

COUNTY LEADER



County Commissioners Association of Ohio quarterly magazine

Winter 2020



In This Issue...

A Message from CCAO President Carl Davis

A Message from CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler

Local Communication is Key to Your County's Success

Governor's Council's Evaluation of Ohio's Foster Care System Underway

Petition Drainage Reform Reaches the General Assembly

Marathon Man (And Women)

Auditor Announces Star Rating System for Public-Records Compliance

County Leaders Attend CCAO Winter Conference

Census 2020 - Make Sure Ohio Counts!

Voice of County Leadership - Kathryn Whittington

Legislator Q&A's

Updates from CORSA, CEBCO and CCAOSC

Counselor's Corner

On the Cover: Secretary Lori Kokoski (Lorain County); 2nd Vice President Debbie Lieberman (Montgomery County); President Carl Davis (Monroe County); Treasurer Tom Whiston (Morrow County); Past President Julie Ehemann (Shelby County); and 1st Vice President Tim Bubb (Licking County)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from CCAO President Carl Davis	3
Letter from CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler	4
Local Communication is Key to Your County's Success	5
Governor's Council's Evaluation of Ohio's Foster Care System Underway	6
Petition Drainage Reform Reaches the General Assembly	7
Marathon Man (And Women)	8
Auditor Announces Star Rating System for Public-Records Compliance	9
County Leaders Attend CCAO Winter Conference	10
Census 2020 - Make Sure Ohio Counts!	12
Voice of County Leadership - Kathryn Whittington	14
Legislator Q&A - State Rep. Brigid Kelly	17
Legislator Q&A - State Re. Scott Wiggam	17
Legislator Q&A - Sen. Tina Maharath	18
Legislator Q&A - Nathan Manning	19
CORSA — Software Updates for 2020	20
The Latest News from CEBCO	21
CCAOSC Solar Savings Program Gets a Refresh	22
Counselor's Corner	23

Photo 1: Rep. Jason Stephens with Policy Analyst Rachel Massoud, Executive Director Cheryl Subler and Legislative Counsel John Leutz

Photo 2: Delaware County Commissioners Gary Merrell and Barb Lewis

Photo 3: Ohio First Lady Fran DeWine discusses Dolly Parton's Imagination Library at the CCAO Winter Conference

Photo 4: CCAO President Carl Davis at the NACo-ARC Opioids in Appalachia Capstone Event



County Leader, CCAO's quarterly e-magazine, provides an in-depth look at the news, programs and policies affecting Ohio's 88 counties.

The e-magazine also showcases our members, offers best county practices as well as ways to enhance the state-county partnership practices and shares the offerings of the association.

If you have questions or story submissions, contact Editor Andrew Johnson at ajohnson@ccao.org or 614-220-7986.



A MESSAGE FROM 2020 CCAO PRESIDENT CARL DAVIS, MONROE COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Greetings fellow county commissioners, county council members and executives. I cannot begin to express how grateful and humbled I am to be elected your CCAO president.

As we close the book on 2019, we will no longer see some familiar faces at the CCAO offices on a regular basis, although we hope they will stop in for the occasional visit.

Doug Foust, long time managing director of CEBCO, retired at the end of 2019. Under Doug's leadership CEBCO has grown from 26 counties in 2013 to 37 counties as we close out 2019. We wish Doug well in his retirement with the desire that he will now have the time to enjoy his hobbies. Taking over the role of managing director of CEBCO is Mike Kindell who most recently served as senior benefits specialist at CEBCO. Congratulations to Mike on your new position and best wishes for continued success.



MaryJane Neiman after many years of planning and directing events and meetings at CCAO, as well as her many other duties, has decided it is time to retire and concentrate on her family and spend more time with her beautiful granddaughter. We wish her a long and enjoyable retirement. The complexity and diversity of MaryJane's duties leads to careful consideration and planning before hiring her replacement.

Suzanne Dulaney, after serving CCAO as our executive director, leading the organization for many years has decided it is time to return to the private sector to pursue other interests. We wish Suzanne great success as well.

As we open the book on the new year, 2020, we have a new executive director. Cheryl Subler has been with CCAO for 24 years, most recently serving as managing director of policy. We welcome Cheryl to her new position and wish her well.

Suzanne, Cheryl and I just returned from Washington DC and the NCCAE Executive Directors and Presidents Meeting. It was very educational and enjoyable. It was a once in a lifetime experience. Activities included an Appalachian Regional Commission "opioids in Appalachia" Capstone Event which outlined the results of a yearlong study. We were treated to a riveting session at Mount Vernon with presentations surrounding the life of George Washington and its relevance to today, highlighted by a tour of the property. We met at the White House with key administration officials. I commend and thank NACO for a fantastic agenda. Cheryl and I have shared some interesting ideas about the future of CCAO. Cheryl is very excited and enthusiastic about her new role. I share her excitement and enthusiasm. We have great support from our staff and they are also excited about the future.

