforcement, but also our local judicial system, our community leaders, [and] our residents."

In the Facebook post announcing his campaign, Morgan said, "As a lifelong advocate for education, energy, fiscal conservative principles, and as a committed member of this community, I am eager to bring my skills and experience to the table to make a positive impact for Butler County." Morgan lists public safety, growth and development, fiscal responsibility and protection for seniors as priorities on his campaign's website.

Another Facebook post from the Morgan campaign on Jan. 5 called it "inconceivable" that the Ohio Legislature isn't focused on tax cuts for seniors, but instead tax increases.

Former Rep. Candice Keller is again seeking a return to office in the Statehouse after most recently running alongside former state Rep. Ron Hood in Hood's Republican primary bid for Ohio governor in 2022. Keller also previously challenged Lang for the 4th District Senate seat in the Republican primary in 2020. Keller served as state representative from the 53rd House District from 2017-2021.

Keller is the executive director of the Community Pregnancy Center in Middletown, and while in the House, sponsored or co-sponsored several bills to limit abortion in Ohio. Keller was also among a group of representatives who brought articles of impeachment against Gov. Mike DeWine in 2020 over his efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19.

As a representative, Keller sponsored 133-HB381 (Keller-Hood), known as the Ohio Stand Your Ground Act. Following the mass shooting event that took place in the Oregon entertainment district in Dayton in August 2019, Keller posted to Facebook a list of several possibilities that she said can be blamed for mass shootings, including "transgender, homosexual marriage, and drag queen advocates," "disrespect to law enforcement" and "the acceptance of recreational marijuana," among others.

In a Facebook post from Jan. 18, Keller wrote, "My Senate opponent George Lang WROTE the LGBQT [sic] Fairness Act, putting men in little girls' restrooms," referring to SB132 (Antonio), which Lang has cosponsored along with seven other senators. Keller continues by calling it "nothing more than pedophilia," and asking, "Is this the guy you want representing you, Butler County?"

According to the Ohio Secretary of State's office, Lang's campaign had $112,944 on hand as of January 2024. Keller's campaign filed to designate a new treasurer in January 2024 reporting $0 on hand. Morgan's pre-primary report filed in December 2023 showed $290 on hand.

The winner of the Republican primary will face retired Army Lt. Col. Thomas Cooke in the general election. Cooke is running unopposed in the Democratic primary for the seat in the safely Republican 4th District.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 8, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: Senate District 6

Three Democrats are vying for the party's nomination to run for the 6th District Senate seat being vacated by sitting Sen. Niraj Antani (R-Miamisburg), who is running for Ohio's 2nd Congressional seat. State Rep. Willis Blackshear (D-Dayton) of the 38th House District is running against Kettering councilwoman Jyl Hall and Dayton Public School Board member Jocelyn Rhynard in this newly redrawn district.

Hall views the position of state senator as an ideal position for regional coalition building. As a councilmember in Kettering, Hall introduced energy aggregation to lower utility costs for residents and pushed for improved child care access. Hall is the daughter of former state legislator and U.S. Rep. Tony Hall.

Hall says she plans to work with like-minded organizations, advocacy groups and community leaders to fight poverty, support labor and advocate for issues important to constituents. Hall lists health care as an important issue to her campaign. Her campaign website also lists the need to address health insurance market regulation to prevent price gouging, as well as to grow maternal health programs and improve mental health and drug rehabilitation programs. Hall also notes that Dayton was ranked among the five hungriest cities in the nation twice in the past decade, and says she is "committed to working tirelessly to help Dayton to once again be a USDA hunger-free community." Hall also says Ohio's ranking for children's services is "abysmal."

Hall said she backs a voter-led movement for a constitutional amendment to "break free from the grip of gerrymandering."

Hall has said the Ohio Legislature must ensure equal access to quality education by increasing funding for public schools. She said that in the Senate, she would address funding disparities and work on affordable education at state universities.

Rhynard currently serves on the Dayton Public Schools Board of Education and has testified at the Ohio Statehouse and in Washington, D.C., as an advocate for public education. She says the biggest barrier to fully funding Ohio's schools is the use of billions of public tax dollars for non-public schools that aren't subject to the same metrics and financial oversight as public schools.

Rhynard is also the parent of a trans child and says that HB68 (Click) was passed by "extremists in the Statehouse." On her campaign website, Rhynard says, "Our government should be protecting, not discriminating, and legislation that legalizes discrimination against LGBTQ+ people not only harms us all, but will continue to drive young people and families out of the state. We all want an Ohio where people want to raise their families, not one that is known nationally for taking away the right to bodily autonomy." As a board member of Planned Parenthood of Southwest Ohio, Rhynard organized support for the passage of Issue 1 in 2023 to enshrine abortion rights in the Ohio Constitution.

As state representative, Blackshear sponsored 134-HB566 with Rep. Andrea White (R-Kettering) to prevent outside investors from buying property in Ohio's largest counties in an attempt to make more affordable housing available in cities. The bill died in committee.

Blackshear also announced in February 2024 that HB2 (Cutrona-Upchurch) would distribute over $14 million to entities within Montgomery County. That bill is pending in the Ohio Senate.

Blackshear's campaign website says he "will fight for continued investments in our communities, increased public safety, and stand up to Republican extremism -- bringing commonsense back to the Statehouse."

Blackshear has received the endorsement of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio, the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund and the Painters & Allied Trades District Council No. 6 in the race.

Rhynard has been endorsed in the race by Trotwood Mayor Yvette Page, Columbus City School Board member Michael Cole, Ohio State Board of Education member Katie Hoffman and several members of the Cincinnati School Board.

Hall has been endorsed by the Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC and Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney Mat Heck, Jr.

In his 2023 annual campaign report, Blackshear reported $68,072 on hand following $71,869 in contributions. Hall's campaign reported $31,127 on hand following $34,378 in contributions in the campaign's 2023 annual report. Rhynard's campaign reported $40,319 in contributions in the campaign's 2023 annual report and $34,865 on hand.

The winner of the Democratic primary will face the winner of the Republican Charlotte McGuire, who was recently appointed legislative chair of the State Board of Education. (See *The Hannah Report*, 2/9/24.)

The 6th Senate district had been reliably Republican in years past. But redistricting in 2023 shifted the district boundaries to cover more of metro Dayton, and Dave's Redistricting now gives the district a 53.3 percent Democratic lean.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 15, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: Senate District 10

Two Republican candidates are challenging for the nomination for the 10th Senate District seat being vacated by term-limited Sen. Bob Hackett (R-London) at the end of his term. Former state Rep. Kyle Koehler is seeking a return to the Statehouse against Sugarcreek Twp. Trustee Carolyn Destefani.

Koehler served as a state representative from the 79th District from 2014-2022, during which time he chaired the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. During his four terms in the Ohio House, Koehler sponsored bills that were enacted that reformed both payday lending and Ohio's gun law concerning an individual's "duty to retreat," among others.

On his campaign website, Koehler lists issues including "lower taxes, smaller government;" lowering business taxes to remove obstacles to their growth in creating jobs; property taxes, which Koehler says "steal away our right to ownership;" and Second Amendment rights. Koehler also defends states' rights, which he defines as "all powers not expressly granted to the federal government" which "are reserved to the states." Koehler also describes a quality education as one in which parents are required to participate.

On social media, Koehler has touted his time in the Statehouse as his edge over his opponent.

While Destefani doesn't bring a background in state elected office, she has served as a township trustee since 2016 and is currently director of federal programs for defense industry and state-level IT consulting firm Flairsoft Federal.

Destefani lists economic development and education as top priorities for her campaign. She says economic development includes ensuring Ohio has a qualified workforce, affordable housing and sufficient child care. STEAM areas and career center instruction are listed as areas of focus in education. Destefani says groups like JobsOhio and the Dayton Development Coalition are doing a "fantastic" job with public/private partnerships to bring economic and job opportunities to Ohio.

Destefani also supports American energy independence, health care pricing transparency and checks and balances on all levels of government to provide limits to government power.

Destefani was inducted into both the Greene County Women's Hall of Fame and the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame in 2023 and is a past graduate of the Jo Ann Davidson Ohio Leadership Institute. She served in the U.S. Air Force for seven years, later taking a position with Greene County Job and Family Services, which she resigned after an investigation into the improper use of county property during her campaign for Sugarcreek Township Trustee.

Both candidates in the 10th District primary sport a long list of endorsements of their campaigns. Koehler has been endorsed by Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost; Lt. Gov. Jon Husted; U.S. Reps. Warren Davidson (R-Troy) and Jim Jordan (R-Urbana); state Reps. Bernard Willis (R-Springfield), Susan Manchester (R-Lakeview) and Scott Lipps (R-Franklin); state Sens. George Lang (R-West Chester), Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware) and Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster); several elected officials in Clark County and townships and cities within the 10th District; the Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC; and Ohio Right to Life PAC.

Destefani has been endorsed by former Ohio Gov. Bob Taft and former First Lady Hope Taft, Rep. Brian Lampton (R-Beavercreek), Rep. Bill Dean (R-Xenia), former Rep. Bob Doyle, and several elected leaders from Greene, Clinton, and Clark counties, the city of Beavercreek and Sugarcreek Township.

According to the Ohio Secretary of State's office, Destefani's campaign had $4,351 on hand as of a filing on Jan. 30, 2024. A Jan. 31, 2024, filing showed Koehler's campaign with $65,122 on hand.

The winner of the Republican primary will face Democrat Daniel McGregor in the general election in the 10th Senate District, which has a 63 percent Republican lean, according to Dave's Redistricting.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 16, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: Senate District 32

In the 32nd Senate District, incumbent Sen. Sandra O'Brien (R-Rome) is facing Rep. Mike Loychik (R-Cortland) in the Republican primary for the right to face Democrat Michael Shrodek in the general election. He is running unopposed in his party's primary.

During the 135th General Assembly, O'Brien has been the primary sponsor on bills including SB159, to authorize tax credits for pregnancy resource center donations; SB11, to expand eligibility for EdChoice scholarships; and SB35, to create a fund to reimburse law enforcement officers for costs related to continuing professional training.

O'Brien's current Senate committee assignments include agriculture and natural resources, transportation, local government (chair) and education (vice chair). She is also on the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform. O'Brien is a former Ashtabula County auditor who ran unsuccessfully for state treasurer in 2006. (See *The Hannah Report*, 4/20/20.)

She has been endorsed by Ohio Right to Life PAC, Ohio Values Voters, Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC, the Ohio Republican Party, Buckeye Firearms Association and the Ashtabula County Republican Party.

Loychik has gone after O'Brien on social media concerning the General Assembly vote to override Gov. Mike DeWine's veto of HB68 (Click). In a Jan. 25 Facebook post, Loychik criticized O'Brien for not being present for the vote to override the veto of the bill, despite O'Brien's previously saying on social media she would vote to do so. O'Brien had voted for the original passage of HB68 in the Senate.

Loychik is one of 22 Republicans who voted with Democrats at the beginning of 2023 to install Rep. Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) as Speaker of the House over Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Maumee). The Ohio Republican Party later censured Loychik and the 21 others for the vote.

Loychik lists on Facebook his accomplishments during the 135th General Assembly as protecting Second Amendment rights, delivering tax cuts for all Ohioans, expanding school choice and supporting economic and workforce opportunities. His campaign website also says Loychik authored the Second Amendment Safe Haven Act, HB51 (Loychik-Schmidt), and led the fight to make Ohio a constitutional carry state. He lists his 2024 goals as reelecting President Donald Trump, growing the GOP and making Ohio great again.

Loychik's campaign website also labels him as pro-gun, pro-ag, pro-labor and pro-military.

O'Brien's campaign reported to the Ohio Secretary of State's office having $50,274 on hand on Jan. 11, 2024, after $18,434 in expenditures. Loychik's campaign filing from Jan. 31, 2024, shows $58,882 on hand and $23,717 spent.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 20, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 5

After state Rep. Richard Brown (D-Canal Winchester) declined to run for re-election and run instead for Franklin County Common Pleas court judge, three Democratic candidates are vying to represent the safely blue Ohio House District 5, which attracted no Republican candidates.

The Central Ohio area district includes Lockbourne, Groveport, Obetz, Canal Winchester, and Reynoldsburg. It also covers Rickenbacker International Airport. The district has a Democratic index of 58.77 percent and a Republican index of 41.23 percent, according to data from the Ohio Redistricting Commission.

The three Democratic candidates include Leo Almeida, Ohio director of government relations at the American Cancer Society; Meredith Lawson-Rowe, president of the Reynoldsburg City Council; and Marco Miller, chair of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Board.

Almeida is a former Legislative Service Commission (LSC) fellow and former legislative aide to multiple state senators, including the now state Rep. Cecil Thomas (D-Cincinnati). He previously worked as a senior policy associate for the Nature Conservancy in Ohio.

Beyond his role at the American Cancer Society, Almeida serves as the president of the Board of Trustees for the Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS) and is on the Community Relations Commission (CRC) for the city of Columbus. He said he was 4 years old when he and his mother moved from Brazil to Ohio, and he became a U.S. citizen in 2009.

