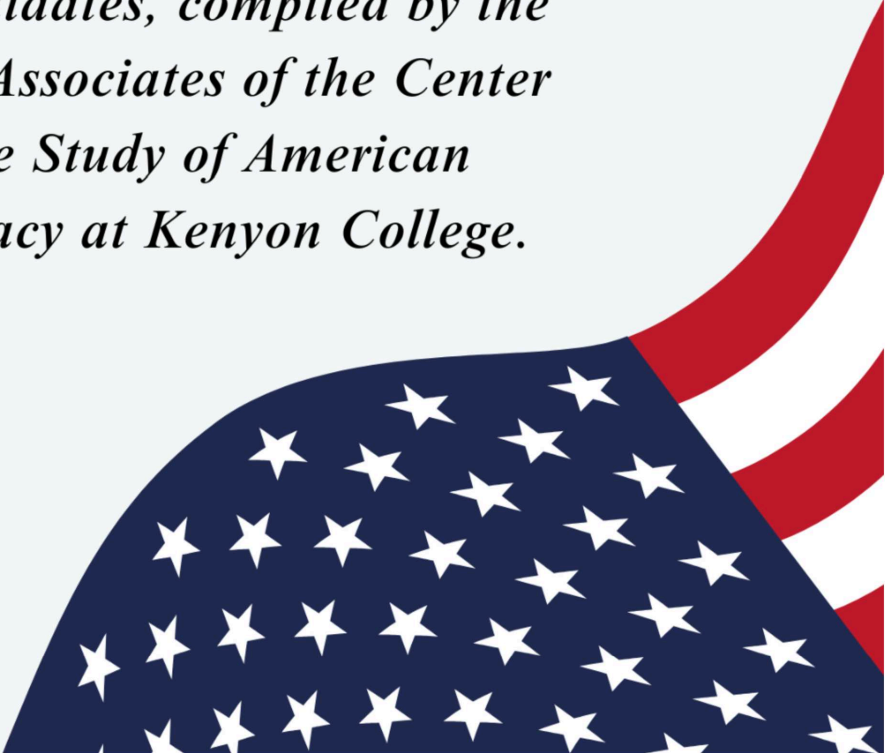




KNOX COUNTY VOTER GUIDE

NOVEMBER 2024

*A nonpartisan guide to issues
and candidates, compiled by the
Student Associates of the Center
for the Study of American
Democracy at Kenyon College.*



Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.

For President and Vice President

For President: Richard Duncan (Nonparty candidate)

For Vice President: Mitchell Preston Bupp

- Richard Duncan is a recurring Independent presidential candidate in the state of Ohio, running in 2024 for the fifth time. He studied geography in graduate school and has been a member of the Center for Law and Justice and a member of the Board of Building Appeals in Kent, Ohio. He has no experience in elected office and is only on the ballot in Ohio.

For President: Kamala D. Harris (Democratic)

For Vice President: Tim Walz

- Harris, 60, has held executive and legislative offices as Vice President of the United States, U.S. Senator, Attorney General of the State of California, and District Attorney of San Francisco. Walz, 60, is in his second term as governor of the state of Minnesota, after six terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. Before running for Congress, he served twenty-four years in the National Guard and worked as a high school teacher. The Democratic Party platform is [here](#).

For President: Chase Oliver (Libertarian)

For Vice President: Mike ter Maat

- Chase Oliver, 39, is an anti-war activist from Georgia. He ran for Congress in 2020 and for the Senate in 2022, but has never held office. His running mate, Mike ter Maat was a police officer for over 10 years and has previously worked as a commercial loan officer, a financial economist in the White House Office of Management, and an economic consultant. Oliver's platform emphasizes protecting individual rights and decreasing the role of government. He wants to abolish the U.S. Department of Education, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the Department of Transportation and to phase out Social Security and Medicare for younger Americans. He supports reproductive freedom.

For President: Peter Sonski (Other party candidate)

For Vice President: Lauren Onak

- The candidates of the American Solidarity Party, a party self-described as an offshoot of Christian Democracy, advocate for social justice through their Christian faith. The core ideals of the party are those of Christianity designed to be applied universally to a pluralistic society and advocate for human rights and dignity. These candidates are “campaigning to bring your values to American politics.”
- Peter Sonski worked for eight years as Director of Communications for the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and as Assistant Editor at the National Catholic Register, after graduating from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He is concluding his second term on Connecticut's 17th Regional School District Board of Education and previously held municipal-level offices. Lauren Onak is a stay-at-home mom with three young children with degrees from Barnard College of Columbia University and Hunter College.