Some conferences and meetings you may consider are the CCAO Statewide Energy Summit on Feb. 7, the NACO Legislative Conference Feb. 29 through March 4 in Washington DC, and the OCCO Legislative Reception on April 1 at the Statehouse. Check the CCAO website for more information on these and other events.

I am looking at the new year as a time to heal, a time to grow and a time to look forward with 2020 vision. We need to cast aside our differences and celebrate and build on our similarities. Working together, we have accomplished much in 2019. With a united effort, 2020 will be a great year.

LETTER FROM CCAO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHERYL SUBLER

CCAO brings together county elected leaders and professionals to promote and advocate for county government as well as to provide value-added programs that strengthen counties. This respected, member-driven organization with its diverse membership from all 88 counties has had much success over the years and is highly respected today. I am very honored by the trust placed in me to continue that tradition.



I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the leadership of CCAO for the opportunity to serve as executive director as well as the members who have offered their support and encouragement. Your backing means a lot.

The team at CCAO along with myself will be reaching out to you to enhance our relationship as well as to listen to your thoughts on how the association can foster a stronger community for the exchange of ideas and best practices in addition to developing innovative services. As Henry Ford said, “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”

In addition, it is important to recognize this year is a historic milestone for many counties. From 1810 to 1824, Ohio experienced a rapid growth in the expansion of counties. Thirty-one new counties were created, bringing the total number of counties to seventy-three by 1824. Fourteen counties were formed in 1820, and they included:

- Allen
- Crawford
- Hancock
- Hardin
- Henry
- Marion
- Mercer
- Paulding
- Putnam
- Sandusky
- Seneca
- Union
- Van Wert
- Wood

Many counties will be hosting bicentennial celebrations – reflecting over the last 200 years, showing pride in their communities and demonstrating the value of their accomplishments by residents working together. These celebrations are important. They unify residents and communities as they look back at the past and celebrate what their county has become and where it is headed in the future. We at CCAO wish all counties honoring their past and future a joyous year.

While counties’ responsibilities have evolved and expanded since 1820, their primary function of serving as the state’s administrative agent, or rather partner, in delivering vital services remains steadfast. Working to enhance and build a stronger state-county partnership is more important today than ever.

Therefore, regularly reach out to your lawmakers and statewide officeholders to keep them updated on your county’s strategic plan, successes, challenges and needs. Invite them to the courthouse and to various events. Also, visit your state partners at the Statehouse and discuss how your county can help the state be a leader. Communication is critical, and it is a two-way street with constant flow. Remember . . . Stronger Counties. Stronger Ohio.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

LOCAL COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO YOUR COUNTY'S SUCCESS

by John Leutz, CCAO Legislative Counsel

By all accounts, county government fared very well in the biennial state budget adopted earlier this year. Our success was a direct result of our members taking our message of **Stronger Counties. Stronger Partnership. Stronger Ohio.** directly to their residents.



But delivering the message does not end at the conclusion of a successful budget. It must be an ongoing and engaging undertaking with residents and community institutions – it is a mission of education.

Our message - **Stronger Counties. Stronger Partnership. Stronger Ohio.** – is as relevant today as it was during the budget process. You must continue to talk to your community to share how your county's story has been impacted by the scope of the revenue losses and how this lost revenue hampers your ability to deal with the very real challenges facing your county government – from economic and workforce development to public safety to infrastructure to human services to mental health and addiction issues within your community.

You must tell your story. Your community has to hear and understand the message and your county's story. As county elected officials, you must take your message and your story to your legislators, your local media, and your community and citizens. You must lead the discussion of the challenges of county government today.

We encourage you to engage your community by

- Regularly providing articles for your local newspaper to publish that discuss a current issue and how your county is taking steps to address that issue.
- Making yourself readily available for radio or television programs and interviews.

- Initiating and continuing open dialogue with your local media reporters, developing a working relationship with them and keeping them informed of the county government activities.
- Developing a plan for maintaining and updating a county web site that is designed to direct those who access it to current information about your county's activities.
- Utilizing social media in a coordinated effort through Facebook and Twitter to continually post and share county activities, events and issues with the public.
- Maintaining a “regular tour” of your local service clubs to keep their members outline current county activities and seek their opinions.
- Staying in constant contact with your cities, villages and townships.
- Being visible in your county and initiating conversation about county issues with your constituents.

