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2024 Statehouse Primary Election Results

The Government Advantage Group 2024 Statehouse Primary Election Results report provides a summary of the results of the March 19th primary election for state legislative races, US Senate, US Congress, and Ohio Supreme Court. This report lists the results of some of the hotly contested races on both the Republican and Democrat sides. Overall turnout was very low with only about 20% of the electorate turning out to cast their ballots.

On the Republican side, numerous incumbents saw challenges from within their own party. This can certainly be tied back to the 2023 vote for Speaker when 22 Republicans joined all House Democrats to elect Speaker Jason Stephens over Derek Merrin. These members, dubbed the “Blue 22”, ran without the endorsement of the Ohio Republican Party but did have the benefit of incumbency and, in most cases, a sizable fundraising advantage. We did see several incumbents upset by challengers. Those representatives not prevailing in their primaries are: Sara Carruthers, Jon Cross, Elliot Forhan, Brett Hillyer, and Gail Pavliga

With the presidential ticket essentially decided before Ohioans went to the polls, Ohio’s results simply further solidified the race as a rematch between President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump.

With the Presidential primary drawing little fanfare in Ohio, the spotlight was on the Republican Primary to nominate the candidate to challenge Senator Sherrod Brown. Bernie Moreno earned the backing of President Trump and Ohio’s Republican US Senator JD Vance. Senator Matt Dolan earned high-profile endorsements from Governor Mike DeWine and former US Senator Rob Portman. Secretary of State Frank LaRose ran with the endorsement of Congressman Mike Turner and was the only candidate who had previously won a statewide election. It was Moreno that came out on top and will face off against Senator Brown in November in what is expected to be one of the most closely watched races in the country.

There were also several legislators running in open Republican primaries for Congress to replace Congressman Brad Wenstrup, who decided he wanted to spend less time away from family, and Congressman Bill Johnson, who resigned to accept a position as President of Youngstown State University. It was the race to replace Wenstrup that drew the most crowded field. Several candidates also competed in a Republican primary to take on Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur in November.

- To replace Wenstrup - Current and former lawmakers threw their hats in the ring, but it was attorney and family business owner David Taylor who walked away with the party's nomination.
- To replace Johnson - Current State Senator Michael Rulli was able to best current State Representative Reggie Stoltzfus and candidate Rick Tsai. This will tee up an opening in the Ohio Senate to replace Rulli.
- To challenge Kaptur - Capitalizing on a late endorsement from former President Trump, current Representative Derek Merrin will take on Ohio's longest serving member of Congress.

Here are the results, broken down by chamber and party primary (*Disclaimer: information is included based on publicly available information from the Secretary of State, which may not be fully up-to-date and does not take into account write-in votes as those have not been tabulated yet*).

Ohio Senate

District 4 (Republican primary) – Senator George Lang was challenged by former State Representative Candice Keller and a lesser-known Mark Morgan, a political operative who recently moved back to Ohio. Lang, who was endorsed by the Butler County Republican party and previously bested Keller for the seat in 2020, maintained the financial advantage. The 3-way race ultimately favored Lang, who will face Democrat Thomas Cooke in November in the heavily Republican district. **Winner: George Lang**

District 6 (Democratic Primary) – This seat is eyed as a pickup for Senate Democrats as redistricting made it more favorable. Incumbent Niraj Antani chose not to run for re-election and instead ran in the primary to replace Congressman Wenstrup. Current State Representative Willis Blackshear went in the favorite. Even though the district now favors Democrats, we still expect Senate Republicans to spend some of their considerable war chest to bolster former State Board of Education President Charlotte McGuire to retain the seat. **Winner: Willis Blackshear**

District 32 (Republican primary) – Rather than face a 3-way primary for his seat, Representative Mike Loychik chose not to seek another term in the Ohio House and instead challenged incumbent Senator Sandra O'Brien in the Senate primary. The Republican Senate Campaign Committee spent significant resources to defend O'Brien, but Loychik was also able to raise considerable funds for a primary. O'Brien benefited from the endorsement of the Ohio Republican Party, while it censured Loychik for his vote in support of Speaker Stephens. O'Brien prevailed and will now face Democrat Michael Shrodek in a district that favors Republicans by 10 points. **Winner: Sandra O'Brien**