For President: Jill Stein (Other party candidate)

For Vice President: Anita Rios

- Jill Stein (Green Party) chose Butch Ware as her running mate, but the change was made after Ohio's deadline. The Secretary of State of Ohio has announced that votes for the Stein/Rios ticket will *not* be counted.

For President: Donald J. Trump (Republican)

For Vice President: JD Vance

- Trump, 78, was president of the United States from 2017-2021, after a career running his real estate development firm and producing and hosting the television show, *The Apprentice*. JD Vance, 40, enlisted in the Marines after high school, serving four years. After college and law school, he wrote a best-selling memoir, *Hillbilly Elegy*, and worked as a venture capitalist, before becoming a U.S. Senator for Ohio in 2022. The Republican Party platform is [here](#).

A detailed, reliable, nonpartisan information about all judicial candidates is available at www.judicialvotescount.org.

Here we summarize main points from the candidates' campaign websites and Judicial Votes Count. Endorsements are self-reported by the candidates.

For Justice of the Supreme Court, full term commencing January 1, 2025

Michael P. Donnelly (Democratic)

- Justice Michael P. Donnelly has served on the Supreme Court of Ohio since 2019, and is running for re-election to his seat. After earning his J.D. from the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Donnelly began his legal career in 1992, working as an assistant prosecutor for Cuyahoga County. He was in private practice for seven years, representing plaintiffs and injured workers in cases involving asbestos exposure, personal injury, and workers' compensation claims. From 2005 to 2018, Donnelly served as a judge on the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas.
- Donnelly has endorsements from the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Ohio AFL-CIO, and many other labor unions, the Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council, Cleveland Stonewall Democrats, the Ohio Environmental Council, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio, and others.

Megan E. Shanahan (Republican)

- Judge Shanahan graduated from The University of Cincinnati College of Law and has practiced law since 2000. She has been an assistant county prosecutor in Butler County, in the felony division for Hamilton County, and as assistant city solicitor for Mt. Healthy. Her judicial career began with her election to the Hamilton County Municipal Court, where she served for four years. Since 2015, she has been a judge for the Hamilton County Common Pleas Court.
- Shanahan has been endorsed by Buckeye Firearms, The Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, NFIB (National Federation of Independent Business), Ohio Farm Bureau, Ohio State Medical Association PAC, Ohio Right to Life, the Ohio Business Roundtable, and others.

For Justice of the Supreme Court, full term commencing January 2, 2025

Justice Joseph Deters was appointed to the Ohio Supreme Court in January 2023 for a term that ends in 2026. He is giving up that seat to challenge Justice Melody Stewart, who is seeking reelection to the seat whose term runs from January 2, 2025, through 2030.

Interestingly, Teamsters DRIVE and CAMEO (Cleveland American Middle East Organization) have endorsed both of these candidates.

Joseph T. Deters (Republican)

- Justice Deters, 66, obtained his JD from the University of Cincinnati Law School and his previous public service includes Assistant Hamilton County Prosecutor (six years); Hamilton County Clerk of Courts (four years); Hamilton County Prosecutor (24 years) and Treasurer of the State of Ohio (five years).
- Deters' campaign website says one of his priorities is "Maintaining positions as a strict conservative constitutionalist that values the rights of all Ohioans." The site lists ten endorsements from business, professional, and labor groups including the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, the Ohio Farm Bureau, and the Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council. We were unable to find information about ratings from bar associations.

Melody J. Stewart (Democratic)

- Melody J. Stewart, 62, is a Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court running for re-election in 2024. She was elected to her first term in 2018 as the first African American woman elected to the Supreme Court of Ohio. Previously, she served 12 years on the Ohio Court of Appeals. Prior experiences include: assistant law director for the cities of Cleveland and East Cleveland, a civil defense litigator, a law professor at Cleveland State University, and a music teacher. She holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, a J.D from Cleveland State, and a Ph.D from Case Western Reserve University.
- Stewart has been endorsed by the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Toledo Blade, Ohio Citizen Action, Ohio AFL-CIO, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio, the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police, and many others. She earned "Excellent" ratings from the Cuyahoga County Criminal Defense Attorneys and the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association.