CCAO firmly believes that the success of county government is dependent on your local efforts. We encourage you to actively reach out to those in your community at every chance and in every way possible to tell your county's story and assist our association in the discussion of the challenges of county government today.



Morrow County Commissioners present State Rep. Riordan McClain with a plaque thanking him for an improved state-county partnership.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL'S EVALUATION OF OHIO'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM UNDERWAY

by Rachel Massoud, Policy Analyst

2019 brought many new investments in children in Ohio. Gov. Mike DeWine has made children a primary focus of his administration, creating both the Office of Children's Initiatives and the Office of Children Services Transformation. The final version of the first biennial budget under his administration included an additional \$65 million per state fiscal year in children services funding, as well as funding for multi-system youth and kinship initiatives.



To build upon those investments, the governor launched the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council to review and make recommendations on how to improve Ohio's foster care system. Advisory council members include foster alumni, foster parents, kinship caregivers, biological parents, children services directors and caseworkers, judges, the director of the Office of Children's Initiatives, the director of the Office of Children Services Transformation and community stakeholders.

One of the advisory council's primary tasks is traveling Ohio to hear about challenges and best practices of the foster care system. This led to the council hosting 10 regional listening forums in the following counties: Athens, Auglaize, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Licking, Medina, Stark, Warren and Wood.

The format of the forums was designed to make sure the advisory council was listening to the testimony from those who are living and interacting with the foster care system. Each individual providing testimony was allowed five minutes to discuss their experiences, ideas, and recommendations. Those testifying were also asked to provide written remarks.

The advisory council members heard from current and former foster youth, current and former foster parents and kinship caregivers, and other community members concerned with the success of

this system for Ohio's children. Elected officials were among attendees at many forums, including county commissioners and other county staff.

Some themes emerged across the state, including

- A need for more services for children aging out of the foster care system, including transportation, housing and expanded independent living services.
- The need for an impartial foster care ombudsman to investigate and resolve complaints from children placed in foster care.
- Frustration with the length of cases and the number of "chances" biological parents are given to reunify.
- Frustration with lack of communication both with foster youth and foster parents on case progress.
- Frustration with inconsistency across counties.
- The need for more child care. Many witnesses expressed the inability to find child care for their foster children dealing with trauma.
- A lack of mental health and behavioral health services for both children and foster parents.
- A desire for foster parents to have a voice in the reunification process.
- A perception that kinship providers have more say in the process than foster parents.
- Strong disdain for the guardian ad litem process.
- Challenges for foster parents that wish to adopt their foster children.

Members of the advisory council have been reviewing the testimony and notes from all 10 events. Members will meet monthly through May to discuss this testimony and other data, trends and policies, with goal of issuing recommendations on how to improve the foster care system. Those recommendations are expected to be finalized and sent to DeWine in May.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

PETITION DRAINAGE REFORM REACHES THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

by Adam Schwiebert, CCAO Policy Analyst

It's not surprising that most Ohioans give little thought to drainage. Rains come and go and few think about what happens to all that water afterward. With most portions of the state receiving nearly 40 inches of precipitation per year, Ohio is blessed with abundant water resources. But what happens when you have too much of a good thing? All that water has to go somewhere. If left unchecked, excess water can lead to serious property destruction and loss of soil productivity. What procedures are in place to deal with excess precipitation? That's where petition drainage comes in.



The roots of petition drainage in Ohio date back to the 1860s. Although much has changed since those days, the petition drainage process continues. Petition drainage provides local governments as well as their residents a structured process to propose, construct and maintain a wide array of drainage improvements. Common drainage projects include drainage ditches, underground tile pipes and the clearing of logjams and other waterway obstructions. They may not be glamorous projects, but they're essential to maximizing agricultural productivity and preventing private property flooding.

Commissioners have a significant role to play in the petition drainage process. Commissioners participate in projects views, hold public hearings on proposed projects, and ultimately vote to affirm or dismiss filed petitions. With commissioners so closely involved in the drainage process, it makes sense for CCAO to lead the effort in revising Ohio's petition drainage statutes for the 21st century.

The problem petition drainage faces is that much of the enabling legislation in the Ohio Revised Code has not been updated in decades. Different petition drainage functions are outlined in four separate chapters of the Code, and these chapters are often

ambiguous, incompatible or don't reflect modern technology and practices. This unfortunately leads to confusion for local officials and taxpayers alike and sometimes creates unnecessary legal expenses.