"Going through the immigration process inspired me to seek a career in government. Running for office has been my American dream since a young age and I am proud to be Brazilian by birth and American by choice," Almeida says on his campaign website.

Almeida's top issues include affordable health care, including abortion rights for women, economic development, education, with an emphasis on teacher retention and recruitment, and environmental protection. On his campaign website he wrote, "I pledge to put the needs and aspirations of the people of Ohio House District 5 at the forefront of my agenda. I will actively listen to your concerns, be an accessible and accountable representative, and work tirelessly on your behalf to improve the quality of life within our community."

Almeida is endorsed by the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee (OCC-PAC). In the annual campaign finance report filed in January, Almeida reported raising $12,768, spending $3,706 and having $9,061 on hand.

Lawson-Rowe is the president of the Reynoldsburg City Council and works as the executive administrator at Multiethnic Advocates for Cultural Competence, Inc. (MACC). She also has previous experience as a trend analyst at Wendy's International, according to her social media.

"For over 30 years, I have been immersed in public service, first as a community member, then as a councilwoman, and always as a wife, mother, and grandmother. My commitment to our community is driven by a deep-seated belief that we can and must do better for our families, our neighbors, and future generations," Lawson-Rowe says on her campaign website.

She continues, "I am running to bring this vision to life, a vision that includes securing essential funding for affordable housing, advocating for robust public transportation, protecting women's health care rights, and ensuring our seniors receive the comprehensive care they deserve."

Lawson-Rowe has been endorsed by Joe Begeny, the mayor of Reynoldsburg; Matriots Ohio; and the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund, according to her social media. She has also received the endorsement of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus.

Lawson-Roe set up her campaign fund in December but has not yet reported any contributions or spending.

Miller is a U.S. Air Force Veteran who served in Vietnam. After serving in the military, he joined the Columbus Fire Department where he served as union president. He also served as the president of the Groveport Madison School Board, according to his campaign website. In 2019, Miller was elected to the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Board and currently serves as chair.

Miller is a small business owner and a co-founder of the group Grassroots Strategies, a political consulting group that works with Democratic candidates. He is a lifetime member of the American Legion, Post 283.

His campaign website highlights his focus on affordable housing, veterans' issues, women's health care rights, and fair wages.

His campaign website describes him as a "proud progressive Democrat" and touts his work electing other Democratic candidates.

"His company has successfully helped Democrats up and down the ballot and has helped produce and mail the Franklin County Democratic Party's sample ballot for almost 10 years. Marco's work on campaigns has not only touched Democrats across the county but every elected Democrat in the 5th House District," the site states.

In the annual campaign finance report filed in January, Miller reported raising $7,703, spending $540 and having $7,212 on hand. His campaign committee also lists about $736 in outstanding debts.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 23, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 6

Seven Democrats and one Republican are vying for the Central Ohio seat currently held by term-limited state Rep. Adam Miller (D-Columbus), who is running for Congress.

Ohio House District 6 includes portions of west Columbus, including West Scioto, Lincoln Village, Westland, Westgate, and Hilltop. The district is safely blue with a Democratic index of 56.92 percent, according to data from the Ohio Redistricting Commission.

On the Democratic side, the candidates include Brandon Barcus, Patrick Barnacle, Eli Bohnert, Christine Cockley, Adhanet Kifle, Kawther Musa, and Elijah Williams. One of them will face off against the lone Republican candidate, Hussein Jabiri, in the general election.

On the Democratic side, the top fundraiser is Cockley who reported over $52,000 in contributions in her annual report. She has spent just $9,000 and has over $50,000 on hand. Her nearest fundraising rivals are Barcus who reported receiving over $17,500, spending $2,250, and having over $15,000 on hand, and Bohnert who reported raising nearly $11,000 as well as receiving nearly $12,000 in "in-kind" contributions, spending over $2,000 and having nearly over $9,000 on hand.

Other candidates have reported funding in the low thousands or none at all. Jabiri has not reported raising or spending any money or having any on hand.

The candidates detailed their backgrounds and priorities on social media and their campaign websites.

Barcus describes himself as an army veteran and community advocate. He is a board member of the Highland West Civic Association and served as a census field manager in 2020. His campaign website highlights his working-class background and focuses on issues like economic development and vocational training, easing taxes for homeowners, and tackling the opioid crisis.

"Raised by a single mother in a working-class family, I lived many of the struggles faced by Central Ohio families. A public school graduate and product of social programs, I have made it my mission to give back to the community that raised me, because residents deserve every opportunity for good, high-paying jobs to put food on the table," Barcus says on his campaign website.

Barnacle is the senior director of data and technology at Movement Labs, a political consulting firm. He previously served as the zoning chair of the Greater Hilltop Area Commission. He also worked as data director for the Ohio Democratic Party and in multiple roles for Everytown for Gun Safety, according to his social media.

His campaign website lists priorities including educational freedom, reproductive rights, "commonsense" gun laws, "free and fair democracy," and "stopping fascism." Barnacle is endorsed by the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee.

Bohnert serves as treasurer of the West Scioto Area Commission and on the Community Advisory Committee of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, according to his social media. He works in infrastructure support for JPMorgan Chase & Co. His campaign website lists priorities like strengthening unions, funding public education, accessible health care, affordable housing, and commitments to LGBTQ and reproductive rights. He is endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats of Central Ohio.

"My journey to running has been shaped by my countless grassroots advocacy experiences and policy-driven initiatives. I'm ready to bring my years of diverse experience along with a new perspective as the first openly gay man elected to the Ohio Statehouse to advocate for a brighter tomorrow for the Westside," Bohnert says on his campaign website.

Cockley is the executive assistant to the CEO of YWCA Columbus. She holds a bachelor's degree in public affairs and a Master of Public Administration, both from Ohio State University. She also previously interned in the office of U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH). Her campaign website lists as priorities investing in preventive health care, reducing addiction, supporting reproductive rights and affordable housing, reducing gun violence, raising the minimum wage, expanding access to child care, funding public education, and more. Cockley was endorsed by the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC), the Ohio State Legislative Board of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Painters & Allied Trades District Council 6, Matriots Ohio, and other groups.

"I knew from a young age that public service was my passion. From walking -- or being strolled -- in parades while my mom ran for Domestic Relations Court judge in Richland County to attending the local Democratic Party meetings to holding my parents' hands as they voted to volunteering with my synagogue Temple Emanuel Jacob, I've been service driven my entire life," Cockley said on her campaign website.

Kifle works in computer information systems at Battelle. She has served as a board member of the Center of Science Industry (COSI), a Greater Hilltop Area commissioner, a member of the Franklin County New American Advisory Council, and more. "In 1975, my family fled war-torn Eritrea and found refuge in a refugee camp. We endured displacement for seven years with just the clothes on our backs before settling in Ohio. My parents worked tirelessly as my mother became a housekeeper, and my father juggled roles as a maintenance worker and a cab driver. As the eldest of my six siblings, I took on a nurturing role, witnessing firsthand their sacrifices," her campaign website states.

Her campaign website lists priorities including raising the minimum wage, improving access to affordable housing, and investing in education and in mental health services.

Musa is a health coordinator, according to her social media. She holds a master's degree in health science, specializing in human nutrition. She is fluent in Somali, Arabic, and English. Her campaign website lists as priorities improving access to health care, job creation, affordable housing, funding public education, combatting substance use issues, and advocating for social justice.

"Kawther Hersi Musa is a dedicated professional with an academic background and extensive experience in health care, community engagement, and advocacy. Her commitment to public service has led her through a remarkable journey, shaping communities and championing causes close to her heart," her campaign website states.

Williams describes himself as an entrepreneur and licensed insurance agent. He graduated from Columbus State Community College with degrees in marketing and business administration. His campaign website states that he is an ordained elder with the Church of God in Christ and an ordained and licensed pastor under Kingdom Keepers International Fellowship of Churches.

His top priorities are education, quality of life issues, and "accountability" for the deaths of Black Ohioans by police officers. His campaign highlights his support for Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ issues.

Jabiri is a media and communications specialist for the government of Somalia and he previously worked as a communications specialist for Voice of America, according to his social media. His campaign website says his priorities are education and workforce development, affordable health care, public safety, affordable housing, and small business support. Jabiri was endorsed by the Franklin County GOP, his website says.

"[I] aspire to utilize my leadership skills and experience in crises management to create a lasting, positive impact on our community. My unwavering commitment to public service drives me to ensure our district

thrives, leaving no one behind. I envision a future where the district represents progress, inclusivity, and opportunities," he said on his website.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 6, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 10

Now that state Rep. Dave Dobos (R-Columbus) has bowed out of his re-election bid, two Democrats and two Republicans will face off in the March primary for one of the most competitive seats in the Ohio House.

Located in Central Ohio, House District 10 includes Grove City, German Village, west Columbus, and Urbancrest. Politically, the district is a toss-up. It has a Democratic index of 50.58 percent and a Republican Index of 49.42 percent, according to data from the Ohio Redistricting Commission.

Dobos, who is serving in his first term in the Ohio House, withdrew from the Republican primary at the end of January; however, kept his name on the ballot for the Franklin County Republican Party Central Committee race that he is also running in. (See *The Hannah Report*, 1/30/24.)

Remaining in the race are Republicans Brian Garvine and Shafi Shafat and Democrats Sarah Pomeroy and Mark Sigrist.

Garvine is an attorney with his own law firm, located in German Village, that specializes in civil litigation. He is a former member of the village of Ashville Council where he served as president pro tem. He currently serves as the personnel director for the village of Ashville and the magistrate for the village of Ashville Mayor's Court, according to his campaign website.

Garvine wrote on his campaign website that he is "committed to working tirelessly to decrease business regulations, enhance economic growth, improve education and education choice for all residents of our district. As a pragmatic business owner with a focus on inclusivity and collaboration, Brian aims to build a better future for our district."

Shafat is the president of the Somali American Chamber of Commerce as well as the founder of Dalmar TV, a local television station broadcasting in the Somali language, and Batel Express, a logistics service, according to his campaign website.

"Too many of our youth are falling into lives of crime and drugs. Families are struggling economically. Divides separate us. Shafi has lived these challenges – that's why he'll address them," Shafat's campaign website states.

Shafat set up his campaign fund in December and has not reported any contributions or spending. Garvine established his campaign fund in January and has not yet filed a campaign finance report.

On the Democratic side, Sarah Pomeroy is senior assistant city attorney in the nuisance abatement section of the city attorney's office. Previously, Pomeroy worked in Washington, D.C. at the law firm Jones Day, where she specialized in antitrust and corporate litigation.

Pomeroy highlights economic development, housing, and education issues on her campaign website.

"I support policies including tax incentives for companies building local and hiring local and supporting Ohio-based businesses and our local unionized labor force." Pomeroy said on her site.

"I support promoting equal access to quality education regardless of your zip code, disability status, or personal struggles – and in fact our education system has a responsibility to work alongside our other institutions to support the whole child and family, for example by integrating our parks or public health system directly with schools and their families," she continued.

The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Action Fund endorsed Pomeroy.

Sigrist retired in 2018 after working for 33 years at Honda North America in its Marysville, OH headquarters. Sigrist, who earned an accounting degree from Ohio University, served as a member of the Honda president's strategic planning team. He is currently an at-large member of Grove City Council.

Priorities that Sigrist highlights on his campaign website include women's reproductive freedom, expanding health care access, and supporting public education, affordable housing and aging Ohioans.

"Working with others, on issues bigger than what you can solve alone, not caring about who gets the credit, is how meaningful work gets done," Sigrist said on his campaign website. "I enjoy finding the experts, passionate, life-affirming people, willing to show up, not just talk, and work toward making this a better world."

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee (OCCPAC) endorsed Sigrist.

Dobos' late withdrawal appears to have given Democrats a fundraising edge in the race.

In the annual campaign finance report filed in January, Pomeroy reported raising $25,784, spending $623 and having $25,160 on hand. Sigrist reported raising $17,543, spending $1,438, and having $16,104 on hand.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 19, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 12

Two veterans are vying for the Republican nomination for the House seat in Ohio's 12th District, a largely rural district directly southwest of greater Columbus, as incumbent Rep. Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) is facing a challenge from Patricia (Patty) Hamilton.

Stewart was originally elected as representative in 2020 from what was then the 78th House District, after earning a law degree from Ohio State University following a tour of duty in Iraq.

In 2023, he was named a "Defender of Limited Government" by the Institute of Legislative Analysis, a nationwide limited government think tank that ranks lawmakers at the state level. Stewart's current House committee assignments include behavioral health, civil justice, constitutional resolutions and public health policy, on which he serves as vice chair.

Stewart has worked to increase the availability of broadband Internet in rural areas during his time in the House.

During the current General Assembly, Stewart has been the primary sponsor of bills including HB44 (Humphrey-Stewart), to require electronic recordings of all parole board hearings; HB69 (Stewart-Willis), to revise membership of county veterans service commissions; HB136 (Holmes-Stewart), to authorize the operation of remote dispensing pharmacies; HB305 (Stewart-Brown), regarding electronic filing of court documents; and HB 392 (Stewart-Plummer), to allow state-sponsored executions by nitrogen hypoxia, following that compound's use for an execution in Alabama. (See *The Hannah Report*, 1/30/24.)