For Justice of the Supreme Court

This race is for the seat currently held by Justice Deters. The winner will complete the term that expires December 31, 2026.

Lisa Forbes (Democratic)

- Judge Forbes, 60, graduated summa cum laude from Case Western Reserve School of Law in 1992. Forbes has served on the bench of the Ohio Eighth District Court of Appeals Judge since 2020.
- She became a partner of Vorys, Sater, Seymour, and Pease LLP where she has worked for 27 years as a litigator, helping clients resolve disputes ranging from complex business litigation to consumer class actions, and legal malpractice to trust and estate disputes. She told Judicial Votes Count that she is running to “do her part to ensure that the Ohio Supreme Court is an effective firewall protecting our democracy and the rule of law.” Endorsed by AFL-CIO, AFSCME, and many labor unions, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund, and others.

Daniel Hawkins (Republican)

- Judge Hawkins, 48, practiced criminal law and earned his law degree from The Ohio State University College of Law. Hawkins spent 2001 to 2013 as Assistant Prosecuting Attorney and Director of the Special Victims Unit for the Franklin County Prosecutor's Office. He then became a judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court Environmental Division from 2013 to 2019. He is now a Judge of the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas General Division (2019-present).
- He is a member of the Federalist Society and told Judicial Votes Count “I am running because I love this state and I want my children to grow up in an Ohio that is safe and prosperous.” Websites do not specify his endorsements beyond the Ohio Republican Party.

For U.S. Senator

Sherrod Brown (Democratic)

- Sherrod Brown is seeking re-election, having represented Ohio in the U.S. Senate since 2007. He previously served in the U.S. House of Representatives, as the Ohio Secretary of State, and in the Ohio General Assembly. Brown grew up in Mansfield, Ohio, graduated from Yale University and has two master's degrees, in public administration and in education, from The Ohio State University.
- A central part of Brown's campaign is "fighting for blue-collar workers" by increasing worker protections, defending unions, supporting tariffs against foreign imports, and job creation in Ohio. He co-sponsored two laws that are bringing chip manufacturing to Ohio (from overseas) and the All-American Flag Act, which requires the federal government only to buy flags made in America.
- Brown's campaign has received endorsements from the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Toledo Blade, and many labor unions, environmental, gun safety, and reproductive rights groups.

Don Kissick (Libertarian)

- Kissick is an auto worker and a veteran of the U.S. Navy, having deployed twice to the Middle East. He moved to Ohio in 2007 and now lives in Ottawa, Ohio, with his family. His campaign site on Facebook has 372 followers and directs viewers to a personal website that offers a platform from 2018 emphasizing gun rights, non-interventionist foreign policy, an end to foreign aid, immigration reform to enable more legal entry, cutting spending to reduce the national debt, and an end to corporate bailouts.

Bernie Moreno (Republican)

- Bernie Moreno is the U.S. Senate candidate for the Republican Party. He is the CEO of the Collection Auto Group. Born in Bogotá, Colombia, he grew up in Florida, moving to Ohio in 2005. He holds a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Michigan.
- A central part of Moreno's campaign is "protecting the American dream for another generation." If elected, Moreno seeks to "shrink the government, protect our freedoms, stop the Chinese [C]ommunist [P]arty from taking our data and land, and always put America first." He previously expressed support for a federal 15-week ban on abortions and continuing to build the wall on the U.S.'s southern border.
- Moreno's campaign has received endorsements from the Associated Builders and Contractors, Moms for America, Ohio Right to Life, Ohio Value Voters, Turning Point, and from fellow Republicans.

For Representative to Congress (12th District)

Troy Balderson (Republican)

- Balderson has represented OH-12th since 2018. A lifelong Ohioan from Zanesville, Balderson attended The Ohio State University and Muskingum College and previously held state senator and state representative positions.
- Running for re-election, Balderson advocates securing the border, increasing gas production and pipeline construction, and expanding affordable healthcare in rural areas.

Jerrad Christian (Democratic)

- A Navy veteran trained in meteorology and software engineering, Christian states that his platform is built on empathy for fellow citizens and a vision of a sustainable, equitable future for all.
- If elected, he would work to bring jobs to the 12th district by repairing existing oil and gas wells. Christian seeks to bring innovative technology to Ohio to increase crop yields and food security and create job opportunities. He advocates for investing in renewable energy, access to reproductive care, and striking the balance between individual freedom and the societal good. When asked by a Kenyon student what his most important issue was, Christian stated that addressing climate change at the local level was his number one priority.