The Drainage Law Revision Task Force, chaired by Union County Commissioner Steve Stolte, was created in 2013 to modernize Ohio's petition drainage statutes. The task force is comprised of county commissioners and engineers, soil and water conservation district staff, the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, OSU Extension and others. For five years, the task force reviewed and revised existing drainage statutes to create a more efficient and streamlined petition drainage process. The completed product of those efforts was introduced by state Rep. Bob Cupp as House Bill 340 this past year.

Along with streamlining separate ORC sections and providing much needed clarity, House Bill 340 makes many commonsense updates. One example included in the bill allows for commissioners to utilize modern technology during projects views. Current statute requires that commissioners walk the length of a proposed project to physically inspect the terrain and proposed improvement site. Except for trained drainage engineers, most individuals gain little from this experience. HB 340 allows for commissioners to utilize technology, such as drones, to provide a more comprehensive view of a proposed improvement, and in doing so, save time and promote greater understanding of a project.

It's for these reasons and others that HB 340 is a key CCAO legislative priority in 2020. It may not generate headlines like other statehouse issues, but updating Ohio's petition drainage laws is a sound step for efficient county government.

CCAO thanks the many members of the Drainage Law Revision Task Force for their contributions to this project and we look forward to supporting the bill throughout 2020.

MEMBER NEWS

MARATHON MAN (AND WOMEN)

by Andrew Johnson, CCAO Communications Coordinator

Mercer County Commissioner Greg Homan was looking for a way to make memories with his children, and he decided running would be the way to do it.

“I wanted to teach my children to set challenging goals and the enjoyment of crossing the finish line,” Homan said.

The Coldwater resident’s journey started with his two oldest daughters, Colby and Shelby; together, they completed a half-marathon in each of the 50 states, which took about 20 months to complete.

After the family completed that goal, Homan’s 9-year-old daughter Palin showed interest in the sport. That started a new challenge of running an event in each of Ohio’s 88 counties.

That journey, which started in May in Butler County and wrapped up in November in Meigs County, included 5K events at community festivals and



Homan with his daughter, Palin



Homan and his daughter ran a race in each of Ohio’s 88 counties

charity fundraisers supporting community projects ranging from parks and 4H programs to fundraisers for mission projects and other charities.

The pair also ran longer trail runs, 10K’s, and even some color and night runs to add in some variety.

Homan said their most challenging outing involved the pair running events in three different counties on the same day.

“Throughout our journey, we not only learned more about each other (as father/daughter), but also more about the great state of Ohio. We had the opportunity to meet great people throughout the state and see many great sites,” he said. “We incorporated visits to local museums, special events and state parks, and we tried new foods and expanded our knowledge of the history and diversity of Ohio.

Many late nights driving, hundreds of miles running, several pairs of running shoes later - we look back on our journey with a sense of accomplishment and many life-long memories that we’ll share together.”

GUEST COLUMN

AUDITOR ANNOUNCES STAR RATING SYSTEM FOR PUBLIC-RECORDS COMPLIANCE

by Keith Faber, Auditor of the State

Central to the founding principle of self-governance is partnership between taxpayers and their elected representatives. For government to be most effective, taxpayers must be active participants in the operations of their elected representatives. When there is opacity in government practice, tyranny and stagnation will thrive, but transparency in governing forces those who serve in elected positions to be more accountable to their fellow citizens and foster the exchange of ideas that increases the effectiveness and efficiency of government. To that end, Ohio Sunshine Laws protect citizen’s right to have broad access to government records and meetings.



My office works with entities every day to ensure that Ohio is adhering to Sunshine Laws in every facet and at every level of government. Each year, we collaborate with the Attorney General’s office to distribute Ohio Sunshine Laws, An Open Government Resource Manual, which provides extensive information so public officials are equipped to remain compliant with the open records laws. The manual is available on our website at www.ohioauditor.gov/open.html. Our office also conducts Certified Public Records Training to educate public office holders and their staff about their statutory obligations. These classes are open to the public and you can register at www.ohioauditor.gov/open/trainings.html.

Staying compliant with Ohio’s open records and open meetings law is important work. Public officials must put forth a tremendous amount of effort in order to properly draft public records, record retention policies, implement them, and respond to records requests, all while juggling their other responsibilities. Yet, it is noble work, which keeps

the wheels of democracy turning. This is why when I took office less than one year ago, a top priority was creating a system to reward officials who comply with Sunshine Laws. And I am happy to announce that as of Nov. 21, that system is complete.