Ohio House

District 6 (Democratic Primary) – Seven democrats lined up for a chance to succeed Adam Miller, who is running to challenge US Congressman Mike Carey in this Columbus seat. Christine Cockley, who works at YWCA Columbus, led the field in fundraising, with former Statehouse staffer Brandon Barcus and LGBTQ+ activist Eli Bohnert behind her. Democrat party

leadership chose not to endorse in this race, though individual elected officials in Franklin County did make endorsements. Cockley prevailed and will face Republican Hussein Jabiri in the comfortably blue district. **Winner: Christine Cockley**

District 10 (Republican primary) – After a scandal surrounding false claims that he received a degree from MIT, Incumbent Representative Dave Dobos chose not to seek another term. On the Republican side, Shafi Shafat, president of the Somali American Chamber of Commerce, and Brian Garvine, an attorney and former Ashville Village Council member, faced off, with Garvine claiming victory. This Columbus seat was a toss-up in the 2022 election, so expect both parties to spend resources here. Democrats hold a slight edge, with just over a percentage point advantage based on past election results. **Winner: Brian Garvine**

District 10 (Democratic Primary) – As noted, Democrats see a chance to gain a seat here, as Franklin County has been trending Democrats for several years now. With the incumbent not seeking another term, this could give them an edge. Grove City Councilman Mark Sigrist faced off against Sarah Pomeroy, a senior assistant city attorney for Columbus. This one is still too close to call with Sigrist only 24 votes ahead and may hinge on a recount or provisional ballots. **Winner: TBD**

District 17 (Republican primary) – Three Republicans vied to replace term-limited Tom Patton, one the few remaining elected Republicans in Cuyahoga County who is running in November to return to the Ohio Senate. Former Representative Mike Dovilla, Strongsville council member Gordon Short, and frequent candidate Anthony Alexander ran for the chance to face off against Democrat Jessica Sutherland. Short was favored by Patton to replace him and endorsed by The Plain Dealer’s Editorial Board as well as many mayors in the district. In one of the several races seen as a proxy battle for the Speakers’ vote, Dovilla proved triumphant. **Winner: Mike Dovilla**

District 21 (Democratic Primary) – This was a very rare race where the House Democrat caucus did not want the incumbent to come out on top. Representative Elliot Forhan has made headlines over his sparring with members of his own party. Both Beachwood City Council member Eric Synenberg and healthcare consultant Angel Washington received high-profile endorsements in their campaigns. While Synenberg was preliminarily chosen as the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party’s candidate and Washington came closest to receiving the endorsement during the full vote, the party ultimately did not make an official endorsement in the race. Syneberg proved victorious and will face write-in Republican Joshua Malovasic in the fall. **Winner: Eric Syneberg**

District 29 (Republican primary) – In one of many primaries driven by the election of Speaker Jason Stephens by 22 members of the House Republican Caucus, incumbent Cindy Abrams, a Stephens supporter and former law enforcement officer, ran against challenger George Brunemann, who helped found the Cincinnati Tea Party in 2009. Abrams was previously censured by the Ohio Republican Party for her vote for the Speaker’s gavel and was also not endorsed in her race. In the end, Abrams came out on top and will face Democrat Joseph Salvato in a district leaning slightly Republican. **Winner: Cindy Abrams**

District 47 (Republican primary) – In another race against an incumbent member of the “Blue 22”, Rep. Sara Carruthers faced off against pastor Diane Mullins, who was endorsed by the county Republican party. Carruthers held the fundraising edge, but Mullins pulled off the upset

and ultimately prevailed. She will now face Democrat Vanessa Cummings in a district favoring the Republicans 61%, based on prior election results. **Winner: Diane Mullins**