For State Representative (61st district)

For a news report profiling both candidates, see:

<https://www.knoxpages.com/2024/03/20/lear-hogan-win-ohio-61st-district-primary-races/>

David Hogan (Democratic)

- Hogan resides in Marion OH and has taught history at Heidelberg College for 35 years. He has a BA from the State University of New York and a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University. This is his third race for state representative. He is the author of *Selling 'em by the Sack: White Castle and the Creation of American Food* (1997) and is the former president of the Ohio Academy of History and a former board member of the Ohio Historical Society.
- Hogan describes himself as a “left-leaning moderate.” His campaign promises “rational, bipartisan leadership that opts for moderation over extremism.” He is pro-Second Amendment but in favor of background checks. He advocates funding public schools instead of charter schools. Hogan supports faster implementation of marijuana legalization, bipartisan cooperation to address gun violence, and LGBTQ+ rights. He opposes what he describes as out of control property taxes and urges the removal of religion from public schools.

Beth Lear (Republican)

- Beth Lear is the incumbent, concluding her first term representing the 61st Ohio House District, which includes eastern Delaware County and western Knox County. With a bachelor's degree in international relations from The Ohio State University, Lear has been on the Delaware County Republican Central Committee since 2011. She has worked as a legislative aide in the Ohio House of Representatives, an education analyst for the Buckeye Institute, and the Vice President of Government Affairs for Associated Builders and Contractors of Ohio. She was in the Ohio Air National Guard and served on community boards for the Delaware County Library, Delaware County Port Authority, and four charter schools.
- Lear’s website emphasizes her conservative priorities. She states that she works to protect homes, freedom, children, and families by sponsoring bills to make sextortion a felony; to limit increases on property taxes, to prohibit shared-gender bathrooms or accommodations for kindergarten students through college, and to ensure that loved ones are not left alone during future public health emergencies. None of these bills has been enacted into law.

For State Representative (98th District)

Mark Hiner (Republican)

- Hiner is a conservative running for office for the first time. A business owner originally from Ashland, Ohio, Hiner holds a degree in Broadcast Engineering Technology and an MBA.
- Hiner’s platform emphasizes limited government and “pushing power as close to the people as possible.” If elected, he would push for tax reform and would work to eliminate the Ohio income tax. He favors school choice and gun rights and seeks to provide support to first responders to ensure they have the necessary tools to keep the public safe.

Annie Homstad (Democratic)

- An accountant, substitute teacher, and local school treasurer in Knox County, Homstad has been endorsed by twelve organizations, including the Knox County Democratic Party, Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, and Job Security for Ohioans.
- Homstad believes in finding solutions to the problems Ohioans face, like the rising cost of living, the low minimum wage, and school funding.

For Judge of the Court of Appeals (5th District) – 3 separate seats

Robert G. Montgomery (Republican) is running unopposed. See his profile at Judicial Votes Count.

For Judge of the Court of Appeals (5th District)

Kevin W. Popham (Republican) is running unopposed. See his profile at Judicial Votes Count.

For Judge of the Court of Appeals (5th District)

David Gormley (Republican) is running unopposed. See his profile at Judicial Votes Count.

For County Commissioner

Barry Lester (Republican)

- A graduate of Fredericktown High School and a veteran of the U.S. army, Lester currently works for Donley Ford in Mount Vernon. Lester has experience in budgeting, procurement, and human relations from being the Chief Operating Officer at Midwestern Auto Group, where he managed 200 employees.
- Lester opposes farmland solar and seeks more timely, transparent communication between the county and citizens. Knox Pages' full profile is here:
<https://www.knoxpages.com/2024/09/19/knox-county-commissioners-race-a-closer-look-at-barry-lester/>

Chuck Rogers (Democratic)

- Chuck Rogers is a retired flight paramedic and first responder; a board member of the Knox County Habitat for Humanity and the Shady Owl Ranch Animal Sanctuary; and a volunteer with MTVarts and the Knox County Dog Shelter.
- His priorities as commissioner include: addressing rising property values and updating zoning codes; building workforce housing; improving medication access; combating tax value lost through dispensary bans; increasing government transparency; and updating public transportation.
- Knox Pages' profile of Rogers is here:
<https://www.knoxpages.com/2024/09/18/knox-county-commissioners-race-a-closer-look-at-chuck-rogers/>

For County Commissioner

Drenda Keesee (Republican) has no opponent for the second commissioner's seat.