From this point forward, when our office tests for compliance with Ohio’s Sunshine Laws, our auditors will incorporate those results into the new Star Rating System (StaRS). The StaRS will then generate a rating for the public office based on their compliance with the law and implementation of best practices. Offices that are compliant with open records law and implement best practices become eligible to receive a StaRS Award. To receive one star an office must meet every Sunshine Law requirement, and then by adding best practices an entity can achieve a multiple-star rating. The best practices are not required by law, but they do enhance transparency consistent with the spirit of the Sunshine Laws. A full break down of the number of stars an office can earn and how many best practices they must implement to earn them is available at www.ohioauditor.gov/open/stars.html.

One of the main reasons I created the new Star Rating System was because it is important to recognize exceptionally transparent government. Public offices that receive StaRS ratings with two or more best practices will be eligible to print a certificate that highlights their accomplishment. Also, my office will post StaRS level of each entity the Auditor of State’s website, so those who work hard to keep government transparent will be recognized for their efforts.

Officials who work every day to make public records and meetings more available to the taxpayer deserve to recognition for their efforts. It is my hope that ultimately as more officials pursue high achievement through StaRS that the overall transparency of Ohio’s governing will improve and more citizens will feel like they can participate in representative democracy.

CCAO NEWS

COUNTY LEADERS ATTEND CCAO WINTER CONFERENCE

by Andrew Johnson, CCAO Communications Coordinator

More than 500 county commissioners, executives, council members, engineers and their guests in December gathered in Columbus for the 2019 CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference. The three-day conference offered sessions to educate attendees about several issues affecting counties, including a legislative update, cyber threats, telling your county's story, the 2020 Census and the future of children and family services.

"I always enjoy attending CCAO's conferences, and I find them to be very informative and worthwhile. The conferences allow you to educate yourself on hot buttons in our industry and an opportunity to network and brainstorm with your peers," Portage County Commissioner Sabrina Christian-Bennett said.

Gov. Mike DeWine made a special appearance on the last day of the conference to have a discussion with members regarding the opiate litigation.

Ohio First Lady Fran DeWine spoke to attendees about her passion for helping children as well as work to the introduce the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to each county in Ohio.

Senate President Larry Obhof discussed the state-county partnership, and Dr. Cathann Kress, vice president for Agricultural Administration and dean of the College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University, also discussed her work with counties.

"My takeaways from the winter conference that I found to be beneficial were the news that the counties should be receiving their first disbursements for internet sales tax around the first of the year and the Imagination Book Program presented by First Lady Fran DeWine," Christian-Bennett added.

Members also elected the 2020 CCAO officers:

- President - Carl Davis, Monroe County Commissioner



Gov. DeWine with CCAO President Davis

- 1st Vice President – Tim Bubb, Licking County Commissioner
- 2nd Vice President – Deborah Lieberman, Montgomery County Commissioner
- Secretary – Lori Kokoski, Lorain County Commissioner
- Treasurer – Tom Whiston, Morrow County Commissioner

"The winter conference was a well-planned event with very interesting and informative sessions and presentations by some of our state partners coupled with light hearted entertainment. The unexpected visit from Governor DeWine was an added bonus," Davis said.

Tuscarawas County Commissioner Joe Sciarretti added, "While I received very strong updates regarding issues surrounding energy, public defenders reimbursement and the upcoming capital budget collaboration with the legislature, I also was able to learn more about the future direction of PERS and how it will affect our current employees as well as our efforts with attracting future hires."



1) Tuscarawas County Commissioner Chris Abbuhl with CEBCO staffers Melissa Bodey and Wendy Dillingham
2) CORSA staffers Ali Redmond, Jim Hale and Frank Hatfield with Henry County Commissioner Robert Hastedt
3) Adams County Commissioners Barbara Moore and Ty Pell
4) Rep. Jack Cera swears in the 2020 CCAO Officers
5) State Sen. Theresa Gavarone with Wood County Commissioner Doris Herringshaw, Erie County Commissioner Matt Old and Defiance County Commissioner Ryan Mack



STATE NEWS

CENSUS 2020 – MAKE SURE OHIO COUNTS!

by Cheryl Subler, CCAO Executive Director

The Constitution of the United States requires that an “actual enumeration” of the population take place every ten years for the purposes of apportioning the membership of the Congress. In 1790, the year of the first census, 17 U.S. marshals and their assistants counted 4 million Americans. Over 200 years later, the 2020 census will be the first to offer a full internet response option and the first to extensively use technology – instead of paper – to manage and conduct field work. Moreover, it is expected to count nearly 333.5 million individuals.

When will the census begin?

A lot of work has already been underway to prepare for the census. April 1, 2020 is observed nationwide as Census Day. By this date, households will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. There are three options for responding: online, by mail, or by phone. It typically takes around 10 minutes to complete.