District 51 (Republican primary) – Current State Rep. Brett Hillyer, another supporter of Speaker Stephens, faced off against a challenge from the right by Jodi Salvo, director of substance use prevention services at OhioGuidestone. Hillyer heavily outspent Salvo, but Salvo emerged victorious. They will now face Joe Rinehart in the November general election. **Winner: Jodi Salvo**

District 56 (Republican primary) – Incumbent Adam Matthews, while not one of the “Blue 22,” failed to secure the endorsement of the Ohio Republican Party, making him vulnerable to a challenger. Matthews was opposed by former Mason mayor and city council member Kathy Grossman and first-time candidate Heather Salyer. Matthews was able to earn the chance to run for a second term and will now face Democrat Cleveland Canova in the general election in the red-leaning district. **Winner: Adam Mathews**

District 62 (Republican primary) - Incumbent and veteran lawmaker Jean Schmidt had a closer than expected race with small business owner and Army Reserve veteran Dillon Blevins, who she bested in the 2020 primary for the seat. Schmidt held on to her seat here with a narrow 52% of the vote. She will now face Democrat Katie Vockell in the fall in the heavily Republican district. **Winner: Jean Schmidt**

District 66 (Republican primary) – Incumbent Sharon Ray did not vote for Speaker Stephens but does serve as a member of the Ohio House Republican Leadership team. This may have cost her the endorsement of the Ohio Republican Party. She faced off against daycare owner Gary Fox, with Ray ultimately cinching the nomination. **Winner: Sharon Ray**

District 69 (Republican primary) – Incumbent Kevin Miller, another supporter of Speaker Stephens, faced off against Daniel Kalmbach, a third-generation farm and feed producer. Miller was the largest beneficiary of support from the Ohio House Republican Alliance campaign fund, though his opponent spent heavily as well. Ultimately, it was Miller who earned the support of the voters and will face Democrat Jamie Hough in November in the heavily Republican district. **Winner: Kevin Miller**

District 71 (Republican primary) – A crowded field lined up to replace term-limited Representative Bill Dean in this solidly Republican district. Candidates included Levi Dean, son of the current seat holder and member of Xenia City Council. Other entrants into the primary were Xenia school board member Joshua Day, former Cedarville Mayor Robert Fudge, and businessman Tyler Scott. Dean was the winner and will now go up against Democrat James Duffee in the heavily GOP district. **Winner: Levi Dean**

District 72 (Republican primary) – Incumbent Gail Pavliga won a very competitive race in 2022, but she hasn't been able to rest on her laurels, as she faced Heidi Workman, a self-employed business professional, in this similarly competitive March Primary. Workman decided to challenge Pavliga after her vote for Speaker Stephens. Both candidates spent heavily, with the House Republican Alliance directing hefty resources to bolster Pavliga. But it was Workman who prevailed and goes on to face Democrat Nathaniel Adams in the fall. **Winner: Heidi Workman**

District 73 (Republican primary) – Incumbent Jeff LaRe, who also serves as the Vice Chairman of the House Finance Committee, was challenged by former Baltimore police chief Mike Tussey in a primary spurred by LaRe’s status as one of the supporters of Speaker Stephens. LaRe claimed victory and the chance to earn another term in office as the district favors Republicans by 59%. **Winner: Jeff LaRe**

District 75 (Republican primary) – In probably the most high-profile and contentious House primaries, U.K.-born Sally Culling put her all into defeating incumbent Harz Ghanbari after he backed Speaker Stephens in the vote over Representative Derek Merrin. Culling, who previously served on Nottingham City Council and worked for the British Conservative Party, earned endorsements from the Toledo Blade, Senator Theresa Gavarone, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, and others. Ghanbari had the backing of the Fraternal Order of Police, NRA, Ohio Right to Life, as well as several Wood County officials. Culling outspent Ghanbari, though Ghanbari enjoyed hefty support from the House Republican Alliance campaign fund. Ghanbari prevailed and will now face off against Democrat Jan Materni in a district only slightly favoring the GOP. **Winner: Haraz Ghanbari**