For Prosecuting Attorney

Chip McConville (Republican) is running unopposed.

For Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas

Christy Milligan Staton (Republican) is running unopposed.

For Sheriff

Daniel Weckesser (Republican) is running unopposed.

For County Recorder

Tara Stiltner (Republican) is running unopposed

For County Treasurer

Connie Durbin (Republican) is running unopposed.

For County Engineer

Cameron Keaton (Republican) is running unopposed

For Coroner

Jennifer Ogle (Republican) is running unopposed

For Member of State Board of Education (7th District)

Jessica Goeller: CSAD has attempted to reach out to Jessica Goeller for information on her campaign but received no response. Neither state party appears to have endorsed this candidacy and a web search yielded no biographical information.

Rhonda R. Johnson was a classroom teacher for 35 years, during which she became President of the Columbus Education Association. She then served as Education Director for the City of Columbus. Johnson believes the State School Board can play a big role in mitigating the teacher shortage. She wishes to expand the Resident Educator Program, in order to increase teacher retention rates (currently most teachers leave the profession in their first five years). She pledges to advocate for teacher quality. In a statement to CSAD, Johnson addressed the need for “competent, high-quality and caring teacher[s].” She has the endorsement of the Ohio Democratic Party.

State Issue:

Issue 1: “To create an appointed redistricting commission not elected by or subject to removal by the voters of the state.”

A “yes” vote on Issue 1 creates the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission, to ban partisan politicians from the map drawing process and redraw the existing maps.

A “no” vote on Issue 1 maintains the current system and current maps, with only elected officials on the commission that draws district maps.

Details:

Every decade, following the national census, Ohio redraws its maps for the districts represented in the state legislature and the U.S. House of Representatives. Ohio Issue 1 is a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would change the process for drawing those legislative districts.

Currently, the Ohio Redistricting Commission (ORC) is responsible for drawing district maps. The ORC consists of seven members, all of whom are elected officials. Two seats are reserved for Republicans and two for Democrats, appointed by state legislative leaders. The remaining three positions are held by the governor, the secretary of state, and the auditor, positions currently controlled by one party.

After the last census, the ORC proposed seven maps that the Ohio Supreme Court, in bipartisan decisions, struck down as unconstitutional. The high court found that the commission had drawn district lines to favor one party, such that representation in the Statehouse and Congress would be disproportionate to the party’s actual support among voters statewide. As the 2022 election date approached, a federal court ordered that the final set of proposed maps be used, so that the election could proceed. Current members of the Ohio legislature and Congress were elected based on those districts that the high court said favored one party. In response, the now-retired chief justice of the high court and others proposed Issue 1 as a mechanism to take elected officials out of the map-drawing process. (Continued, below.)

Issue 1 would create the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission (OCRC), a 15-member body made up of five citizens with a record of affiliation with the Republican Party (for example by voting in two primaries), five with a record of affiliation with the Democratic Party, and five citizens not affiliated with one of the two largest parties. The amendment would create a screening panel of four retired judges—two Republicans and two Democrats—to vet individuals applying to serve on the commission. The process for selecting the final fifteen commission members from a larger pool of applicants has several steps, creating multiple opportunities for public comment on the qualifications of the applicants and for uncovering conflicts of interest. The proposal bans current and former elected officials or candidates, political party officials, lobbyists, and major political donors from applying to serve on the commission.

Once the citizens' commission is selected, Issue 1 requires that the commission draw impartial maps in compliance with the U.S. Constitution and federal law, including the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The language in the proposed constitutional amendment states that maps should be drawn, "To ban partisan gerrymandering and prohibit the use of redistricting plans that favor one political party and disfavor others, the statewide proportion of districts in each redistricting plan that favors each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide partisan preferences of the voters of Ohio." The commission would draw new maps before the 2025 general election.

Local Issues:

Brinkhaven General Fund (1 of 2), proposed tax levy (renewal)

- The renewal of a tax for Brinkhaven Village is expected to raise \$2,000 each year for the general fund.
- The tax rate will not exceed 2 mills, meaning it will cost \$70 for every \$100,000 of assessed property value. Commencing in 2025 and lasting five years.