In May the Census Bureau will begin following up with households that have not responded.

In December, the president will receive the apportionment counts, and states will receive redistricting counts by April next year.

What will the census ask?

As required by the Census Act, the U.S. Census Bureau submitted a list of questions to Congress on March 29, 2018. Based on those questions and a subsequent executive order, the 2020 Census will ask.

- The number of people living or staying at your home on April 1, 2020.
(Used for the total count and to ensure everyone is counted only once and in the right place according to where they live on Census Day.)
- Whether the home is owned or rented.
(Used to produce statistics about homeownership and renters for economic indicators, housing programs and informing planning decisions.)

- The sex of each person in the household.
(Used to produce statistics used to plan and fund government programs, enforce laws, regulations, and policies against discrimination.)
- The age of each person in the household.
(Used to better understand the size and characteristics of different age groups. Agencies use this data to plan and fund government programs that support specific age groups, including children and older populations.)
- The race of each person in the household.
(Used by federal agencies to monitor compliance with anti-discrimination provisions, such as those under the Voting Rights Act and Civil Rights Act.)
- Whether a person in the household is of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.
(Used by federal agencies to monitor compliance with anti-discrimination provisions, such as those under the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act.)
- The relationship of each person in the household to each other.
(Used to plan and fund government programs that support families, including people raising children alone, and other households that qualify for additional assistance.)

To review the Sample Census Form, click [here](#).

Why is the census important?

- It determines how the federal government will distribute more than **\$675 billion dollars** to critical state and local programs. Businesses use the census data to decide where to build factories, offices, and stores, while real estate developers and city planners use the information to plan homes and improve neighborhoods.
- The census is the basis for redistricting and reapportioning the number of representatives in U.S. Congress. It is also used as the basis

for drawing state senate and house districts. The population count helps decide where new schools and hospitals are needed and where to add public safety resources.

- The census count affects the course of the next 10 years. The result of this count is multiplied every year that passes, since following estimates are based on the original census count.

Why and How to get involved

It is everyone’s responsibility to get the count right for Ohio. You can join existing Complete Count

2010 Census Participation Rates of Ohio Counties*

County	County	County	County
Adams County	78%	Hamilton County	77%
Allen County	78%	Hancock County	79%
Ashland County	82%	Hardin County	79%
Ashtabula County,	78%	Harrison County	72%
Athens County	72%	Henry County	82%
Auglaize County	85%	Highland County	75%
Belmont County	77%	Hocking County	77%
Brown County	76%	Holmes County	80%
Butler County	79%	Huron County	79%
Carroll County	78%	Jackson County	77%
Champaign County	79%	Jefferson County	77%
Clark County	77%	Knox County	77%
Clermont County	80%	Lake County	81%
Clinton County	78%	Lawrence County	75%
Columbiana County	78%	Licking County	78%
Coshocton County	83%	Logan County	77%
Crawford County	80%	Lorain County	80%
Cuyahoga County	74%	Lucas Count	76%
Darke County	80%	Madison County	80%
Defiance County	82%	Mahoning County	79%
Delaware County	84%	Marion County	77%
Erie County	78%	Medina County	84%
Fairfield County	80%	Meigs County	79%
Fayette County	77%	Mercer County	84%
Franklin County	73%	Miami County	80%
Fulton County	83%	Monroe County	65%
Gallia County	76%	Montgomery County	77%
Geauga County	84%	Morgan County	58%
Greene County	79%	Morrow County	78%
Guernsey County	78%	Muskingum County	79%
		Noble County	66%
		Ottawa County	59%
		Paulding County	79%
		Perry County	79%
		Pickaway County	79%
		Pike County	77%
		Portage County	78%
		Preble County	77%
		Putnam County	83%
		Richland County	79%
		Ross County	77%
		Sandusky County, OH	81%
		Scioto County, OH	75%
		Seneca County, OH	81%
		Shelby County, OH	77%
		Stark County, OH	81%
		Summit County, OH	79%
		Trumbull County, OH	79%
		Tuscarawas County	79%
		Union County	81%
		Van Wert County	83%
		Vinton County	76%
		Warren County	83%
		Washington County	72%
		Wayne County	82%
		Williams County	81%
		Wood County	80%
		Wyandot County	81%

Committees or form a group that will partner with the Census Bureau to get the word out. Since local leaders know their communities best, they are a vital part in ensuring an accurate and complete count of their community. To connect with someone from the U.S. Census Bureau in your area about partnering send an email to phrcc.partnership.list@2020census.gov.