Stewart was also the primary sponsor of HJR1, a proposed amendment to the Ohio Constitution to require a 60 percent popular vote to approve a constitutional amendment, which was not adopted by the House, though companion bills SJR2 (Gavarone-McColley) was, putting the issue before voters in the special election in August 2023. Issue 1, however, failed.

Stewart has been endorsed by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) Ohio PAC, Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC, Americans for Prosperity-Ohio, Ohio Right to Life, Ohio Value Voters, Franklin County Republican Party, Buckeye Firearms Association, Madison County Republican Party, Red Future Radio Network co-founder "GOP Josh" and numerous elected officials from Franklin, Pickaway and Madison counties.

On her campaign's website, Hamilton describes herself as "currently a landlord of 10 high quality rental homes" with her husband. She previously had 30 years of service in the Army Reserve, with combat tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Hamilton is also treasurer and corresponding secretary of the Soldier's Monumental Association, as well as a member of the Pickaway County Agricultural Society, National Rifle Association, Ohio Farm Bureau, and America First Now group.

Hamilton also lists on her campaign website "what I stand for and why I am running":

- Always maintain the highest level of integrity.

- Duty to uphold our constitutional freedoms.

- Ensure parent's rights to protect their children and defend biological girls in high school sports.

- Stand for rights of farmers and small businesses while keeping efficient, honest government.

- Lower taxes and ensure Ohio is energy independent.

She has also voiced opposition to industrial solar on usable farmland and decried recent increases in property taxes across the state.

Hamilton lists endorsements of her campaign from media personality Bruce Hooley, the We The People Convention, Veterans For America First, Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom, Youth Prosperity Ohio, Pickaway County Republican Central Committee, Pickaway Ohio Conservatives, and other individual elected officials from Pickaway and Madison counties.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 22, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 15

With redistricting putting incumbent Rep. Richard Dell'Aquila (D-Seven Hills) outside the new 15th House District boundaries, the open seat has drawn two contenders apiece in the party primaries for the contest, including one who's consulted on district maps.

Democratic primary voters will choose between Chris Glassburn, a city council member for North Olmsted and consultant to General Assembly Democrats in the redistricting process, and TJ Mulloy, a campaign worker, financial adviser and former union laborer.

On the Republican side, Brooklyn City Council member Aaron Borowski faces off against Ryan McClain, a candidate in past cycles.

The western Cuyahoga County district covers communities including Brook Park, Brooklyn, Linndale, Middleburg Heights, North Olmsted and parts of Cleveland and Olmsted Township. Ohio Redistricting Commission data give the district a Democratic index of 54.82.

Glassburn appears to be the party favorite, with endorsements from the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party, Reps. Bride Sweeney (D-Cleveland) and Sean Brennan (D-Parma), Ohio AFL-CIO and North Shore AFL-CIO and numerous local elected officials. Cleveland.com/*The Plain Dealer* also endorsed Glassburn.

On his campaign website, Glassburn touts bipartisan work on city council, including as chair of the finance committee. He said he will support the new school funding formula and gun safety proposals including red flag laws and those to keep firearms away from children, and "will oppose the attacks on women, minorities, workers and our LGBTQ+ community."

A redistricting consultant to both Democratic caucuses in the General Assembly, he refers to himself as "a champion against gerrymandering, fighting for fair districts and ensuring our voice is heard in Columbus and Washington."

Mulloy counts endorsements from labor groups, including Laborers Local 301, International Association of Fire Fighters Local 93, Insulators Local 3 and Pipefitters Local 120.

His campaign website targets corruption, saying he "will go to Columbus to stop the lobbyists and special interests writing our legislation and end 'pay to play' politics." He also expresses support for education funding, using new marijuana tax revenues to support first responders, and affordable child care.

"The No. 1 challenge of our time is that working men and women haven't seen a raise in a generation. Our standard of living has stagnated and even fallen as corporations and the rich use their undue influence with politicians to take all the gains for themselves, while leaving the middle class behind," his campaign site states.

According to the Cleveland.com/*Plain Dealer* endorsement column on the race, Mulloy splits his time between Ireland and Northeast Ohio.

On his campaign site, Borowski describes himself as a bread delivery driver. He touts work to get free training in Jiu Jitsu for first responders, create veteran parking at the city senior center and remove regulatory restrictions on businesses. He said as state representative he would work to reduce regulations that hinder business and economic growth, fight against legislation that violates property and privacy rights and ensure funds are allocated to appropriate projects and services in the district.

Borowski has some high profile endorsements, including from Treasurer Robert Sprague, Attorney General Dave Yost and Secretary of State Frank LaRose, the Cuyahoga County Republican Party and Cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer.

McClain has run for the seat before, including as the challenger to Sweeney in 2018 when he was 19 years old.

His campaign site lists priorities that include protecting the right to life, saying he wants "to put an end to the practice of abortion in America," ending the "medical-police state" and opposing pandemic lockdown policies, defending gun rights, supporting school choice and a "crack down on wokeness such as critical race theory and radical gender ideals," and defending fiscal freedom by abolishing the Ohio income tax.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 7, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 17

In the GOP primary race for Cuyahoga County's only Republican-leaning district, a former lawmaker, a city council member and a media producer are vying to succeed term-limited Rep. Tom Patton (R-Strongsville), who's running for the Senate.

The candidates include former Rep. Mike Dovilla, who served in the House through 2016 and that year tried to succeed Patton when he was leaving the Senate for the House, a race now-Sen. Matt Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls) won.

Also running is Gordon Short, an attorney and accountant who serves as Ward 4 councilman for the city of Strongsville.

In addition, there's Anthony L. Alexander, who ran last cycle in the GOP primary for the 7th Congressional District. His congressional campaign materials describe him as a site supervisor in the developmental disabilities field and a multi-media host and producer.

Patton has endorsed Short as his successor, as has Dolan, whom Patton is seeking to succeed. The mayor of Strongsville, where Short serves on council, also endorsed him, as did the mayor of Berea, where Dovilla lives. Short also has the nod from Cleveland.com's editorial board and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC, among other supporters.

Dovilla lists backers including Americans for Prosperity-Ohio, Treasurer Robert Sprague, Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom and Strongsville GOP.

Issues Short addresses on his campaign website include lowering income tax rates while increasing the homestead exemption, supporting law enforcement, eliminating burdensome regulations to encourage job creation, and providing parent choice in education.

Dovilla, a U.S Navy veteran, launched his campaign with a pledge to improve Ohio's business climate by reducing taxes and eliminating burdensome regulations, promoting access to quality education while protecting parent choice, and holding government accountable through increased transparency. In his prior House service he chaired the Policy and Legislative Oversight Committee, and his legislative record includes sponsorship of 131-HB2, a major overhaul of charter school oversight.

According to the Ohio Redistricting Commission, House District 17 has a Republican index of about 53.55 percent. The Southwest Cuyahoga County district includes the communities of Berea, Broadview Heights, North Royalton, Olmsted Falls and Strongsville.

In campaign finance filings, Dovilla and Short reported comparable fundraising, but Short had a sizable cash-on-hand advantage in the annual report filed in January.

Dovilla reported raising $33,024, spending $4,281 and having $28,742 on hand. Short reported raising $36,194, spending $5,854 and having more than $101,000 on hand. Campaign finance records do not include reports from Alexander.

The winner of the primary will face Jessica Sutherland, the only Democrat to file in the race.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 14, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 20

The Democratic primary for the 20th Ohio House District won't list any candidates for voters to choose from in the race because both three-term incumbent Rep. Terrence Upchurch (D-Cleveland) and Nathaniel Cory Hartfield are running as write-in candidates.

The situation arose when Upchurch attempted to submit the requisite 50 petition signatures in December to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections to get his name on the primary ballot. However, from the 56 signatures Upchurch submitted, the board of elections staff found that only 44 were valid as the other 12 were from voters who now live outside the boundaries of the redrawn district. Upchurch then withdrew that paperwork before the board of elections rejected it and instead entered the race as a write-in candidate.

As previously reported in *Hannah News*, "[Upchurch] told [Cleveland.com] that he was dealing with a sick family member and did not realize there was an issue until it was too late." (See *The Hannah Report*, 1/11/24.)

Following Upchurch's withdrawal of his initial petition, Nathaniel Cory Hartfield submitted paperwork to the county board of elections to be a write-in candidate in the race. Hartfield is a great-grandson of Fannie Lewis, the longest-serving woman in the history of Cleveland's City Council. Hartfield previously ran in the nonpartisan primary for Cleveland City Council Ward 7 in 2021 but finished last in the field of 11 candidates.

Upchurch is seeking a fourth term in the House and currently serves as president of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, which has endorsed him in the race. In the current General Assembly, Upchurch has been the primary sponsor of several bills, including capital appropriations bill HB2 (Cutrona-Upchurch); HB150 (Upchurch-Miller), to prohibit rental discrimination based on lawful source of income; HB218 (Brewer-Upchurch), to restore local authority to generally regulate firearm conduct; and HB221 (Schmidt-Upchurch), to expand postconviction relief for DNA showing actual innocence, among other bills.

In his pre-primary report, Upchurch's campaign committee reported $12,200 in contributions received with $5,244 on hand following $9,466 spent. Hartfield has filed no campaign finance report with the secretary of state's office.

The candidate in the race who wins on election day will have to receive more than 50 write-in votes and more than the other candidate. The winner will face Republican Donna Walker-Brown in November's general election. However the seat is safely Democratic, with Dave's Redistricting giving House District 20 an 88.4 percent Democratic lean.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 13, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 21

On the outs with his caucus, first-term Rep. Elliot Forhan (D-South Euclid) now faces two challengers for his seat in the strongly Democratic House District 21, which covers communities in Northeast Cuyahoga County. Beachwood City Council member and attorney Eric Synenberg and small business owner Angel Washington are now competing with Forhan for the Democratic nomination.

Forhan, an attorney who worked on President Joe Biden's 2020 campaign, won the seat in 2022, after Euclid Democrat Kent Smith hit House term limits and successfully ran for the Senate that year. But since November, Forhan's been a pariah in the House Democratic Caucus, stripped of committee assignments and barred from the services of caucus staff by Minority Leader Allison Russo (D-Upper Arlington), and denied badge access to the Statehouse and Riffe Center by Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill). (See *The Hannah Report*, 11/17/23, 11/20/23.)

The legislative leaders cited allegations of hostile and harassing behavior toward fellow legislators and staff. Rep. Juanita Brent (D-Cleveland) had filed for a protection order against Forhan, though media reports indicate Cleveland police later declined to file charges after asking for but not receiving evidence.

Forhan has strongly objected to the treatment, saying Russo didn't specify any action "that could create the reasonable apprehension of violent conduct." He also pointed out that ex-Rep. Bob Young didn't see similar treatment after being charged with domestic violence.

Among issues Forhan is campaigning for, according to his website, are reproductive rights, gun control, raising the minimum wage, supporting universal Pre-K and free community college and trade school, helping seniors with housing and other living costs, and supporting an Ohio child tax credit and expanded state-level earned income tax credit, among others. He notes his support for November's Issue 1, the reproductive and abortion rights constitutional amendment adopted by Ohio voters, including his battles as a member of the Ohio Ballot Board against the ballot language Republicans adopted for the measure.

The endorsements and awards section of Forhan's website includes no listings.

Synenberg has lined up support from a number of local political leaders, including Smith, now the Senate minority whip; former Senate Minority Leader Kenny Yuko, former House Speaker and Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish; and local mayors including Georgine Welo of Forhan's hometown in South Euclid. Numerous labor groups and the Plain Dealer/Cleveland.com also endorsed him.

Among issues Synenberg highlights on his campaign website are support for the rights of women, workers, minorities and LGBTQ Ohioans; fair school funding; and ending gun violence with commonsense gun reform.

Washington's campaign touts the endorsements of the Cuyahoga County Progress Caucus, Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC, International Association of Firefighters Local 93, and two members of Cleveland City Council, among others. Her campaign website says she will support mental health rights, quality education and public schools, developing the lakefront and remediating brownfields, assisting small businesses and entrepreneurs, home rule and local government funding.

The November race will very likely be settled by the results of the Democratic primary. The Ohio Redistricting Commission's data show the district with about a 77.5 percent Democratic index. Write-in candidate Joshua Malovasic is the only contender for the GOP nomination.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 4, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 24

First-term Rep. Dani Isaacsohn (D-Cincinnati) is looking to extend his Statehouse tenure this year but first needs to secure the Democratic nomination over a challenger, Stephan Pryor.

Isaacsohn or Pryor would be overwhelmingly favored in November over John Sess, the only Republican candidate on the ballot for House District 24. Ohio Redistricting Commission data show the district with a Democratic index over 72 percent.