Brinkhaven General Fund (2 of 2), proposed tax levy (renewal)

- The renewal of a tax for Brinkhaven Village is projected to generate \$3,000 each year for the general fund.
- The tax rate will not exceed 2.5 mills, costing \$88 for every \$100,000 of property value, and will be in effect for five years starting in 2025, with the first payment due in 2026.

Centerburg, local liquor option

- Should Centerburg's local Shell convenience store located at 79 East Main Street, Centerburg, OH 43011, be allowed to sell wine, beer, and mixed drinks on Sundays.

Central Ohio Joint Fire Department, proposed tax levy (replacement)

- Voters are asked to approve a replacement levy to continue funding the fire, EMS, and rescue services provided by the Central Ohio Joint Fire Department. The department serves over 8,000 residents in Hilliar Township, Milford Township, and the Village of Centerburg and provides fire protection for both Centerburg and Highland school districts, a hospital, three senior living facilities, and many miles of state roads. The fire chief's letter explaining the district's services and expenses can be found at <https://cojfd.org/>.
- The proposed 5.925 mill levy would cost a taxpayer \$207 per \$100,000 of appraised property value. It would first be due in 2026 and last four years.

Clay Township, proposed tax levy (renewal)

- This levy asks voters to approve a 5-year renewal of a 2 mill property tax for the general construction and reconstruction of streets, roads, and bridges. The county auditor estimates the tax would raise \$25,700 annually.
- The tax rate would not exceed 2 mills, costing \$70 for every \$100,000 of property value, and will be in effect for five years starting in 2025, with the first payment due in 2026.
- In a statement to CSAD, Clay Township Trustee Dennis Dugan states that this levy has been on the ballot for more than 20 years and the money will be allocated for road maintenance.

College Township, proposed tax levy (replacement)

- A replacement of two levies expiring this year, combined into one levy of 7.25 mils to support the College Township Fire Department. This is lower than the 12.25 mils passed in 2021, as the College Township Fire Department is now contracted with the Mount Vernon City Fire Department.
- The county auditor estimates this levy would collect \$309,000 annually, amounting to \$254 for each \$100,000. This would commence in 2025 and last five years, with the first payment due in the 2026 calendar year.
- In a statement to us, the Fiscal Officer of College Township shared, “Without a manned fire station in Gambier, over 2,000 students and staff members of Kenyon College, students, and staff of Wiggin Street Elementary School, and approximately 600 village and township residents would have a significant wait for emergency response with services dispatched from west of downtown Mount Vernon.”

County Line Joint Fire District, proposed tax levy (replacement)

Precincts voting on this levy: Morgan Split 1,2,3

- 6.5 mill levy that would replace the existing 4.05 mill levy and cost a taxpayer \$227.52 per year for each \$100,000 of assessed property value. The levy would first be due in 2025 and last five years. Levy would help fund the County Line Joint Fire District, which serves the Village of Utica, Washington Township, and Morgan Township.
- Funds would go towards replacing aging equipment, such as chest compression devices and cameras; modifications to the station to improve housing conditions and improve response times; and the costs of recruiting and retaining firefighters in the district.

Eastern Knox County Fire Department, proposed tax levy (renewal)

- The county auditor estimates that the tax will raise \$2,186,000 each year.
- The tax rate will not exceed 5 mills, which equals \$175 for every \$100,000 of property value, and will be in effect for four years starting in 2025, with the first payment due in 2026.
- This levy is a continuation of an existing property tax. The tax enables the fire department to pay firefighting personnel, purchase up-to-date fire equipment, maintain buildings and sites, improve fire-alarm communication systems, and purchase ambulance equipment. In a statement to the Center for Study for the American Study for Democracy, Larry Stimpert, the Chief of the Eastern Knox County Fire Department, wrote, “It is imperative that [the levy] passes to continue providing quality fire and EMS services to the residents of the Eastern Knox County Joint Fire District.”

Fredericktown Village, proposed tax levy (renewal)

- Renewal of a tax for the purpose of raising \$60,000 annually for continuing current operations. The funds from this levy are deposited into the General Fund and directly support the compensation of village employees, including public works and administrative staff. Without this revenue, the Village would be unable to pay its employees.
- For each \$100,000 of property value, based on the county auditor’s valuation, a taxpayer would pay \$53. This tax would last for five years, starting in 2025, with the first payment due in 2026.