For the 2010 Census, Ohio had 188 Complete Count Committees across all 88 counties. To access a map of the current CCC locations and their contact information, click [here](#).

*2010 Census Participation Rates, defined as the percentage of questionnaires mailed back by households that received them. The rates exclude households whose forms were returned by the U.S. Postal Service as “undeliverable.” For households that did not receive or mail back a questionnaire in 2010, the Census Bureau followed up in person to obtain their data and make sure everyone was counted.

VOICE OF COUNTY LEADERSHIP KATHRYN WHITTINGTON, ASHTABULA COUNTY COMMISSIONER



CCAO created *The Voice of County Leadership* series to help members tell their stories and hear the issues that matter to them. A different county commissioner, county executive or county council member will be featured in each *County Leader*.

Where are you from?

I reside in Richmond Township, a rural part of Ashtabula County.

How long have you been a county commissioner?

I'm in my fourth year and first term.

Can you tell me about yourself? What is your professional background? What other elected positions have you held? Why did you first run?

I was previously the community service coordinator for Ashtabula County Children Services Board, serving the children and families of Ashtabula County for 15 years, and I have over 25 years of experience working with families and communities.

I am a West Geauga High School graduate and have an Associate's Degree in Business Administration Management and a Bachelor's Degree in General Business Administration.

I decided to run after my house was burglarized. This was directly related to the opiate epidemic. I knew at that time that I needed to help address the drug epidemic in our community.

Why did you want to be a commissioner?

I wanted to address the drug epidemic in our community and felt that in a leadership role such as this that I can contribute to helping to address this issue that has plagued many parts of our state for the last several years.

What was the biggest surprise or adjustment after taking office?

The biggest learning curve was what we can and cannot do as commissioners, such as how business can be conducted and that all of that work sessions are public discussions and that you cannot confer with your colleagues when making decisions. There is a learning adjustment to how we function and make decisions.

Are there common misconceptions about your job?

I often hear that many people say that you are in charge of everything in the county when in reality we have specific operations we have jurisdiction over but there are many things that we do not have control over as well.



Whittington with Portage County Commissioner
Sabrina Christian-Bennett

What are your main responsibilities?

The board of commissioners approve the annual budget, levies taxes for county purposes, issues bonds for capital improvements, and serves as the purchasing and contracting agent for the county. The board controls county-owned real and personal property. In cooperation with the county engineer, the board approves the maintenance and construction of county roads and bridges.

The board of commissioners has direct authority over the following departments:

Building Department, Commissioners Office, Community Services and Planning, Dog Warden Emergency Management/911, Environmental Services, Lodging Tax, Maintenance and Risk Management.

Also, in addition to the above listed departments the board of commissioners also have direct authority over the Ashtabula County Department of Job and Family Services and the Ashtabula County Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

One of the primary responsibilities of a commissioner is to develop a balanced budget and provide adequate resources to deliver county services. What has been one of the biggest challenges in that area?

We always could use more revenue of course to help fund the many programs and services that we request, but as we all know we only have so much money to work with.

What has your county been doing to enhance the state-county partnership?

We are in communication with the statewide liaisons and aides and also have developed relationships with our legislators statewide and federally. This is on top of our efforts from all three board members in Ashtabula County to be extremely active with CCAO.

What are you most proud of for having achieved in your time as commissioner?

Being part of the creation of our county dedicated drug and violent crime task force which is called CEACC, the Crime Enforcement Agency of Ashtabula County.

What has been the biggest challenge you've dealt with as a county commissioner?

Sometimes I would say the biggest challenge is navigating the political challenges that may pop up in this job. I strive to make decisions that are best for the community but sometimes there are those political challenges that can murky the waters.

What advice would you give your peers in other counties who are facing a similar challenge?

Always do what is best for your county and the constituents that you represent.

What are the main challenges your county is facing?

The drug epidemic is one of our major challenges and I would also say that having the ability to fund all the programs and services that I'd like to see funded but dealing with the reality of only having so much money to work with.

Why is it important to be involved with CCAO?

It is important because CCAO priorities are derived from the needs of the counties and it also provides a great opportunity to network with other commissioners throughout the state to learn what is working elsewhere.

Do you have any main priorities, issues or causes? Why?

Broadband needs to be available to all residents in all areas. This lack of infrastructure effects everyone from students (doing homework and projects), Farmers, self-employed small businesses (running operations from home) and impacts the counties economic development.

The Community Corrections Facility Project (jail project) impacts our community as a whole. Our jail is long past its life and no longer is cost effective to maintain. A new jail will allow us to address those inmates with mental health and addiction issues while they are serving their sentence, as well as having the appropriate amount of classroom space.