District 77 (Republican primary) – The primary to replace term-limited Representative Scott Wiggam saw many candidates with Statehouse ties throw their hats in the ring. These included Ohio Chamber of Commerce and former Department of Insurance employee Meredith Craig, as well as former legislative aide and member of the Ohio National Guard, Bill Albright. In one of the few primaries that did not appear to be a proxy battle for the Speaker’s gavel, Craig appears to have squeaked out the win and will face Democrat Mark Gooch in the deeply red district. **Winner: Meredith Craig**

District 83 (Republican primary) – Another member of the House Republican Leadership was a target of the anti-Stephens camp, with incumbent Jon Cross seeing a formidable challenge from Ty Mathews, a former employee of Josh Mandel and infantry platoon leader in the Ohio National Guard. Fundraising was largely equal between the two, though Cross enjoyed the support of the House Republican Alliance campaign fund. Mathews succeeded in upsetting the incumbent and will now face Democrat Sheila Coressel in a district favoring the right by nearly 72%. **Winner: Ty Mathews**

District 86 (Republican primary) – Incumbent Tracy Richardson was opposed by Jerome Township Trustee Wezlynn Davis, partly due to her support of Speaker Stephens. Richardson came out on top and will oppose Democrat Lesley Verbus of Marysville in a district favoring the GOP by 66%. **Winner: Tracy Richardson**

District 89 (Republican primary) – Incumbent DJ Swearingen, faced a challenge from Steve Kraus, who sought to regain the seat after he was removed in 2015 following a felony conviction of theft from an elderly person. Kraus remained at a steep fundraising disadvantage throughout the race as a result and Swearingen secured high profile endorsements from US Senator JD Vance and others. Swearingen ended up running away with the win and will go up against Democrat Alisha Roshong in November in the district, which slightly leans Republican. **Winner: DJ Swearingen**

District 90 (Republican primary) – Although incumbent Justin Pizzull was not appointed to this seat vacated by former Representative Brian Baldrige until after the contentious Speaker vote in January 2023, he still faced opposition to his appointment by supporters of Derek Merrin, who instead sought to appoint his now-opponent, Gina Collinworth. Collinworth garnered

endorsements from the Chamber of Commerce PAC and Americans for Prosperity-Ohio in this race, though Pizzulli was endorsed by some of the district's county Republican parties. In November, Pizzulli will face Democrat Kaitlyn Nunnely in the solidly red district. **Winner: Justin Pizzulli**

District 98 (Republican primary) – The race to replace term-limited Darrell Kick was one of the more antagonistic. Mark Hiner, owner of Columbus Broadcasting Corporation, and Scott Pullins, attorney for former Speaker Larry Householder, publicly traded barbs and legal notices. Hiner's campaign received support from current Senate President Matt Huffman, while Pullins was backed by Speaker Stephens. Hiner moves on to the General, facing Democrat Annie Homstad in the 71% Republican district. **Winner: Mark Hiner**

Full List of Candidate for the November Election:

· (i)= incumbent WI: write in

House District	Republican Candidate	Democrat Candidate
1		Dontavius Jarrells (i)
2		Latyna Humphrey (i)
3		Ismail Mohamed (i)
4	Jason Allevato	Beryl Brown Piccolantonio (i)
5		Meredith Lawson-Rowe
6	Hussein Jabiri	Christine Cockley
7		Allison Russo (i)
8	Aaron Neumann (WI)	Anita Somani (i)
9		Munira Yasin Abdullahi (i)
10	Brian Garvine	Too Close to Call
11	Stephanie Kunze	Crystal Lett
12	Brian Stewart (i)	Brad Cotton
13	Robert Dintaman	Tristan Rader
14	David Morgan	Sean Brennan (i)
15	Aaron Borowski	Chris Glassburn
16	Daniel Harrington	Bride Rose Sweeney (i)
17	Mike Dovilla	Jessica Sutherland
18	Justyn Anderson (WI)	Juanita Brent (i)
19	Kenny Godnavec	Phillip Robinson (i)
20	Donna Walker Brown	Terrence Upchurch (i) (WI)
21	Joshua Malovasic (WI)	Eric Synenberg
22	Milan Wesley (WI)	Darnell Brewer (i)
23	Tony Hocevar	Dan Troy (i)
24	John Sess	Dani Isaacsohn (i)
25	Jim Berns	Cecil Thomas (i)
26	John Breadon	Sedrick Denson (i)
27	Curt Carl Hartman	Rachel Baker (i)