Fredericktown Village Recreation District, proposed tax levy (replacement)

- This levy would raise about \$414,000 annually to fund the parks and recreation operations.
- At a rate of 1.5mills, a taxpayer would pay \$53 dollars for each \$100,000 of assessed property value. This tax would last for three years, starting in 2025, with the first payment due in 2026.

Fredericktown, local liquor option for a particular location:

- Should Bell Stores Inc. be allowed to sell wine and mixed drinks on Sundays at their carryout/grocery store located at 300 West Sandusky Street, Fredericktown, OH 43019?

Loudonville-Perrysville Exempted Village School District—proposed bond issue and tax levy

A yes vote would:

1. Authorize a bond issue to support the school district's Master Facilities Plan.
 - a. This plan involves demolishing the aging Budd and McMullen Elementary schools, along with Loudonville High School (excluding the gym and shop facilities). A new building will be constructed on the current Loudonville High School site for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students.
 - b. The county auditor estimates this tax will average 9.743 mills for each \$1 of taxable value, costing \$341 for every \$100,000 of property value.
 - c. Construction would take place in two phases over the span of two years and cost \$53.5 million, to be repaid over a maximum period of 37 years.
2. Authorize a tax levy to make permanent improvements to the existing facilities that will not be demolished.
 - a. Proposed upgrades include a new metal roof, relocation of the sports fields, upgrades to the shop building, terrazzo floors, a rubber playground, and other site costs.
 - b. The county auditor estimates this levy will collect \$145,000 annually, at a rate not exceeding 0.5 mill, costing a taxpayer an estimated \$18 for each \$100,000 of the county auditor's appraised property value. The levy does not state an end date.

Morgan Township, proposed tax levy (renewal)

- This levy asks voters to renew a property tax dedicated to funding construction and repairs for the streets, roads, and bridges in Morgan Township. The county auditor estimates it would raise \$70,200 annually, at a rate not exceeding 3 mills, costing a taxpayer an estimated \$105 for each \$100,000 of the county auditor's appraised property value. This tax levy would last for three years, starting in 2025, with the first payment due in 2026.
- In a statement to CSAD, Morgan Township Trustee Alan Doup stated that this levy is to “chip and seal roads that need maintenance.”

Mount Vernon - Referendum on Ordinance No. 2024-21: Proposal to rezone 0 Vernonview Drive

- This referendum deals with a proposal from the municipal planning commission to rezone a parcel of land in the City of Mount Vernon at 0 Vernonview Drive. The parcel, owned by Arista Villas of Mount Vernon, comprises nearly 40 acres running east from Vernonview Dr., between Woodside Dr. and Upland Terrace. (It is north of the retail establishments on US 36.)
- A “yes” vote on the referendum would rezone this parcel from R1-Single Family to a PND-Planned Neighborhood District. A PND is a flexible zoning category that allows the municipal planning commission to consider land-use proposals that mix single-family, two-family, or multiple-family dwellings. After the Mount Vernon City Council voted 4-3 to support this rezoning proposal, residents opposed to the change petitioned to put the zoning decision on this ballot. The residents seek to keep the entire area zoned R-1 (residential housing for single homes).
- If the referendum passes, the municipal planning commission has said “they would not approve apartments but would listen to other improvements to this area.”

Mount Vernon - Referendum on Resolution No. 2024-23: Proposal to enter into a contract for the rehabilitation and improvement of Edgewood Road

- The resolution authorizes the City of Mount Vernon to enter into a contract with the Ohio Department of Transportation to make improvements to Edgewood Road, including “approaches from Ohio 229 to US 36.” The design phase will consider if it is appropriate to add a curb, gutter, and sidewalk to the roadway. In the second phase, contingent on funding, the Ohio Department of Transportation would reconstruct the water and sewer pipes, roadway, and approaches.
- Widening Edgewood Road and extending the road through to Coshocton Avenue could create a direct route from the south side of the city to the shopping areas on US 36. Local homeowners believe the city has not been transparent about its plans and are concerned about the impact of a road extension on their neighborhood. For more information, see [the Knox Pages account](#) from March 26, 2024.
- A “yes” vote allows the city to move forward with the project. A “no” vote rejects the contract.

Pike Township, proposed tax levy

- This tax is for road construction and repairs in Pike Township. In a statement to CSAD, township trustee Brayden Freeman said work on Earnest Rd and Keck Rd has gone well but they need more repairs, and that Divelbiss Rd is now in need of repair. The township recently acquired new chip and seal equipment that should make future repairs cheaper.
- An additional property tax of 1 mill, or \$35 for each \$100,000 of appraised property value. This levy will begin in 2024 and last five years. It will first be due in 2025.