Isaacsohn is the founder of Cohear, which connects decision-makers with local residents to solve problems. In campaign materials, he lists priorities including investing in K-12 education, preschool and child care; improving career pathways with apprenticeships and free community college; supporting labor rights; and advocating for gun safety. He's introduced multiple bills on this topic, including HB419 on background checks and HB418, regarding concealed carry. Aside from gun safety, topics on which the bills he's sponsored focus include refundability of the earned income tax credit in HB39; enacting a property tax freeze for certain homes in HB263; and student attendance in HB348.

Pryor is a community activist campaigning on issues including improved education and extracurricular activities for inner-city youth; affordable housing for working families; better living accommodations for senior citizens; addressing gun violence; affordable health care and mental health services; and property and business taxes.

Isaacsohn sits on numerous committees, among them the House Finance Committee and its Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, where last year he was involved in deliberations on continuing the new school funding formula. His other committee assignments include civil justice, constitutional resolutions, government oversight, technology and innovation, and ways and means committees.

Isaacsohn certainly has the fundraising advantage. Pryor reported no contributions, spending or cash on hand in his designation of treasurer report in January, and he did not file a pre-primary report last week. Isaacsohn, meanwhile, has $146,000 on hand after raising $52,654 and spending $35,454.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 13, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 29

Rep. Cindy Abrams (R-Harrison) is betting on incumbency and primary challenger George Brunemann on a team Trump tie-in to push them to victory in the typically quiet 29th District. Abrams seemed poised to complete four House terms in 2026 until she joined Democrats last year to elect House Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) and drew a censure from the Ohio Republican Party (ORP) as one of the "Blue 22."

The victor will face Democrat Joe Salvato and Independent Liz Anderson this November in a heavily GOP-leaning district, all but ensuring the Republican primary winner the House seat.

A former Cincinnati police officer and councilmember for her hometown of Harrison, Abrams was first appointed to former representative and now-Sen. Lou Blessing's (R-Cincinnati) post when he moved to the upper chamber in 2019. Blessing and his father before him had held the House district since 2005.

Brunemann is Hamilton County "captain" for the Trump-endorsed U.S. Senate candidate Bernie Moreno, whom the westside Cincinnati native has endorsed. Brunemann has owned and operated the engineering-consulting firm NgEK Inc. for two decades and previously ran for ORP's State Central Committee against now-party Chairman Alex Triantafilou.

Abrams has in turn endorsed one of Moreno's primary challengers, Secretary of State Frank LaRose.

Since the censure last year of Abrams with other Republican backers of Stephens, ORP has further announced it will not endorse Abrams or the remaining "Blue 22" in their respective primaries. (See *The Hannah Report*, 1/29/24.) The party has stopped short, however, of offering Brunemann the endorsement.

Abrams' endorsements include the Ohio Right to Life PAC and Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee. Ohio Value Voters has endorsed Brunemann.

Abrams has not only years of local name recognition but also extensive legislative experience, receiving legislator of the year awards from the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and Ohio Fire Chiefs Association (OFCA) and the John E. Murphy Guardian of Justice Award from the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association (OPAA).

She currently chairs the House Criminal Justice Committee and serves on Gov. Mike DeWine's Juvenile Justice Working Group. Legislation this session includes human- and drug-trafficking bill HB230 (Abrams-Swearingen), which designates August as "Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Month" and which has cleared the House Homeland Security Committee; HB296 (Abrams-Hall), which increases local contributions to the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund (OPFPF) and remains in the House Pensions Committee; and the House Civil Justice Committee's HB322 (Seitz-Abrams), which proposes civil rather than criminal penalties for failing to register with the childhood sexual abuse registry and eliminates residence restrictions on such offenders.

Municipalities have come out against HB296, and Stephens has expressed doubt about another Abrams bill, HB326's proposed use of marijuana tax revenue to fund peace officer training. (See *The Hannah Report*, 11/14/23, 11/28/23.)

Brunemann responded to Ballotpedia's 2024 "Candidate Connection" questionnaire and called for "data-based" legislative priorities rather than a General Assembly run on "money and influence." His campaign site identifies top priorities as restoring liberty in a post-COVID environment, improving K-12's cost-benefit ratio, and reducing taxes. He says the majority should add lower property levies to falling state income taxes.

Brunemann will join Moreno for a Cincinnati "Meet and Greet" on Sunday, March 10.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 7, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 32

New Franklin Councilman John K. "Jack" Daniels would appear to have an advantage over GOP primary challenger Mary Stormer for the House District 32 seat vacated by former Rep. Bob Young (R-North Canton), who resigned effective Oct. 2, 2023, amid domestic violence charges. (See *The Hannah Report*, 10/6/23.)

Daniels at the time was recommended as Young's replacement by the Summit County Republican Party. (See *The Hannah Report*, 10/18/23.)

Daniels and Stormer, an Akron Municipal Court accounts supervisor and former Akron School Board member, had both applied along with a third candidate for the endorsement. However, the seat remains vacant as Ohio House Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) who said at the time he thought "a lot of" the county endorsement (see The Hannah Report, 10/24/23), opted instead to leave it open, pending the outcome of the March primary.

Daniels has since secured additional endorsements from the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee (OCCPAC) and Americans for Prosperity – Ohio. (See *The Hannah Report*, 1/9/24, 2/5/24.)

"It's an interesting time in politics, so we'll see if there's anybody else that would be interested too," he said last October.

Daniels or Stormer would have a statistical advantage over the Democratic rival in the Republican-leaning district. Whoever the caucus appoints likely will have a little over half a year of Statehouse and district campaign experience before he or she faces Democrat James J. Colopy of Akron in November. He is running unopposed in the party primary.

District 32 lies in the bottom half of Summit County and covers the southern portions of Akron, including Akron Fulton Int'l Airport, along with Barberton, Clinton, New Franklin, Green, Akron-Canton Airport and points between. It had 118,000 residents in 2020, 83 percent of whom were White and 10 percent Black, though Whites made up an even higher percentage of the voting-age population.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 21, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 34

House District 34 has become a wide-open primary with Rep. Casey Weinstein's (D-Hudson) announced run for the Ohio Senate, though not so much for Republicans in this moderately left-leaning Akron suburb. Derrick Hall, Dina Edwards and Nathan Jarosz will face each other on Tuesday, March 19 to become the Democratic nominee for communities including Hudson, Stowe and Cuyahoga Falls.

Hall is president of Akron School Board, an executive of Summa Health and a Judge Advocate General (JAG) captain in the U.S. Army Reserve, holding degrees from Harvard Medical School (M.S.), Ohio State University (J.D., MBA and PharmD) and University of Akron (B.S.)

He is endorsed by the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC), Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee (OCC PAC), Akron Education Association, 314 Action Fund and a dozen council members representing various communities in the Akron area.

Hall grew up in Akron government housing until his mother finished her teaching degree when he was 13 and credits her for inspiring his educational achievements.

"I have seen firsthand where public schools succeed and where they struggle," he says of life experience including his time on the Akron School Board. "The funding is not adequate and must be revisited by the Ohio Legislature."

In addition to education, Hall's other policy concerns include Ohio's fall redistricting ballot issue, health care access, abortion rights, the environment, senior care, technology and small business, and military service.

Edwards is a veteran schoolteacher currently working with migrant children as an ESL instructor.

"I am a fierce advocate for public schools where we teach diversity, equality, inclusion and hope," she says.

Edwards is endorsed by Rep. Weinstein's wife, University of Akron economics Professor Amanda Weinstein, Matriots, and several Stow-Munroe Falls School Board members.

In addition to strong public schools, her legislative priorities include protecting families, backing workers, and a sustainable future for all Ohioans.

Jarosz founded and operates the nonprofit Leadership Influencing Teen Empowerment (LITE) and travels nationally and internationally to deliver leadership training.

He is a community organizer and president of Summit County Progressive Democrats with a master's in organizational leadership from Malone University, a B.S. in management from Thomas Edison State University, and diversity and inclusion certification from Cornell University.

Along with education priorities in social-emotional learning, the former Eagle Scout names environmental conservation, abortion rights, public safety and gun violence as top policy concerns, blaming local government cuts for worsening crime.

"Under Gov. Kasich and continued under Republican Gov. Mike DeWine, our Republican-led state government has made us less safe," Jarosz says, also calling for expanded gun background checks. "The Republican-led state Legislature in Ohio has made our state the Wild, Wild Midwest."

He is endorsed by Akron Mayor Shammas Malik, former Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic, Barberton Mayor William Judge, Stow Mayor John Pribonic, and dozens of current and former council members from the Akron area.

The mostly White District 34 leans 53 percent to 47 percent in favor of Democrats, giving their primary winner a decided advantage over Tallmadge City Council President Adam Bozic, who is running unopposed as their Republican challenger.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 11, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 38

The primary race for Ohio House District 38 features two high-profile, experienced leaders vying for the seat being vacated by Rep. Willis Blackshear (D-Dayton), as he is running for the Ohio Senate 6th District seat. Running to fill the spot are Desiree Tims, president of Innovation Ohio, and Dayton NAACP President Derrick Foward.

Tims has headed the progressive think tank Innovation Ohio since 2021. She has not said if she will stay at the organization if elected to the House. She previously ran for U.S. Congress in 2020 against U.S. Rep. Mike Turner (R-Dayton) and worked on political staffs in Washington D.C. for President Barack Obama and U.S. Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). Tims has also been chosen as a representative of Ohio's 10th Congressional District to the 2024 Democratic National Convention.

Tims said her top priorities in office would be the rising cost of housing and housing supply and fighting for more funding for public schools, saying that increased K-12 funding would give Ohio greater pull in hiring and retaining qualified teachers. She also campaigned for the passage of the Issue 1 reproductive rights amendment in November 2023 and supports pro-LGBTQ protections in employment, housing and public accommodations.

Tims wants to increase the state of Ohio's investment in mental health care and substance abuse treatments and supports more affordable health care for Ohioans and more preventive health programs. She also supports gun control measures like bans on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Tims has been endorsed in the race by the Ohio Women's Alliance Action Fund, Run For Something, Matriots Ohio and the Ohio Environmental Action Fund.

Foward was president of the Dayton Unit of the NAACP since 2007 and also served as first vice president of the Ohio Conference NAACP. He has recently resigned both positions to run the House campaign. Foward has noted his record as advocating for voting rights, criminal justice reform, women's rights, union rights, education reform, youth development and economic stability.

Foward has said he would address poverty from the Ohio House, including supporting raising the minimum wage, expanding eligibility for Ohio's earned income tax program and reinstituting the child tax credit and spending more of the state's budget on resources for poor families. He has also said the Legislature needs to maintain its support for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, which he says is the primary source of state funding for local homelessness and housing programs.

He says he supports the Second Amendment as a gun owner himself, but he has criticized Ohio's permitless concealed carry law as "absolutely ridiculous," and has called for the General Assembly to enact gun control measures similar to those Tims has called for.

Foward argues that more individualized learning environments and a community approach to education are approaches to help Ohio's low proficiency rates in math and reading education.

Foward has received endorsements in the race from former Ohio legislators Tom Roberts, Fred Strahorn and Roland Winburn, as well as civil rights leader Jessie Gooding, Montgomery County Commissioner Debbie Lieberman, Dayton Mayor Jeffrey Mims, Dayton City Commissioner Chris Shaw and other business and elected leaders in the Dayton area.

The pre-primary report filed with the Ohio Secretary of State by the Foward campaign on March 4, 2024, reported $15,963 in contributions received and $4,541 spent with $13, 807 on hand. Tims' pre-primary report shows she raised $21,347 this year, spent $31,287, and has $22,221 on hand.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 11, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 47

Rep. Sara Carruthers (R-Hamilton) will face a tough challenge on her path to her fourth and final term in the Ohio House before term limits prevent her from running again, going up against the Butler County Republican Party-backed Diane Mullins in the Tuesday, March 19 House District 47 primary.

Mullins, a pastor at Calvary Church in Hamilton, had previously run for the Ohio House in 2019 for a different seat in an open primary won ultimately by now Rep. Thomas Hall (R-Middletown). During that campaign, she posted a video to her campaign social media, saying there needs to be people in politics "who share our same values. This is an office to serve people, to represent people in Columbus. To me, it's about you."

In her current race, she told the *Oxford Observer*, Miami University's student-led newspaper, that she seeks to be a "genuine conservative Republican voice in Columbus." She listed top issues as "protecting unborn life, parental rights, girls' sports, Second Amendment rights, combatting Statehouse corruption, supporting local businesses, promoting technical education, advocating for farmers, and reducing government intervention and taxes."

Carruthers is running for her fourth and final term. This General Assembly, she has sponsored bills creating a parent's bill of rights and raising fines for selling tobacco to minors.

Her social media has also promoted various projects in Butler County that she pushed for to receive funding from HB2 (Cutrona-Upchurch), including $4 million to expand the welding lab program at Butler Tech, and $1 million to transform a 129-year-old former mill into residential units.

The House Republican Alliance (OHRA), the campaign arm of the House Republican Caucus, has run ads supporting Carruthers, saying she is empowering kids in the classroom and has "led the charge to ban kids' gender-altering surgeries."

