

News from the Greater Cleveland Partnership



November 9, 2011

1240 Huron Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44115
www.gcpartnership.com

Greater Cleveland Partnership Post-Election Report

November 9, 2011

Voters reject State Issues 1 and 2 but approve Issue 3

Ohio voters went to the polls yesterday and rendered judgment on three statewide ballot issues, as well as numerous local contests. On the statewide level, this off-year election illustrates that the voters' decisions will lead to much interpretation in the coming weeks and months.

Issue 2, which called for numerous reforms concerning public employees, was soundly defeated—resulting in the repeal of Senate Bill 5. Its repeal was aided by significant support from organized labor. Issue 2 was supported by Governor Kasich and many business organizations, including the Greater Cleveland Partnership.

Yet Issue 3, which many predicted would follow the same voter trends, was overwhelmingly approved. Issue 3 was an Ohio constitutional amendment expressing displeasure with a federal law (often known as Obamacare) requiring most Americans to buy health insurance. It is thus premature to draw any bold conclusions or make predictions about the mood of the electorate in 2012. One message Ohio voters did send was a desire to participate in the process. Voter turnout was higher than usual for an off-year election.

State Issue 1

Issue 1, the *Judicial Office Age Amendment*, failed by 62 to 38 percent. Had it passed, it would have raised the maximum age for judicial office pursuant to election or appointment from 70 to 75. As a result of voter rejection, the maximum age a judge can obtain office through election or appointment will remain 70 years of age.

State Issue 2

Issue 2, the *Ohio Senate Bill 5 Referendum*, topped the election day list of ballot questions and was defeated by a margin of 61 to 39 percent, meaning that the reforms addressed in Senate Bill 5 will not go into effect.

GCP's statement on the outcome of the Issue 2 vote

"In the aftermath of the repeal of Senate Bill 5, we can expect that emotions on both sides of this issue will ebb. Now we must turn our attention toward what comes next.

"We are faced with a troubled Ohio economic landscape that looks the same as it did before the election—with dark fiscal clouds forming over many local governments and school districts across the state.

"Our financial problems – particularly those of our local governments and public school districts - will not vanish. Clearly, tax increases are not the answer. Calm and clarity from all Ohioans are needed for us to work together toward making our state more competitive and more appealing for job creation and continuing to improve our public education system.

"The Greater Cleveland Partnership will continue to advocate for adjustments to a system, which, left as is, is unsustainable. We still strongly support the sweeping changes proposed to

help the state improve economic performance and reduce costs that were detailed in the *Redesigning Ohio: Transforming Government into a 21st Century Institution* [report](#) released last December by the GCP, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and other Ohio metropolitan chambers. We are concerned that, if the status quo is permitted to go forward untouched, what has been a trickle of layoffs among our public workers across Ohio could turn into a devastating flood.

“We also will continue to support efforts that will help the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and other districts keep the best teachers in their classrooms every day—regardless of economic conditions. We must provide our children with the best possible opportunities for academic success.

“Thanks to those GCP members who gave their time, talent and energy to support our position on this important issue. Although Issue 2 did not pass, reform efforts will continue. In the months ahead, we look forward to your continued commitment to our agenda to work toward a better Ohio.”

State Issue 3

Issue 3, Ohio’s *Healthcare Reform Freedom Act*, which was approved by a 66 to 34 percent margin, is seen as a statement of Ohio citizens’ freedom to make healthcare related decisions and a disapproval of components of the federal healthcare reform law enacted in 2010. It will have limited legal impact, as federal law generally supersedes state law, but it may be interpreted as a vote against federal mandates.

Incumbent mayors re-elected with ease

Two of Ohio’s larger cities, Akron and Columbus, unsurprisingly re-elected their respective incumbent mayors. Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman (D) easily defeated Earl Smith (R), a political newcomer and former police sergeant, by a 70 to 30 percent margin. Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic (D) defeated attorney Jennifer Hensal (R) by nearly a three-to-one ratio. A host of other suburban mayors also faced re-election challenges, and nearly all of them were successful.

Solon Issue 95 approved by voters

Solon residents approved a ballot initiative to allow the rezoning of a small area of the city, which will enable Nestlé to expand its existing operations, adding 40-60 new jobs. The GCP supported this local initiative because of its economic development and job creation potential.

Thanks to representatives from Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P. and to GCP staff members for their contributions to this report.

This report distributed by:



1240 Huron Road East, Cleveland, Ohio 44115