

2020 PRIMARY VOTER GUIDE

ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

THREE WAYS TO VOTE

VOTE AT YOUR POLLING PLACE ON ELECTION DAY



Election Day is Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Polls are open from 6:30 am until 7:30 pm. Visit www.VOTE411.org to check your voter registration and to find out your polling place and precinct.

VOTE BY MAIL

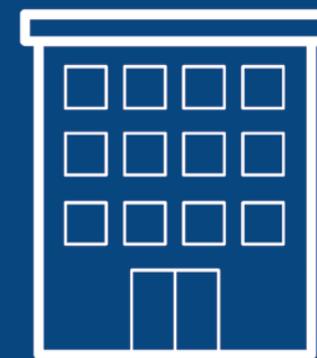


FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 16

In Ohio you may obtain an absentee ballot for ANY reason. You can request an absentee application by calling your Board of Elections or download and print an application online or by mail.

The absentee application must be received at the county Board of Elections (BOE) before Saturday, March 14 at 12 noon. Complete absentee ballots must be post-marked by Monday, March 16 if mailed or can be dropped off at the Board of Elections (but NOT at local polling places) by Tuesday, March 17 at 7:30pm.

VOTE EARLY IN-PERSON



MARCH 7 - MARCH 16

Registered voters may vote early beginning on February 19 for the March 17, 2020, election

Location for early voting in Hamilton County:

Hamilton County Board of Elections
4700 Smith Rd.
Norwood, OH 45212
513-632-7000

Early voting days and hours are as follows:

February 19-March 6: Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm
Saturday, March 7: 8am-4pm
March 9-13: Monday-Friday, 8am-7pm
Saturday, March 14: 8am-4pm
Sunday, March 15: 1-5pm
Monday, March 16: 8am-2pm



YOUR PERSONALIZED BALLOT

As well as extended Voter Information including additional questions and information from the candidates and polling place locator, can be found on our voter guide website: www.VOTE411.org

About This Guide

This information guide was prepared by the League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area (LWVCA) volunteers to provide information about the races and ballot issues in the primary election for Hamilton County. The candidate responses can be found online at Vote411.org. LWVCA uses the following criteria: The questions selected by LWVCA were advertised to the candidates, who were informed that each response would be printed as received and that all candidates would be solely responsible for the content of their replies.

In making this information available to the public, the LWVCA neither endorses nor rejects the views of any candidate or political party. The League does not and cannot assume responsibility for any candidate's reply, or for the candidate's motive in making it.

The summaries and background for the Hamilton County and City of Cincinnati ballot issues were prepared by the League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area volunteers. Descriptions of other ballot issues come from the Hamilton County Board of Elections.

Find the answers to our candidate questions online at Vote411.org

We asked:

The Presidential candidates: “Explain where you see opportunities for Democrats and Republicans to find common ground on the very serious issues facing our country.”

US House of Representatives candidates: “Where do you stand on gun safety measures?”

Why should you vote?

The simple numbers show how you can take the power of the vote back. How important is a single vote?

If 100 people are eligible to vote and each person registers AND votes, then 51 votes decide the election.

If only 60 people of the 100 eligible to vote register AND ALL 60 vote, just 31 votes win the election.

If only 60 people register of the 100 eligible to vote, but only half (30) of them vote ... then it takes just 16 votes to win the election.

Because many people did not vote, a small group of active voters — just 16 people — controlled the outcome for all 100 of the people.

When you choose NOT to vote, you give more clout to every vote that is recorded.

Voting Q&As

What is a Primary election?

In Ohio, the primary election on March 17 will determine the nominees for the political parties who will be on the general election ballot in November. The parties also use the primary election to select their party committee members. And often a jurisdiction will use the scheduled primary election to let voters decide a levy or issue. In Hamilton County, in addition to party candidates, voters will decide a Transportation sales tax levy at the March 17 election. Depending on where you live in the county, you also may have a local jurisdiction or school district issue on your ballot.

Do I have to choose a Democrat or Republican ballot?

When you vote in the March 17 election you will be asked if you want the Republican or Democratic ballot. Ohio has an open primary which means you don't have to be registered as a party member in advance. You simply ask for the party ballot you want to vote, even if it is different from what you voted in past primaries. If you do not want to be identified as either Republican or Democrat, you can ask for an Issues Only ballot. That will allow you to vote for or against the Transportation levy in Hamilton County and any small jurisdiction issues on your ballot.

If I ask for a party ballot in this primary election, do I have to vote for the same candidates in November?

In the General Election in November, you may vote for any candidate that you prefer regardless of political party affiliation.

A person that is 17 years old claims they are allowed to vote in the primary. How can that be, I thought they had to wait until they are 18?

Persons who will be 18 years old by the November 3 election may vote in the Primary Election to help select the candidates who will be on the November ballot. They will not be able to vote on issues or levies since those are final decisions. However, the 17-year-old voter must be registered 30 days before the Primary in order to vote.

How do I find out about the candidates? I thought the League of Women Voters had a Voter Guide.