Carruthers has faced backlash for her decision to back House Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) for speaker along with all of the House Democrats over caucus choice Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Maumee), putting her into a group of 21 other Republicans who voted for Stephens dubbed by detractors as the "Blue 22." Her re-election could play into whether Stephens is able to hold on to his speakership in the next General Assembly.

Carruthers told the *Oxford Observer* that "misinformation about me voting for a Democratic speaker has resulted in reduced support from some members of the party," adding, "I voted strongly for a Republican speaker."

Mullins has attacked Carruthers on her social media, saying the incumbent has turned her back on the Republican Party and the people who voted for her. Mullins also looks to tie Carruthers to the 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) FirstEnergy scandal in a post.

She told the *Oxford Observer* that politicians need to be held accountable for both their positive and negative actions, saying that all politicians do good things, "it is the bad things they do and the bad people they align with that make them unworthy of the position." Mullins also told the newspaper that she believes the community and businesses can benefit from her involvement in the Statehouse.

Mullins has the backing of the Butler County Republican Party, though Carruthers told the *Cincinnati Enquirer* that she did not seek the endorsement.

"I think I've been around here long enough. I'm proud of my record and it's up to the community," Carruthers told the newspaper.

Mullins is also no stranger to controversy. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported on clips of Mullins' sermons posted on social media that the newspaper said referenced "anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, the Antichrist, and a communist plot involving sculptures. She has told her congregation not to watch secular news or read secular news articles, saying they are all 'lies and propaganda.'"

Mullins also has the endorsements of Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom, Ohio Values Voters, Drain the Swamp PAC, and Ohio Conservatives PAC.

Carruthers has received endorsements from Ohio Right to Life, the NRA, Buckeye Firearms Association, and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

In her annual campaign finance report filed in January, Carruthers reported $60,086 in contributions, $27,937 in expenditures, and nearly $66,000 on hand. Mullins reported $4,100 in contributions and $4,100 on hand.

The winner faces Vanessa Cummings, who is unopposed in the Democratic primary in the heavily Republican district. According to data from the Ohio Redistricting Commission, the district has a 61 percent Republican lean.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 27, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 51

Rep. Brett Hillyer (R-Dennison) must overcome a primary challenge from a Bolivar Republican who works in the behavioral health field in order to win election to his fourth and final term in the Ohio House.

House District 51 covers all of Tuscarawas County and the southern part of Stark County. It is strongly Republican, with the Ohio Redistricting Commission giving it a Republican lean of nearly 65 percent. The primary has Hillyer, an attorney in addition to his legislative work, taking on Jodi Salvo, the director of substance use prevention services at OhioGuidestone, a nonprofit behavioral health organization.

Hillyer has faced criticism from other Republicans and was censured by the Ohio Republican Party's State Central Committee after he joined with 21 other House Republicans and all House Democrats in elevating Rep. Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) to speaker over Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Maumee), the winner of a closed-door caucus vote. The 22 Republicans have been dubbed the "Blue 22" by detractors.

He has introduced a number of bills making changes to the judicial system during his time in the Legislature, including 134-HB315 (Hillyer-Leland), a sweeping bail reform bill that did not make it out of committee last session. This session, he co-sponsored HB201 (Hillyer-Demetriou), a bill signed into law that prohibits governmental entities from restricting the sale or use of a motor vehicle based on the energy source used to power the motor vehicle. He also sponsored 134-HB208 (Hillyer-Skindell), which would have prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The session, he also chairs the House Civil Justice Committee.

He has gone against his caucus this session, voting against SJR2 (McColley-Gavarone), which put a constitutional amendment on the August special election ballot raising the threshold for passage of future amendments to 60 percent, and HB68 (Click), legislation addressing transgender care for youths and transgender participation in sports. However, he voted with fellow Republicans in overriding Gov. Mike DeWine's veto of HB68.

Hillyer told Spectrum News that he has one of the highest ratings for limited government in the General Assembly and said they need to continue to adhere to small government values and principles.

"You know, you can still be an advocate for limited government and still be respectful of other people," he told Spectrum.

Salvo said on her campaign website that she has an "unwavering commitment to preventing youth substance use, promoting mental health wellness, serving the most vulnerable and underserved and addressing suicide prevention." She said she is committed to finding solutions to mitigate Ohio’s addiction and mental health crisis.

"We must stand as a challenge to the liberal agenda and voices from our urban areas. Our values, traditions, and way of life must not only be preserved but strengthened for the benefit of our community and future generations," she said on her website.

In a survey with Ballotpedia, she said as a state representative she "will work to protect individual freedoms, including the right to life, religious freedoms, and the right to bear arms as outlined in the Second Amendment. I am committed to ending the teaching of social issues in schools. I will champion traditional family values, and uphold parental rights. I will work to preserve the integrity of our student's education and safeguard our fundamental freedoms."

Salvo has been attacked by the Ohio House Republican Alliance (OHRA), the campaign arm of the House Republican Caucus, with mailers and ads going out to the district that claim she is controlled by liberal interests, which she has pushed back against on her social media.

Hillyer touts endorsements on his social media from the Ohio Real Estate Investors Association, the NRA and Ohio Young Republicans. Salvo touts endorsements from Ohio Value Voters, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of Ohio, We the People Convention, and Ohio Citizens PAC, as well as an "AQ" rating from Buckeye Firearms Association.

In their pre-primary campaign finance reports, Hillyer reported raising $31,518, spending $110,420, and has $53,377 on hand; while Salvo reported raising $49,524, spending $39,596, and has $29,301 on hand.

The winner faces the winner of the Democratic primary between John Bazaar and Joe Rinehart.

Bazaar is a retired engineer who said on Facebook that he became involved in politics after watching "with dismay, the rapid erosion of the rights of the citizens of the state of Ohio. The erosion of LGBTQ+ rights, workers' rights, voters rights, women's rights, civil rights, veterans' rights and many others has been a source of much concern to me." He said he will fight for those rights, as well as the environment, "a fair wage," "to take health insurance off the backs of the people, employers, and medical care providers," and Medicare for all.

Rinehart is a U.S. Marines and Vietnam veteran and a self-employed entrepreneur and consultant who started and later sold config.com Internet services. His platform includes protecting public education, keeping drillers out of Ohio parks, keeping politicians "out of our doctors' offices," and supporting unions and their members. He touts endorsements from VoteVets, BCTGM Local 19, and the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund.

Neither Democrat has an active campaign fund at the moment.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 12, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 54

A youth pastor and a certified registered nurse anesthetist will face off in the Republican primary for the open 54th House District covering most of Huron County and parts of Lorain County.

Current seat holder Rep. Dick Stein (R-Norwalk) is term-limited, and has thrown his support behind Kellie Deeter, a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA), nurse practitioner, and a local small business owner who owns Firelands Anesthesia in Norwalk and Firelands Medispa.

She is facing Anthony Savage, a youth pastor who also owns a business in online retail.

Deeter, who has resided in Huron County for over 30 years, said she wants to use her experience to better the community.

"There are only a small handful of doctors and nurses elected to serve at the state level today, and I intend to use my experiences as a health care professional and as a business owner to find lasting solutions to our most pressing issues in Ohio," she said in her announcement.

Among the issues she highlights on her website are reducing government spending, strengthening the economy, improving patient care and reducing costs in health care, supporting law enforcement and the military, and promoting agriculture. She also said she will work "tirelessly to promote a pro-life agenda" and will be an "unwavering defender of the Second Amendment."

In addition to her work as a CRNA and her businesses, she has also been the government relations director for the Ohio State Association of Nurse Anesthetists (OSANA) since 2015.

In addition to Stein, Deeters has also landed endorsements from the Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC and the Huron County Republican Party. Stein said in a statement that Deeter's experience has "well prepared her to tackle the issues facing our state."

Savage said on his website that he is a seasoned leader with a passion for service. He is a current board trustee of the Lorain County Farm Bureau and was recently elected chairman of the Lorain County Young Republicans.

He said that as a Christian leader, "I can build bridges and find common ground in Columbus to get things done."

Among issues he lists are the right to life, eliminating the state income tax, supporting the Second Amendment, protecting farmers, education, a strong economy, law and order, religious liberty and medical freedom.

Savage noted he is a strong supporter of medical freedom for all, saying that "no one should be forced or coerced into any medical decision."

His endorsements include Sen. Michael Rulli (R-Salem), South Amherst Mayor Scott Jones, and Grafton Mayor Charlie Duke, among others.

In fundraising, Deeter has far outraised Savage. According to her annual finance report, she raised $132,482 since launching her campaign and has $111,980 on hand, drawing a large contribution from OSANA's PAC, as well as contributions from other nurse anesthetist associations around the country.

Savage reported about $13,395 in contributions, and has $6,350 on hand.

The district has a 58 percent Republican index. The winner of the primary faces Democrat Brenda Buchanan.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 13, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 55

Two Republicans are vying for the seat currently held by the term-limited Rep. Scott Lipps (R-Franklin) in a heavily Republican seat in Warren County in March.

Michelle Teska, a business owner who formerly worked in the media industry, has received the backing of Lipps to succeed him, and has lined up other endorsements from groups including the Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC, Warren County Right to Life and Americans for Prosperity's Ohio affiliate. She also has the backing of Sen. Steve Wilson (R-Maineville).

She faces Ben McCullough, a U.S. Army veteran who currently is a sergeant first class in the U.S. Army Reserve.

The race started out more crowded, but Republicans Kim Lukens, Scott Hughes, and Thomas Goodwin have all withdrawn.

A former sales manager for Cox Media Group, Teska and her husband co-own Golden Heart Senior Care, where she serves as president. She was born and raised in Dayton and is a graduate of the University of Dayton.

She said she would work "tirelessly" to reduce bureaucratic red tape that hinders small business growth.

"When individuals and businesses have more of their hard-earned money to invest and spend, everyone benefits," she says on her campaign website.

She also says she has a "deep-seated commitment to the sanctity of life" and is a staunch supporter of Second Amendment rights.

"I have passionately dedicated my time and efforts to values that are fundamental to our nation: faith, family, and freedom," she said in her campaign announcement. "I am a Christian, a wife and mother, a small business owner, and a social and fiscal conservative. I am proud to stand as a pro-Constitution advocate, believing in the enduring principles of our Constitution. I know, too, that our small businesses are the backbone of our communities. These enterprises create jobs, drive innovation, and foster economic competition. As your next state representative, I will work tirelessly to reduce bureaucratic red tape that hinders small business growth. Lowering taxes is crucial to unleashing the full potential of our economy."

McCullough, who has a bachelor's degree in political science from Wittenberg University and a master's degree in international comparative politics from Wright State University, currently works for a management consulting and research services firm as a contractor for the Department of Defense. In the Army Reserves, he serves with a unit stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Saying he is a "soldier, not a politician," he said in his announcement that his top three issues are "putting people over politics, making Ohio a 21st-century economic powerhouse, and protecting personal and constitutional rights." He said he will "always put Ohio first."

"My entire life has been defined by service, and I look forward to carrying forward a vision that will benefit every Ohioan in the Statehouse," he said in his announcement.

In their latest campaign finance filings, Teska holds a money advantage over McCullogh, reporting about $35,810 on hand, while McCullough has just under $3,000.

The winner faces Laura Marie Davis, who is unopposed in the Democratic primary, in November. The district is heavily Republican. According to numbers provided by the Ohio Redistricting Commission released along with its final plan adopted last year, the district has about a 74 percent Republican partisan lean.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 5, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 56

As primary election day draws closer, citizens from the southwest and central portion of Warren Country will have three candidates to pick from in the primary election. House District 56 Republican candidates include incumbent Rep. Adam Mathews (R-Lebanon) and challengers Kathy Grossmann and Heather Salyer.

Mathews, who is currently seeking a second term as House representative, is a member of the Aviation and Aerospace Committee, the Constitutional Resolutions Committee, the Families and Aging Committee and the Ways and Means Committee. He chairs the House Pensions Committee and is vice chair of the Civil Justice Committee.

Mathews is a co-sponsor of both HB367, which regards unauthorized use of an individual's persona through deepfakes, and HB27 which requires state higher education institutions to provide financial cost and aid disclosure.

He's also secured investment worth $13.75 million for the Cincinnati Open Tennis Tournament in Mason

Mathews, if reelected, said he would limit the scope of government.

"Adam believes the government should be bound by our constitutions and laws. We need tostrengthen the state Legislature against overreach, especially when it interferes with our schools, businesses, and daily lives," according to Mathews' campaign site.

He's gained endorsements from the Ohio Right to Life PAC, the Right to Life Action Coalition, Ohio Young Republicans and Americans for Prosperity.

Mathews received both a bachelor's and law degree from the University of Notre Dame. He lives in Lebanon with his wife and four children.

Running against him, Grossmann has served on the Mason City Council from 2015-2023, serving three of those years as mayor of Mason. She also has experience as a former educator teaching fifth grade for Sycamore Community Schools. She currently serves as secretary of the Warren County Republican Party.

Grossmann says she is "100 percent pro-life" and "pro-Second Amendment," according to her campaign site. She will also provide additional supportfor law enforcement.