28	Jenn Giroux	Jessica Miranda (i)
29	Cindy Abrams (i)	Joseph Salvato
30	Mike Odioso	Stephanie Hawk
31	Bill Roemer (i)	AJ Harris
32	Jack Daniels	Jim Colopy
33		Veronica Sims (i)
34	Adam Bozic	Derrick Hall
35	Steve Demetriou (i)	Mark Curtis
36	Andrea White (i)	Rose Lounsbury
37	Tom Young (i)	
38		Desiree Tims
39	Phil Plummer (i)	Dion Green (WI)
40	Rodney Creech (i)	Bobbie Arnold
41	Josiah Leinbach	Erika White
42		Elgin Rogers (i)
43	Wendi Hendricks	Michele Grim (i)
44	Josh Williams (i)	Dave Blythe
45	Jennifer Gross (i)	Landon Meador
46	Thomas Hall (i)	Benjamin McCall
47	Diane Mullins	Vanessa Cummings
48	Scott Oelslager (i)	Lynn Corman
49	Jim Thomas (i)	Krista Allison
50	Matthew Kishman	Doremus Redvine (WI)
51	Jodi Salvo	Joe Rinehart
52	Gayle Manning (i)	Genevieve Fleiger
53	Bradley Lacko	Joe Miller (i)
54	Kellie Deeter	Brenda Buckanan
55	C. Teska	Laura Davis
56	Adam Mathews (i)	Cleveland Canova
57	Jamie Callender (i)	Rick Walker
58	Emily Ciccone (WI)	Lauren McNally (i)
59	Al Cutrona (i)	Laura Schaeffer
60	Brian Lorenz (i)	Rachael Morocco
61	Beth Lear (i)	David Hogan
62	Jean Schmidt (i)	Katie Vockell
63	Adam Bird (i)	Tracey McCullough
64	Nick Santucci (i)	Lauren Mathews
65	David Thomas	
66	Sharon Ray (i)	Bradford Quade
67	Melanie Miller (i)	Drew McIlveen
68	Thad Claggett (i)	Michael Smith

12	Susan Manchester	
14	Terry Johnson (i)	Shane Marcum
16	Besa Sharrah	Beth Liston
18	Jerry Cirino (i)	Katie O'Neill
20	Tim Schaffer (i)	Nick Hubbel
22	Mark Romanchuk (i)	Kathy Salem
24	Tom Patton	Sue Durichko
26	Bill Reineke (i)	Mohamed Juma
28	Jon Leissler	Casey Weinstein
30	Brian Chavez (i)	Iva Faber
32	Sandra O'Brien (i)	Michael Shrodek
Congressional Races		
1	Orlando Sonza	Greg Landsman (i)
2	David Taylor	Samantha Meadows
3	Michael Young	Joyce Beatty (i)
4	Jim Jordan (i)	Tamie Wilson
5	Bob Latta (i)	Keith Mundy
6	Michael Rulli	Michael Kripchak
7	Max Miller (i)	Matt Diemer
8	Warren Davidson (i)	Vanessa Enoch
9	Derek Merrin	Marcy Kaptur (i)
10	Mike Turner (i)	Amy Cox
11	Alan Rapoport	Shontel Brown (i)
12	Troy Balderson (i)	Jerrad Christian
13	Kevin Coughlin	Emilia Sykes (i)
14	Dave Joyce (i)	Brian Kenderes
15	Mike Carey (i)	Adam Miller
Ohio Supreme Court		
Justice	Joseph Deters (i)	Melody Stewart (i)
Justice	Megan Shanahan	Michael Donnelly (i)
Justice	Dan Hawkins	Lisa Forbes
Statewide Offices		
US Senate	Bernie Moreno	Sherrod Brown (i)