The League of Women Voters has an online Voter Guide with information on the candidates that will be on your primary ballot. Go to Vote411.org and enter your address. You will find the information you need to be an informed voter.

ID requirements

HINT: If you think you might have a problem showing adequate ID at the polls, vote early at the Board of Elections. Only ID needed is last 4 digits of social security number.

The forms of identification that may be used by a voter at the polls on Election Day include:

- An unexpired Ohio driver's license or state identification card with present or former address so long as the voter's present residential address is printed in the official list of registered voters for that precinct;
- A military identification;
- A photo identification that was issued by the United States government or the State of Ohio, that contains the voter's name and current address and that has an expiration date that has not passed;
- An original or copy of a current utility bill with the voter's name and present address;
- An original or copy of a current bank statement with the voter's name and present address;
- An original or copy of a current government check with the voter's name and present address;
- An original or copy of a current paycheck with the voter's name and present address; or
- An original or copy of a current other government document (other than a notice of voter registration mailed by a board of elections) that shows the voter's name and present address.

Provisional ballots: If you do not have any of the above forms of identification you may provide either your Ohio driver's license or state identification number (which begins with two letters followed by six numbers) or the last four digits of your Social Security number and cast a provisional ballot. Once the information is reviewed and verified by the board of elections, your ballot will be counted.

Office races that will appear on the Primary ballot

President

Responsibilities: The President is the head of state of the United States of America and is the Chief Executive Officer and the Commander in Chief of all military forces. The powers of the President are described in the constitution and federal law. Subject to Senate approval, the President appoints the members of the Cabinet, ambassadors to other nations and the United Nations, Supreme Court Justices and federal judges. The President, along with the Cabinet and its agencies, is responsible for carrying out and enforcing the laws of the United States. The President may also recommend legislation to the United States Congress.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 4 years

US Representative to Congress

Responsibilities: To represent the people of Ohio, their district, and the United States in dealing with matters of national and international importance. The general welfare should be a prime concern.

To be elected: 1 (from each 12 districts) **Term:** 2 years

OH Supreme Court

Responsibilities: Hears all cases involving questions arising under the Ohio Constitution or statutes; hears appeals from Courts of Appeals decisions. The Supreme Court's decisions are final except in cases involving the U.S Constitution, statutes, or treaties

To be elected: 2 **Term:** 6 years

State Senator

Responsibilities: To represent the people of the district and the state of Ohio in dealing with matters not allocated to the federal government.

To be elected: 17 (1 from each odd numbered district) **Term:** 4 years

State Representative

Responsibilities: To represent the people of the district and the State of Ohio in dealing with matters not allocated to the federal government.

To be elected: 99 (1 from each district) **Term:** 2 years

Judge of the Court of Appeals

Responsibilities: The Court of Appeals is essentially a Court of Review. It hears appeals from the Common Pleas, County, and Municipal Courts. Decisions are final except in cases involving Constitutional questions, cases of felony, cases in which it has original jurisdiction, and cases of public or great general interest.

To be elected: 1 (from each 12 districts) **Term:** 4 years

Judge of the Court of Common Pleas

Responsibilities: To preside at trials of both civil and criminal cases; to supervise the jury commission, grand jury, and other departments of the court.

To be elected: 8 **Term:** 6 years

Judge of the Court of Common Pleas Drug Court Division

Responsibilities: To rule on cases involving offenders with mental illness, substance abuse, and trauma related injuries which pose a special challenge within the criminal justice system.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 6 years

Judge of the Court of Common Pleas Domestic Relations Division

Responsibilities: To handle cases of divorce, dissolution of marriage, annulment, separation, and child custody matters.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 6 years

Judge of the Court of Common Pleas Probate Division

Responsibilities: To rule on cases involving disposition of wills, the administration of estates and guardianships, adoptions, questions of mental or physical disability. They are also responsible for issuing marriage licenses.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 6 years

Judge of the Court of Common Pleas Juvenile

Responsibilities: To rule in cases involving persons under 18 years of age. The Juvenile Court has authority in cases of delinquency, unruliness, juvenile traffic offenses, abuse, neglect, and dependency. The Juvenile Court may be part of the Court of Domestic Relations or the Probate Court.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 6 years

County Commissioner

Responsibilities: To exercise financial control of County expenditures; to authorize public works; to purchase land and buildings; to let contracts; to plan and administer welfare. The Board of County Commissioners also appoints other officials to operate various departments.

To be elected: 2 **Term:** 4 years

Prosecuting Attorney

Responsibilities: To investigate and prosecute crimes committed within the county, to defend the county in court, and to give legal advice to county agencies and townships.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 4 years

Clerk of Courts

Responsibilities: To enter judgments and collect court costs for appellate and common pleas courts, and also to issue and transfer automobile and water craft certificates of title.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 4 years

Sheriff

Responsibilities: To provide services to the courts, to oversee the county jail, and to act as chief law enforcement officer for the county.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 4 years

Recorder

Responsibilities: To record deeds, mortgages, plats, liens, and other written instruments.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 4 years

Treasurer

Responsibilities: To collect taxes in the county and its subdivisions, disburse expenditures, and invest the county's funds.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 4 years

Engineer

Responsibilities: To oversee the construction, maintenance, and repair of all bridges in the county, and of county roads and other public improvements except buildings in the county.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 4 years

Coroner

Responsibilities: To determine the cause of death of persons dying in a violent or suspicious manner and to issue death certificates.