"Kathy will work to ensure all Ohio jurisdictions have the funds and legislation needed to support law enforcement officers, first responders and criminal justice," according to her campaign site.

She is endorsed by the Ohio Conservatives PAC.

Grossmann graduated from Northern Kentucky University with a degree in education andis married with six children, living in Mason.

Salyer is also on the ballot this March runningas a "pro-Trump" candidate.

She criticizes Mathews, saying his views aren't conservative enough.

"My decision to run was fueled by concerns about some Republicans, including our current rep, Adam Mathews aligning with Democrats and their agenda." said Salyer in a video on her campaign website.

Salyer is endorsed by the Ohio Citizens PAC, the We The People Convention, Ohio Value Voters, the Buckeye Firearms Association, and the Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio.

She graduated with a business degree from Mount Vernon Nazarene University. Salyer lives with her husband and has three grown children.

According to pre-primary reports, Mathews holds a financial advantage with more than $41,521 on hand. Grossmann has almost $14,000 on hand, and Salyer has $10,345 on hand.

The winner of this primary election will run against the Democratic candidate for House District 56, Cleveland Canova. The district has a nearly 64 percent lean, according to data provided by the Ohio Redistricting Commission.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 13, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 62

With the 2024 primary approaching, the people of Clermont County will choose between 62nd House District incumbent Republican Jean Schmidt (R-Loveland) and her challenger, Republican candidate Dillon Blevins.

Schmidt, running for her third term as state representative, currently serves on the House Finance, House Civil Justice, House Criminal Justice and House Families and Aging committees, chairing the latter committee.

Recently she co-sponsored legislation with Rep. Adam Miller (D-Columbus), HB259, which aims to abolish the death penalty and to modify the number of jurors that may be challenged in cases where a defendant may be sentenced to life imprisonment. She also strongly supported the passage of HB68 (Click).

"Jean has always been a champion for Ohioans, supporting widespread tax cuts, spearheading criminal justice reform and voting passionately against Obamacare," says her campaign website.

Schmidt has also served as president of Cincinnati Right to Life and on the board of the Clermont County Public Library.

Schmidt was not endorsed by the Ohio Republican Party's Central Committee for her decision to vote for House Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill).

She faces Dillon Blevins, a U.S. Army veteran who is now owner of Cincy Decks and Outdoor Living.

He is backed by Associated Builders and Contractors of Ohio, Ohio Citizens PAC, and We the People Convention. Belvins says he will "restore what it means to be a representative," according to his campaign website.

He also says he will restore election integrity and restore personal freedom.

"What we took witness to in 2020 leaves no doubt the powers that be do not wish us health, wealth and prosperity. Our world leaders crushed small businesses, forced social distancing and masks, ensured Amazon and pharmaceutical companies made record profits, forced unethical and illegal vaccine mandates all in the name of science that, come to find out, wasn't sound. We need to limit and restrain our government especially in times of crisis to ensure we don't let 2020 happen again," Blevins' campaign website says.

Blevins's criticisms of Schmidt include that she "betrayed" Republicans with her vote for Stephens.

"Anyone who knows what Jean Schmidt's been doing in the Columbus Statehouse, they would be infuriated, especially members of the Republican Party," said Blevins in a Casual Talk interview with Casual Music Studio. Blevins has a bachelor's degree from Northern Kentucky University College of Business and has served in the Army Reserves where he opposed President Joe Biden's vaccine mandate.

In their last campaign finance filings, Schmidt reported having about $119,482 on hand, while Blevins has not submitted a report yet.

The winner faces Democrat Katie Vockell in the November general election. According to numbers provided by the Ohio Redistricting Commission last year, the district has about a 68 percent Republican partisan lean.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 9, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 65

Now that early voting for the March primary election is officially underway for Ohioans, the race to watch for the people of House District 65 is between David Thomas and Laurie Magyar. They are vying for the seat currently held by Rep. Mike Loychik (R-Bazetta) who is running for the Ohio Senate.

Serving as the Ashtabula County auditor since 2018, Thomas plans to decrease taxes for workers in Ohio.

"I speak with too many seniors, farmers, and others who are at risk of being taxed out of their homes. This should never happen in Ohio. Our property tax system is out of control and unfairly places the burden on those who can least afford it," says Thomas on his campaign website.

He has gained endorsements from groups in Ohio including the Ashtabula County Republican Party, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC, Americans for Prosperity-Ohio, Associated Builders and Contractors of Ohio, the Sheet Metal Workers' Union Local 33, the Ohio Citizens PAC, Ohio Young Republicans and the Ohio Right to Life PAC.

While Thomas's top priority is to advocate for more tax relief for Ohio's seniors and farmers, he is also pushing his conservative values to win the approval of Ohio voters.

"I am a small government conservative who cares about tax relief, limiting government's power, infrastructure, and ensuring that our fundamental rights are protected," says Thomas on his campaign website.

Thomas has a bachelor's degree in American government and politics from Washington and Lee University, and a master's of business administration from Baldwin Wallace University.

Thomas's opponent, Laurie Magyar is a nurse manager at University Hospitals and is running as a "Trump conservative," according to her yard signs.

Magyar intends to advocate for parental rights, election integrity, fiscal responsibility, and protection of life if she wins the seat. She also has the endorsement of Loychik.

On her campaign Facebook page, she criticizes Thomas for his endorsement from Americans for Prosperity where she writes, "My opponent's door hangers are paid for and distributed by (Americans for Prosperity). He is 100 percent against President Donald Trump." She has also posted screenshots of the former president and 2024 presidential candidate Donald Trump's tweets criticizing Americans for Prosperity.

In their last campaign finance filings, Thomas reported having more than $47,000 on hand. Magyar has not submitted a report yet.

There are currently no Democratic challengers for House District 65. According to numbers provided by the Ohio Redistricting Commission last year, the district has a 57 percent Republican lean.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 26, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 69

Ohioans living in House District 69, covering parts of Coshocton, Licking and Perry counties, have a decision to make between keeping the incumbent House Rep. Kevin Miller (R-Newark) or electing Daniel Kalmbach as House representative on March 19.

Miller, running for a second term, serves on the criminal justice, finance, homeland security, and transportation committees and on the House Finance Subcommittee on Public Safety.

Recently, he cowrote legislation like HB111 to increase the sentence range for third degree felony domestic violence offenses with Rep. Jeff LaRe (R-Canal Winchester) and HB256 with Rep. Rodney Creech (R-West Alexandria) to require the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to inquire about organ donation when issuing licenses.

"Miller has been a lifelong Republican pushing for policies that drive economic growth and job creation. He also values conservative principles such as the right to life, right to bear arms, and freedom from government overreach," according to his campaign website.

Miller has accumulated endorsements from the Buckeye Firearms Association PAC, the Ohio Right to Life PAC, the Buckeye Lake Region Chamber of Commerce, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC, the Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters, Affiliated Construction Trades of Ohio and the National Rifle Association.

The Ohio Republican Party's Central Committee opted not to endorse Miller for his decision to vote for House Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill).

Before his work in politics, he served with the Ohio State Highway Patrol for over 20 years as a state trooper, a labor relations management advocate, and a post commander. He received a bachelor's degree from Ohio State University and attended a course for law enforcement executives at the FBI National Academy.

Miller is married with two adult children. They live in Newark, and they attend Francis de Sales Catholic Church.

Miller's opponent, Daniel Kalmbach is a farm and feed producer and has worked as a legislative aide for Rep. Thad Claggett (R-Newark). He says he will work towards a stronger economy, stop big government, and protect families.

"Our country and our state were founded on small, limited government principles. Today, not only is government getting bigger, it's increasingly woke and not focused on real problems," said Kalmbach on his campaign website.

He goes on to say he will, "remain 100 percent focused on shutting down unnecessary government, fighting tax increases, and getting big government out of our churches, businesses, and everyday lives."

Kalmbach's criticisms of Miller stem from his decision to vote for Stephens.

"RINO Republicans like Kevin Miller cut mucky backroom deals with Democrats to thwart the conservative agenda," says an advertisement paid for by Kalmbach for Ohio and posted on Kalmbach's Facebook page.

Kalmbach is endorsed by U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Urbana).

Kalmbach has a bachelor's degree from Cedarville University, and a law degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Law. He is newly married and lives in Arlington.

Miller holds a financial advantage over Kalmbach, with Miller reporting approximately $96,772 on hand and Kalmbach reporting approximately $35,255 on hand.

The winner faces Jamie Hough in the November general election. According to numbers provided by the Ohio Redistricting Commission last year, the district has about a 71 percent Republican partisan lean.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 12, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 71

Four Republican candidates are seeking to replace term-limited Rep. Bill Dean (R-Xenia) in House District 71, which includes all of Clinton County, most of Greene County and part of Clark County.

The candidates include Bob Fudge, a former mayor of Cedarville and current CEO of Evanhoe & Associates; Levi Dean, a member of Xenia City Council and the son of seat incumbent Rep. Bill Dean (R-Xenia); Joshua Day, an aerospace engineer and member of the Xenia Community Schools Board of Education; and Tyler Scott, a landlord and the founder and former commissioner of Major League Cornhole.

According to Evanhoe & Associates' website, Fudge served in the U.S. Air Force for nearly 25 years.

"He led maintenance operations on multiple aircraft, including combat missions in Operation Desert Storm," Fudge's campaign website says. "His military leadership experience in challenging, resource-constrained environments will translate well to the many issues in Columbus, especially those impacting veterans."

Other issues Fudge plans to address are workforce training, education, taxes and public safety.

Dean has served on Xenia City Council for six years, and is also a small business owner, his campaign website says.

"I am excited to take the same values and work ethic to Columbus to fight for the people of Ohio as I did here in Xenia," Dean says on his Facebook page.

According to his campaign website, Dean is "100 percent pro-life, no exceptions" and "100 percent pro-gun." His website also says he will advocate for limited government, family values and cutting taxes.

Day's website says he served as president of the Xenia Community Schools Board of Education for two years. He still serves on the board but is no longer president.

"He has worked tirelessly to keep dangerous ideologies out of our schools, complete capital projects on budget and improve community relationships," his website says.

Day also plans to reduce taxes, reduce the size and scope of government, and ensure state dollars are directed into the district.

Scott's website says, "A vote for Tyler Scott is a vote for yourself. People over politics!"

Scott said the following are his top issues:

- Abolish the state income tax.

- "Create fiscal responsibility."

- Stop child trafficking.

- Choose "citizens over immigrants" because "if we can't house our own homeless, we should not be housing migrants on the tax dollar."

- Support rural Ohio.

- Protect children "in the womb and outside the womb."

- Ban hedge funds/corporations from owning single family homes.

"Our beautiful state has been subject to backdoor/in-house politics for years," Scott said. "Our state desperately needs someone who's going to make right decisions and isn't compromised by the established politics."

Dean has raised the most money out of the four candidates, reporting $30,300 in contributions in his annual report. Almost all of his funding came from his parents -- $15,000 from Bill Dean and $15,000 from Pamela Dean. He has spent $8,000 and has $22,3000 in cash on hand.

Day raised $20,098, with $15,500 coming from Hartley Enterprises LLC, a company located in Arizona. Day has spent $659 and has $19,733 in cash on hand.

Fudge reported only $700 in contributions but received $5,525 in "other income." His total expenditures are $3,586 and he has $2,364 in cash on hand.

Scott raised $1,960, with $1,700 coming from himself. He has spent $1,756 and has $204 in cash on hand.

The winner of the Republican primary will face Democrat James Duffee in the general election.

According to Dave's Redistricting, House District 71 has a 68.6 percent Republican index.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 28, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 73

The former police chief of the village of Baltimore is hoping to take down one of the "Blue 22" in the Ohio House.

Mike Tussey is challenging Rep. Jeff LaRe (R-Canal Winchester) in House District 73, which includes north and northwest Fairfield County. LaRe is facing the primary challenge in large part because he is one of the Republicans who joined Democrats to elect Rep. Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) as speaker of the Ohio House.

Tussey recently received a boost when the third candidate in the race -- End Abortion Ohio President Austin Beigel -- decided to drop out and endorse Tussey.

"After much reflection and consultation with my family, elders, supporters and fellow conservatives, it has become clear that the best path forward for our community and our shared values is to come together as one unified Christian conservative force," Beigel wrote on social media.

"Mike Tussey and I have stood side by side in our beliefs and dedication to our guiding principles. We are both staunch defenders of the right to life, unwavering in our commitment to abolish abortion and protect the preborn. As Christian conservatives, we understand the importance of standing firm in our convictions, especially when our values are increasingly under attack," he continued. "Splitting our vote would only serve to benefit the incumbent, who stands in opposition to everything we are fighting for. Unity is our great strength, and by supporting Mike Tussey, I am confident that our shared goals will be achieved. He has signed the same pledge with End Abortion Ohio that I had signed, and he has my full confidence that he will fight for the abolition of abortion with everything he has."

End Abortion Ohio held a rally at the Ohio Statehouse in September 2023, urging lawmakers to pass legislation that would make women who obtain abortions guilty of murder. Beigel announced his candidacy for LaRe's seat during that event. (See *The Hannah Report*, 9/13/23.)