Union Township tax levy (renewal) for construction, repairs and maintenance on streets and roads

- Union Township asks voters to renew a tax levy used for the construction, repair, and maintenance of streets and roads within Union Township. CSAD contacted township trustee Darryl Frazier, who specified that this levy will pay for snow plowing and graveling roads. The county auditor estimates the levy will collect \$62,000 annually.
- This levy would begin in 2025 with the first payment due in 2026, lasting five years. At a rate not to exceed 2 mills, this levy would cost a taxpayer \$70 for each \$100,000 of appraised property value.

Glossary

Millage

“Mills” or “millage” is another way of expressing the tax rate on real property (land and buildings). One mill is equal to 1/1,000 of a dollar. So, a 1 mill tax means that for every \$1,000 in assessed property value, the property owner would pay \$1 in taxes. In Ohio, the assessed value of a property for tax purposes is 35% of its market value. For example, if a house in Gambier had a market value of \$200,000, its assessed value would be \$70,000. Therefore, every 1 mill tax increase would cost that property owner \$70 per year.

Precinct Sample Ballot

Sample ballots for each precinct are available at the Knox County Board of Elections website. <https://lookup.boe.ohio.gov/vtrapp/knox/ballotlist.aspx>.

Townships

The state of Ohio has 1,308 political subdivisions known as townships with responsibilities for zoning and road and cemetery maintenance. Townships may provide other services including fire and emergency medical, police, parks, recreation programs, or waste management. Townships cooperate with each other and county/city officials through the Regional Planning Commission. Townships are governed by three elected trustees and an elected fiscal officer, who serve four-year terms. These are part-time positions. Townships cannot impose sales or income taxes. Their only means of raising revenue is through property taxes.

FAQs:

Q: How do I get an absentee ballot?

A: Absentee ballots must first be requested from Knox County Board of Elections (104 E. Sugar St., Mt. Vernon, OH 43050). The deadline to request an absentee ballot is October 29, 2024 but the state recommends that you do so by Oct. 25. You will then receive a ballot to complete and then mail or deliver to the county board of elections. Your completed ballot must be postmarked by Monday, November 4, or hand delivered by 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. Polling stations cannot accept completed absentee ballots.

Q: How do I know where I should be voting?

A: Voting locations are assigned by precinct. The street address used on your voter registration form determines your precinct. You can check your registration details at the Ohio secretary of state's website. Using your voting address, you can find your polling location through the Knox County Board of Elections' website.

For all Gambier residents, regardless of precinct, your voting site is the Gambier Community Center on Meadow Lane.

Q: When are the polls open on election day?

A: For the general election, polls open at 6:30 A.M. and close at 7:30 P.M.

Q: I am a Kenyon student and want to vote in person. Do I need to bring any documentation to the polling station?

A: Yes! Valid forms of ID include an Ohio driver's license, State of Ohio ID card, Interim ID form issued by the Ohio BMV, a US passport, a US passport card, US military ID card, Ohio National Guard ID card, or US Department of Veterans Affairs ID card.

If you do not have one of those forms of identification, you should request an absentee ballot and vote by mail. (See instructions in the first FAQ.)

Q: How do I know if I am actually registered to vote in Ohio?

A: Registered voters may check their voter information online at <https://voterlookup.ohiosos.gov>.

The site shows your registration address, precinct and polling location, and a sample ballot.

CSAD Student Associates

Cooper Bertschi, Lily Meyers, Maddie Barbar, Ella Crowther, Maud Karambis, Trey Loizzo, Kiran Mediratta, Thomas Metcalf, Ashlee J. Molina, Karina Morey, Marielle Musick, Hung Nguyen, Olive O'Riordan, Lisa Torrecillas-Jouault, and Emerson Salome

Questions about the research and writing of this nonpartisan voter guide?

Contact Nancy Powers, Associate Director
Center for the Study of American Democracy
powersn@kenyon.edu

What is CSAD?

The Center for the Study of American Democracy (CSAD) is Kenyon's nonpartisan public affairs institution. We promote student participation in democracy and provide nonpartisan services to educate newer voters about the process. CSAD hosts panels and lectures related to democracy and public policy throughout the academic year, which are free and open to the public.