To be elected: 1 **Term:** 4 years

Learn more about the offices and candidates @ vote411.org



County-wide Issue on Primary Ballot

ISSUE 7 PROPOSED SALES AND USE TAX SOUTHWEST OHIO REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

A majority affirmative vote is necessary for passage.

Shall a sales and use tax be levied at a rate not exceeding eight tenths of one percent (0.8%) for a period of twenty-five (25) years by the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) with none of the proceeds used for the Cincinnati Streetcar, twenty-five percent of the proceeds used for the purpose of public infrastructure projects, like the construction and maintenance of roads or bridges and seventy-five percent of the proceeds used for the purpose of operating the Metro transportation system?

YES
NO

Explanation:

In December 2019 the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) Board voted to place this sales tax of 0.8% for a period of 25 years on the March 17, 2020 ballot. The proceeds of the sales tax would provide general revenues for SORTA to operate the Metro transportation system and also provide money for public infrastructure projects related to the provision of SORTA's service. If this sales tax is approved by Hamilton County voters, the City of Cincinnati earnings tax will be reduced by 0.3% (from 2.1% to 1.8%) per a recent Cincinnati Charter Amendment.

The proposed sales tax is expected to raise about \$130 million a year with 75% (about \$100 million) for the Metro system and 25% (about \$30

million) for infrastructure projects, like roads and bridges, in Hamilton County.

The proposed sales tax would fully fund SORTA's strategic plan, Reinventing Metro www.reinventing-metro.com, which includes service improvements like: updating Metro's aging bus fleet; new transit centers and park and rides; adding new routes, providing longer service hours and increased frequency; and improved service for Access which serves individuals with disabilities. It would also provide funds for infrastructure projects in Hamilton County, such as construction and maintenance of roads and bridges used by buses.

None of the sales tax levy money would be used for the Cincinnati Streetcar which is now solely the responsibility of the City of Cincinnati.

Background:

Since 1972 SORTA and its Metro bus system have been funded locally by a dedicated 0.3% of the City of Cincinnati earnings tax which is paid by those who live and/or work in the City. Currently Metro receives about \$50 million per year from this dedicated City earnings tax. In November 2019 City of Cincinnati voters approved a Charter Amendment to eliminate this dedicated city funding for public transit if Hamilton County voters in 2020 pass a sales tax levy for general revenues for SORTA bus operations, bus capital improvements, and infrastructure improvements.

Under Ohio law provisions passed last year, a regional transit authority may propose to levy a joint bus/infrastructure tax for general revenues, re-

gional transportation improvement, and public infrastructure projects. This state law authorizes a regional transit authority to enter into agreements with counties, municipal corporations, or townships to fund construction and maintenance of roads and bridges related to the provision of service by the authority. The regional transit authority must submit such agreements to the appropriate district public works integrating committee for approval. SORTA, in consultation with the Hamilton County Integrating Committee, is expected to set up an evaluation process for projects competing for the levy infrastructure dollars.

Arguments for the Sales Tax:

The proposed sales tax would provide an adequate, reliable and long-term funding source for SORTA. SORTA is facing a \$160.5 million projected deficit over the next 10 years which would require significant service reductions and fare increases. The sales tax for SORTA's Metro bus operations would replace and double what the dedicated City earnings tax currently provides.

The sales tax would enable Metro to provide new and extended routes, increase bus frequency, and expand service hours throughout Hamilton County in order to connect people to jobs increasingly located in outlying areas away from the city center.

The sales tax would provide significant monies for infrastructure improvements in Hamilton County related to the provision of service by the transit authority.

A reliable and improved transportation system contributes to economic growth and attracts businesses.

The sales tax is the revenue source most metro areas use to fund their transit agencies. A county-wide sales tax to fund the bus system would provide a more regional funding mechanism because close to 50% of the Hamilton County sales tax is paid by people who live outside Hamilton County.

Arguments Against the Sales Tax:

Hamilton County's sales tax is already too high and shouldn't be increased to support the bus system and infrastructure spending.

Most voters in Hamilton County don't ride the bus and shouldn't be expected to pay more to support a system they don't use and that doesn't go where they need to go.

A sales tax is regressive, meaning everyone, regardless of income, is taxed the same amount. Families with lower income will be contributing more than their "fair share" toward the tax and may feel the burden of this increased sales tax.

The 25-year term of the sales tax is too long before voters get to weigh in again.



For information on the smaller jurisdiction issues on the ballot, go to **Vote411.org**