LaRe has served in the House since May 2019, when he was appointed to replace Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster), who moved over to the Senate. (See *The Hannah Report*, 5/22/19.)

LaRe is currently chair of the House Financial Institutions Committee and vice chair of the House Finance Committee. LaRe also co-chairs the Ohio House Republican Alliance (OHRA).

LaRe is executive vice president of the Whitestone Group, a national asset protection and security services company. He has also served as a peace officer and corrections officer in the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office, according to his campaign website. Additionally, LaRe is a youth lacrosse coach and serves on the Pickerington Youth Lacrosse Board.

Tussey recently retired as chief of police of the village of Baltimore. He has also taught criminal justice at Columbus State Community College for more than 30 years, according to Tussey's campaign website.

Tussey said he supports the Second Amendment, noting he's a firearms instructor. He also says he's "pro-life and pro-family" and is a "strong supporter of businesses and farmers."

"I believe that every person should have the right to have a good-paying job without government interference. I believe the purpose of government when it comes to business should ensure the safety of workers and the quality of the work," Tussey said on his website. "I am a conservative Republican who will defend our Constitution against all threats. I will not put personal gain and power above that of the people. This is who I am."

LaRe reported $174,595 in contributions and $99,903 in expenditures in his most recent campaign finance report. He has $203,147 in cash on hand.

Tussey's campaign does not have an updated finance report posted on the Ohio Secretary of State's Office website.

Beigel's campaign reported $3,120 in contributions, $2,451 in expenditures and $669 in cash on hand.

The winner of the primary will face Democrat Michael Scarmack, a write-in candidate.

According to Dave's Redistricting, House District 73 has a 59.8 percent Republican index.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 8, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 77

A variety of backgrounds, including multiple candidates with experience around the Statehouse, are represented by the five candidates in the open Republican primary for the 77th House District seat being vacated by term-limited Rep. Scott Wiggam (R-Wooster). The district entirely and exclusively encompasses Wayne County in North Central Ohio.

Bill Albright serves on the executive boards of the Wayne County Republican Party and the Wayne County Humane Society. Previously he was a legislative aide for state Rep. Mike Henne from 2014 to 2015, then for Frank LaRose during his time as state senator. Albright also worked in the Adjutant General's Department of the Ohio National Guard and is a veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Albright's campaign website lists his economic priorities as lower taxes and cutting the red tape so it will be easier to do business, not only in Wayne County, but across Ohio. He also supports school choice and "a quality education over school indoctrination." Under "Family Values," Albright says, "Pro-life means being pro-mom and pro-family. Mothers and families should have access to resources including prenatal care and maternal health services, both of which I will fight for as your state representative."

On social media, Albright lists that he has received a top rating from the National Rifle Association (NRA), a 100 percent rating from Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom and a top rating from Buckeye Firearms Association. He also lists endorsements from Ohio Right to Life PAC, Ohio Value Voters and Sheet Metal Workers Local No. 33.

He has also announced support on social media for Texas Gov. Greg Abbot's efforts "to do what the Biden administration has failed to do, secure our border!" In addition, he supported the General Assembly's override of Gov. Mike DeWine's veto of HB68 (Click).

The campaign's finance report filed with the Ohio Secretary of State on Feb. 19, 2024 listed $22,044 in contributions, with $5,456 spent and $45,605 on hand.

Meredith Craig is director of healthcare policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. She was previously assistant director of government affairs at the Ohio Department of Insurance, and in that role she testified before committees in the General Assembly multiple times. She also worked under Wayne County Commissioner Ron Amstutz during his time as Speaker Pro Tempore of the Ohio House and was a legislative fellow with the Legislative Service Commission.

Craig is currently a member of the Wayne County Farm Bureau, Ohio Township Association, Wayne County FOPA Lodge 53, Wayne County GOP, Buckeye Firearms Association and the Jo Ann Davidson Leadership Institute.

Craig has said that she understands that small government and a low tax environment create a climate for job creation and opportunity. She is also pro-life and supports school choice. She also advocates for an "all-of-the-above" energy policy.

Craig has received a top rating from both the NRA and Buckeye Firearms Association, and she has received endorsements from Ohio Value Voters, Ohio Right to Life PAC, Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC, Wayne County Auditor Jarra Underwood, Orrville Mayor Matt Plybon, Wayne County Commissioner Sue Smail, Wayne County Commissioner Ron Amstutz and several Wayne County farm owners.

On Jan. 30, 2024, Craig's campaign reported $8,443 in contributions received, $7,469 spent and $22,772 on hand.

Dennis Finley is currently mayor of Dalton in Wayne County and has previously served as president of Dalton's village council. He is also a member of the county mental health and recovery board.

Finley touts his role as a civic leader in Wayne County in a number of capacities as his qualification to represent the region. On his campaign website he writes, "Regardless of age or community status, the folks of the 77th District are ready to be heard in Columbus. It is my goal to be their voice," promising to [break] down systemic vulnerabilities" in Columbus and "[promote] a more prosperous future for the next generation."

Finley's priorities from his website include advocating for agricultural interests of Wayne County, the elimination of or alterations to mandated state school testing and promotion of technical education and being the voice in Columbus for local governments and safety services.

In a filing from Feb. 28, 2024, Finley's campaign reported $8,000 in contributions received and $10,663 spent with $2,435 on hand.

Frank Grande says on his campaign's website that he is "passionate about protecting our homeland against outside dangers, protecting families against undue taxes, protecting children from destructive ideologies, [and] protecting our God given fundamental constitutional rights."

His website pledges "action on the issues for all of Wayne County" and that "we will make the state stop wasting our tax money on things we don't want and don't need."

Grande received his law degree and master's degree in intellectual property from the University of Akron. His LinkedIn profile lists him as currently the owner of Life Spring Consulting and YOUTHSPRING. His campaign has not filed campaign finance reports with the Ohio Secretary of State.

Josh Hlavaty also brings Statehouse experience to the district's primary race. Hlavaty was a legislative aide for Rep. Riordan McClain (R-Nevada) from 2022-2023. His campaign website says he also worked on Republican political campaigns in South Carolina and Alabama, as well as Ohio.

In 2021, Hlavaty ran unsuccessfully for a seat on the Hillsdale School Board. In 2016, Hlavaty was also part of a group that advocated for the federal heartbeat bill before Congress.

Hlavaty says on his campaign website that Ohio has made "great strides" to be a business-friendly state, but he favors "meaningful business tax cuts like eliminating the Commercial Activity Tax and promising to always be a vote supporting Ohio businesses."

He also supports banning the "foreign purchase of farmland" and is specific about promoting energy that benefits Wayne County, urging new considerations of green energy produced in the county to be used in the county, "and not sold to Columbus."

Hlavaty supports school choice in the form of the expansion of the EdChoice program and establishing a "Backpack" Scholarship.

Hlavaty received the highest possible ratings from both Ohio Gun Owners and the Buckeye Firearms Association, and he has been endorsed in the race by Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio, Ohio Right to Life, Ohio Value Voters, Ohio Conservatives PAC and Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom. Individuals endorsing Hlavaty include state Reps. McClain, Adam Bird (R-Cincinnati) and Gary Click (R-Vickery) as well as Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Lutz, Wayne County Clerk of Courts Tim Neal and retired Wayne County Commissioner Becky Foster.

On Feb. 1, 2024, Hlavaty's campaign reported $20,665 in contributions received with $2,689 spent and $17,975 on hand.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 8, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 83

The Republican primary in House District 83 will see a member of House leadership trying to defend his seat for a fourth term against a would-be newcomer to the Statehouse as Rep. Jon Cross (R-Findlay) is challenged by Ty Mathews.

Mathews serves in the Army National Guard and recently returned from a deployment to Iraq. He was also previously a legislative and policy analyst for Ohio Treasurer of State Robert Sprague.

Cross is currently assistant majority floor leader in the House and his committee assignments include energy and natural resources, finance, finance subcommittee on higher education, government oversight and rules and reference. While Cross has not been primary sponsor of any bills in this General Assembly, he has co-sponsored dozens of bills.

In recent months, Cross has voiced his support of votes by the House to override Gov. Mike DeWine's vetoes of HB68 (Click) as well as DeWine's veto of language from HB33 (Edwards) prohibiting local regulations of tobacco and alternative tobacco products. He has also called on the Ohio Senate to "quit playing games" and pass funding bill HB2 (Cutrona-Upchurch).

Cross is among the "Blue 22" House Republicans who sided with House Democrats to elect Rep. Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) as speaker over Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Maumee).

In a Facebook post from Feb. 18, Mathews seemingly brought up the speaker vote when he posted, "Unlike my opponent, I have not betrayed fellow Republicans in the state Legislature or compromised our principles and values by siding with Democrats." Earlier in Mathews' campaign, he announced the endorsement of his campaign by Merrin. In his endorsement, Merrin called the primary contest between Mathews and Cross a "key race in the Ohio House."

Mathews has also taken Cross to task for "bragging" about the funding amounts included in the passage of HB2. He says Cross is not telling the full story of HB2, and the bill may not ultimately be passed by the Ohio Senate or may include smaller amounts of funding.

Mathews' campaign website describes him as pro-liberty, pro-law and order, pro-parents' rights, pro-life, pro-Second Amendment and anti-mandate. He touts a "new era of conservative values," saying "the culture war has not been lost … the family unit has not been broken … the country is not doomed" and "faith is on the rise."

Cross lists endorsements in the race from the National Rifle Association, Ohio Gun Owners, National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) Ohio, Ohio Right to Life PAC, Buckeye Firearms Association, and a number of elected officials from Hardin and Hancock counties within the 83rd House District.

Other of Mathews' endorsements come from Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio, Veterans for America First, Ohio Value Voters, Americans for Prosperity-Ohio, We The People Convention, Associated Builders and Contractors of Ohio, Ohio Citizens PAC, Restore Liberty, and Sheet Metal Workers Local Union No. 33.

In the most recent campaign finance filings with the Ohio Secretary of State's office, Cross reported $149,070 in contributions received and $242,025 spent, with $47,392 on hand. Mathews' campaign reported $63,820 in contributions with $14,448 spent and $61,542 on hand.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 1, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 86

A three-term incumbent is facing a challenge from a business owner who is no stranger to the Statehouse in the Republican primary race in the 86th House District. Rep. Tracy Richardson (R-Marysville) is seeking her fourth term against small business owner Wezlynn Davis, who has provided testimony to House and Senate committees multiple times.

Richardson is one of the "Blue 22" Republican members of the House who joined with House Democrats in early 2023 to elect Rep. Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) speaker over Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Maumee). Following that vote, Richardson and the other 21 Republicans were censured by the Ohio Republican Party, and the party chose not to endorse Richardson in March's primary race, though Richardson does count endorsements in the race from U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH), the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, Ohio Right to Life PAC and Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC.

During her third and current term in the House, Richardson has been the primary sponsor of bills including HB103 (Jones-Richardson), to establish a task force to develop new social studies academic standards in the state; HB254 (Richardson-Holmes), to expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans; and HB385 (Richardson-Williams), to allow a victim of human trafficking to expunge criminal records directly related to their being a victim of human trafficking.

Richardson's campaign website also lists as priorities enhancing and protecting the economy, safeguarding tax dollars, protecting rights and freedoms, addressing education, preventing addiction and treating mental health and advocating for agriculture. Her committee assignments in the House include chair of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education and seats on the finance, families and aging, behavioral health and armed services and veterans' affairs committees. Richardson is also on the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform.

Davis has attacked Richardson on social media for being among the Republican representatives who voted for Stephens as speaker in 2023. She has also said that Richardson was the "hand-picked" candidate for her seat originally by currently imprisoned former Speaker Larry Householder, and that Householder is responsible for "bankrolling" Richardson's campaign. Davis owns her own salon business and has provided testimony in front of House and Senate committees regarding professional licensure legislation and other legislation affecting small businesses.

On her campaign website, Davis labels herself a "small government conservative"; "pro-freedom" (specifically opposing vaccination mandates and government overreach); and "defending Second Amendment rights." Among her priorities, Davis lists economic opportunity, lower taxes and spending, limited government, patient choice in health care, parent-led education, affordable energy, curbing property taxes for retirees and expanding veteran health care and services.

Davis has been endorsed in the race by Whitestone Ordnance gun shop, Young Americans for Liberty, We The People Convention, Ohio Conservatives PAC, Ohio Citizens PAC, Americans for Prosperity, Josh Brown of the Ohio Republican Party State Central Committee and Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom.

In a campaign filing with the Ohio Secretary of State dated Jan. 13, 2024, Davis's campaign reported $10,689 on hand following $13,905 in expenditures. Richardson's campaign reported $69,137 on hand following $7,552 in expenditures in a filing from Jan. 30, 2024.

The winner of the Republican primary in the 86th District will face Democrat Leslie Verbus in the general election. Dave's Redistricting rates the district as having a 66 percent Republican lean.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 21, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 89

Having received an Ohio Supreme Court decision in his favor (see The Hannah Report, 1/29/24), former Rep. Steven Kraus is seeking to defeat incumbent Rep. D.J. Swearingen (R-Huron) in the upcoming March primary. Kraus' candidacy had been challenged on the basis of a felony theft conviction that was sealed rather than expunged, though the ruling sidestepped that issue in clearing him to run again.

Kraus' previous tenure at the Statehouse ended in 2015 following his conviction. On social media, Kraus said he was "cancelled, expunged, now working like [former President Donald] Trump to regain my seat."

His website also sharply criticizes Swearingen's time in office, saying the state has seen "distressing scandals, a loss of trust, a loss of confidence, and the deterioration of vital aspects of Ohio's fabric."

Kraus further claimed to have experienced "the flaws in Ohio's justice system firsthand" and said he wants to implement "transformative reforms."

After Kraus announced his bid, Swearingen in turn told the *Sandusky Register*, "Steve is running because he thinks the seat is owed to him after he was removed for his felony conviction." (See *The Hannah Report*, 12/21/23.)

"People are tired of corrupt politicians who make it all about themselves, their egos and neglect the people they serve," he added. "The seat belongs to the people of the 89th District, not any one person."

As far as his position on issues, Swearingen's website says he has "a proven record" protecting Lake Erie and opposed offshore wind projects, supports U.S. energy independence, helped businesses during the pandemic and favors empowering parents when it comes to their child's education. It further notes his work as vice chair on the House Criminal Justice Committee and said he "developed legislation to fix a bad Ohio Supreme Court decision" through 134-HJR2 (LaRe-Swearingen).

In this General Assembly, Swearingen has introduced bills on bail reform, computer crimes, enacting a "Parents' Bill of Rights" in schools and addressing noncompliance with sex offender registration.

Kraus said he wants to make government small and efficient; limit "interference" in Ohioans' lives; reduce spending; and promote greater local control over public health policies and school administration. He also voiced support for parental rights, promoted community well-being that is conducive to raising families; and believes in value-based governance "aligned closely with Judeo-Christian principles."

His website additionally notes support for school choice, ending the property tax and addressing border security, along with opposition to abortion. Kraus also said Swearingen was censured by the Ohio Republican Party's Central Committee for supporting Rep. Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) as speaker. (See The Hannah Report, 1/6/23.) Kraus said he would have called for the impeachment of Gov. Mike DeWine due to his pandemic response as well.

Kraus has been endorsed by Ohio Value Voters, while Swearingen has the support of Ohio Right to Life PAC.

Swearingen's 2023 annual report filed Jan. 31 said he received $94,023, spent $18,255 and had $136,122 on hand. Kraus filed a 2023 annual report that did not list any fundraising or expenditures.

The winner between them will face Democrat Alicia Roshong, an attorney and former city prosecutor. She owns several businesses as well. Her campaign website identified improving public education, ensuring accessible health care and fostering economic growth as key issues.

Roshong's 2023 annual report said she received $1,140 and spent $42, with $1,098 on hand.

According to numbers provided by the Ohio Redistricting Commission along with its final plan adopted in 2023, the district has an approximately 55 percent Republican partisan lean. It includes Erie County and parts of Huron and Ottawa counties.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 26, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 90

The Republican primary for the 90th House District features three candidates characterizing themselves as political outsiders.

Rep. Justin Pizzulli (R-Franklin Furnace), who was appointed in May to replace Rep. Brian Baldridge (R-Winchester) after he became director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture, said on his campaign website that "politicians in Columbus ignore us."

"They see us as behind the times. They see us as unable or unwilling to contribute to the state economy. As politicians running for office, they see an effort to connect with us not worth their time," he continued.

Pizzulli's website also lists endorsements from the Republican Party organizations in Scioto and Adams counties; local officials in Scioto, Adams and Brown counties; the Buckeye Firearms Association; Ohio Right to Life; Ohio Young Republicans; and labor groups.

His two challengers are Gina Collinsworth and Timothy Wheeler.

Collinsworth said on her website she is running "because Southern Ohio needs a voice for the people, not a politician hand-picked by liberal special interests." She added she is a lifelong resident of Scioto County with a passion for "Southern Ohio and Republican values." Her social media notes she is an economic development professional and third-generation small business owner.

Collinsworth has been endorsed by the Brown County Republican Party, the Scioto County Republican Club, Ohio Values Voters, Americans for Prosperity-Ohio and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce PAC. She also announced the support of U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Urbana), State Sen. Terry Johnson (R-McDermott) and State Rep. Adam Bird (R-Cincinnati).

On his Facebook page, Wheeler said, "If you want a state [representative] that's funded by big donors to carry out favors in the Statehouse, I'm not your guy." He also criticized the local and national Republican Party organizations as being "RINOs" and questioned the other candidates' support of former President Donald Trump. Wheeler also compared his work experience in the septic industry to politics.

Regarding political issues, Pizzulli said he supports "God, guns and babies" and expanded on each point.

"As children of God we are happiest with strong friendships, family, and community. I will work hard to make sure the values our country was built on are cherished and everyone is able to worship freely," he said in regard to religious freedom.

Pizzulli also said he would oppose "any attempts at restrictions on our Second Amendment rights, no matter who is trying to take our guns away" and voiced support for "alternatives to abortion, such as adoption or fostering a supportive environment."

Collinsworth's website does not identify specific issues, but says she is a "conservative Republican, an America First patriot and a faithful Christian." On Facebook, she also pledges to support the Second Amendment and said she had an A- rating from the Buckeye Firearms Association.

"I am 100 [percent] for Southern Ohio conservative values. I am pro-life, pro-God, pro-2A, pro-family and pro-jobs," Collinsworth said as part of a post responding to "attack ads." She also posted a video calling Pizzulli a "never-Trump liberal." There has been contention between the two in regard to ads showing her wearing a mask to visit her husband in the hospital during the pandemic as well, while Collinsworth also had an ad showing Pizzulli in a mask.

Wheeler's social media posts include criticism of Gov. Mike DeWine for vetoing HB68 (Click) and urging the voters to research candidates, particularly their past stance on Trump.

The winner among the three will face Democrat Kate Nunnelly, whose website lists belief in community, conservation, reproductive choice, accessible child-led education, equity, mental health and fair taxes as important issues to the campaign.

Pizzulli's 2023 annual report filed Jan. 31 said he received $53,621, spent $2,014 and had $58,743 on hand. Collinsworth's annual report said she received $8,800, spent $5,017 and had $3,783 on hand. Wheeler's most recent report was filed Oct. 26 and showed he received $5,000, spent $2,288 and had $5,208 on hand.

Nunnelly's two listed reports were in regard to designation of a treasurer and did not show any funds raised or expenditures as yet.

According to numbers provided by the Ohio Redistricting Commission along with its final plan adopted in 2023, the House District 90 has an approximately 68 percent Republican partisan lean. It includes all of Adams and Scioto counties and part of Brown County.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 29, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 95

Rep. Don Jones' (R-Freeport) bid for re-election in the 95th House District is being challenged in the primary by Nelson Roe, who previously ran for the House as a Libertarian in 2014. (See *The Hannah Report*, 4/29/14.) Jones is currently in his third term.

Jones' website details his agricultural background, including 23 years working at Harrison Central High School as an agricultural education teacher and Future Farmers of America (FFA) advisor. He has also been a certified volunteer fireman and emergency medical technician for 27 years and served on several local boards, in addition to the Ohio FFA Board. Jones is also a member of the National Rifle Association (NRA).

While his website does not reference policy positions, he has introduced bills on agricultural societies, reinstating the rural industrial park loan fund; EdChoice scholarships; education in regard to current events, race and sex; and natural gas pipelines.

Jones told the Athens Independent the 95th District still faces challenges with infrastructure and Internet access, as well as resources for area schools. He also said the size and geography of the six counties in the district can make it difficult to connect with all constituents.

Jones has been endorsed by the Ohio Right to Life PAC. (See *The Hannah Report*, 2/13/24.) He did not receive an endorsement from the Ohio Republican Party's Central Committee, which previously censured him for supporting Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill.) (See *The Hannah Report*, 1/6/23, 1/29/24.)

Roe does not have a campaign website but told the Independent the "Blue 22" were part of the reason he is running this year. He also pointed to inflation and school choice issues and supports abolishing the state income tax. Roe further said he is running for elected office to inspire his children to see how one person can make a difference.

Roe's Facebook page noted endorsements by Ohio Citizens PAC and the We the People Convention and said he is seeking campaign donations through the Republican fundraising platform WinRed.

The Republican primary winner will face Democratic candidate Lish Greiner, who previously worked in health care and now runs a lawn care business. Greiner cited her health care leadership experience in responses to the Independent and said she would seek policy changes that echo the "collective voice" of the region if elected. She is unopposed in her primary.

In his 2023 annual campaign finance filing, Jones reported spending $41,975 and had $17,324 on hand. Friends of Nelson Roe's only filing was the designation of a treasurer on Jan. 10. Greiner does not have a campaign committee listed through the secretary of state's website as yet.

According to numbers provided by the Ohio Redistricting Commission along with its final plan adopted in 2023, the district has an approximately 58 percent Republican partisan lean. It includes all of Harrison, Noble and Morgan counties and parts of Athens, Belmont, and Guernsey counties.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on Feb. 23, 2024.

Hannah News Races to Watch: House District 98

This year's Republican primary in the 98th House District features a second bid by conservative activist and attorney Scott Pullins, who previously lost to Rep. Darrell Kick (R-Loudonville) in 2022. Kick is now term-limited, so Pullins faces Mark Hiner and Brandon Lape in a three-way race.

Hiner is a business owner and received Kick's endorsement, while Lape previously ran for the U.S. House of Representatives in 2020 and 2022.

Pullins' campaign website said he is "well known at the Statehouse" and that "his experience and connections will be crucial in helping to pass key legislation." It also lists his "top priority" to restore the Legislature as a separate and equal branch, specifically by preventing "abuse of power by government officials during pandemics" and detailing his belief in "medical freedom." Pullins' site also notes his work in support of firearm ownership, including through his legal practice.

Other issues he identified include opposition to abortion and the death penalty; legalizing marijuana so it is taxed and regulated for personal use; supporting school choice efforts; backing "election integrity" measures including elimination of dropboxes and third-party election audits; and having a robust energy policy in the state. Pullins also said there should be a greater focus on mental health, alcohol, and drug related issues rather than building new prisons, and that local property taxes need to be reformed.

His website also notes the support of U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Urbana) and his membership in Ohio Gun Owners. Pullins' website additionally criticizes Hiner, saying he ran for the East Knox School Board in 2023 with support from the Knox County Democratic Party. Pullins further calls for the Knox County Republican Party to rescind its endorsement of Hiner, saying he engaged in "sleazy campaign tactics" and that allegations in a "push poll" made by phone were "false, defamatory and disgusting."

Hiner's campaign website said he is a conservative Republican who supports school choice, the Second Amendment and limited government. It notes Kick's endorsement, along with backing from the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Americans for Prosperity, Ohio Value Voters and local elected officials.

Hiner also said he supports reducing taxes when possible and eliminating the state income tax. He described himself as "a new face with a fresh perspective" rather than a career politician, and detailed concerns his grandchildren "will not have the same opportunities and freedoms in life that prior generations have had unless we get our state and country back on track."

His campaign also recently released a website sharply criticizing Pullins for having represented former Speaker Larry Householder during his federal trial and writing to the judge asking that Householder receive probation.

Lape's website said he believes in "protecting freedom, smaller government and less spending." It further said he wants to "protect Ohio from federal overreach, grow Ohio by leveraging the private market [and] make Ohio a retirement haven."

Ways he would seek to do that include not recognizing certain federal laws on firearms or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) authority. He also wants the district to contribute products and services toward growth in Central Ohio, including the Intel project. Lape also proposes reforms on retirement savings, health insurance and property rights.

His website additionally said he supports legal immigration while opposing amnesty for those who enter the country illegally; wants to protect Ohio "from predatory loans offered by Chinese endeavors to invest in foreign infrastructure"; and supports ranked choice voting and open primaries.

Lape ran for Congress as a Libertarian in 2020 and a Republican in 2022.

The Republican primary winner will face Democratic candidate Annie Homstad, owner of an accounting business and a school treasurer. Her website says she is "passionate about finding solutions to the rising cost of living and health care, women's health care, voting rights, the low minimum wage and school funding issues."

Pullins' 2023 annual report filed Jan. 31 said he received $5,085, had $10,410 in total other income, spent $2,857 and had $12,796 on hand.

Hiner's 2023 annual report said he received $100, had $99,900 he loaned his campaign, spent $47 and had $99,953 on hand.

The secretary of state's campaign finance site showed Lape For Ohio's only filing as the designation of a treasurer in June 2023 and did not list any money received or spent at that time.

Homstad's pre-primary report filed Jan. 22 said she received $530, spent $107 and had $1,230 on hand.

According to numbers provided by the Ohio Redistricting Commission along with its final plan adopted in 2023, the district has an approximately 71 percent Republican partisan lean. It includes all of Holmes and Coshocton counties and parts of Knox County.

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Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on March 5, 2024.