We will continue to advocate for monies for resources for those dealing with addiction. 2020 will be the Crime Enforcement Agency of Ashtabula County Task Forces first full year dedicated to Ashtabula County. We are looking forward to their continued success in tackling the epidemic.

What do you find are the most successful methods for reaching out to the residents of your county to communicate what your office is doing and why it's doing it?

We just completed our once a month evening agenda session. Since 2017 we traveled to the different, cities, villages and townships and held our agenda session in the evening. This allowed those working to be able to attend a meeting and meet the commissioners and discuss topics that they had concerns about.

We will now be holding meetings at our local high schools. This will allow the students to see how local government works.

We also will be starting our monthly "Coffee with the Commissioners" that will be held around Ashtabula County for residents to come and speak with us regarding any type of concern that they have or

to receive updates on the current projects and priorities.

What do you see for the future/aspirations?

I'm focused on my job as county commissioner right now, but obviously should an opportunity ever arise that I feel I can make a positive difference in a great role, I will certainly weigh that decision at that given time.

When you aren't working, what do you do for fun or anything interesting that may surprise your colleagues?

I love to cook, bake and decorate cakes and read. I also speak nationally about the opiate epidemic and how it has directly impacted my family and highlights Ashtabula County's successes in tackling the epidemic.



Whittington with fellow Ashtabula County Commissioners J.P. Ducro and Casey Kozlowski

LEGISLATOR Q & A

STATE REPRESENTATIVE BRIGID KELLY

Counties have experienced a re-energized state-county partnership this General Assembly. How do you see this relationship continuing in the future?

When local communities are strong, Ohio is strong. It's important for folks in county government and state government to have a partnership; elected officials should work together in order for our constituents to have better lives. For example, low funding levels for counties to use for indigent defense has been an issue for years.



Many counties have struggled to find ways to invest in infrastructure. Both of those issues have been addressed in the most recent operating and transportation budgets. As we continue to build the partnership between county and state governments, it creates more opportunity to address the issues most important to the leaders at the county level, and the people who live in our state.

How can county officials work with you, in your role on the State and Local Government committee, to further this partnership?

We work for you. This means we always welcome feedback, input, and ideas. No one is more an expert at the laws impacting county government than the people who work in county government every day. If there are bills moving through the process, offer your thoughts (formally or informally) about whether they are good or bad, or ways they could be improved.

Partnerships are based on relationships; it's worth investing the time to build relationships with your state legislators. Invite them out to spend time shadowing in county departments, ask them to serve on committees, or have them sit in on meetings to learn more about the county.

What advice do you have for people testifying in front of the committee? How can a witness best connect with lawmakers on the committee?

Come testify! It's incredibly helpful to hear about firsthand experiences and I always appreciate the chance to ask questions about implications of legislation we are considering. Be brief and concise in your testimony and provide real life examples of how bills will impact your county. Now, you can see hearings on the Ohio Channel to keep up with what's happening in Committee.

LEGISLATOR Q & A

STATE REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT WIGGAM

Counties have experienced a re-energized state-county partnership this General Assembly. How do you see this relationship continuing in the future?

The current leadership in Columbus, including the governor, have held local government positions before their elections to their current positions. That being the case, there is a realization that County government is an essential delivery system for will of the legislature as expressed in the Ohio Revised Code. This understanding of county government coupled with healthy tax revenues have paved the way to a symbiotic county-state partnership. I believe this attitude will continue as long as leadership with local government experience and current revenues stay in place.



How can county officials work with you, in your role on the State and Local Government committee, to further this partnership?

To help further this partnership, county officials should continue to be engaged with State policy makers – not simply informing members of issues or challenges – but also bringing possible solutions to the table. These solutions should be more than the simple ask for more money. Beneficial solutions include ways that local government can engage in reforms that may save money and better serve the citizens of Ohio.

What advice do you have for people testifying in your committee? How can a witness best connect with lawmakers on the committee?

The best testimonies contain three elements. First, share a story from personal experience that pertains to the bill. Second, make a real effort to share some research or statistics that back up the position you are taking. Lastly, make it brief and to the point. Share a story, cite the issue and the solution in the bill, share some evidence or facts to back up the solution and be ready for questions. If you have any questions or would like any additional information, reach out to my office at 614-466-1474 or email us at Rep01@Ohiohouse.gov.

LEGISLATOR Q & A

SENATOR TINA MAHARATH

Counties have experienced a re-energized state-county partnership this General Assembly. How do you see this relationship continuing in the future?

Having the local county maintain a relationship with the County Commissioners Association of Ohio tremendously assists us members of the General Assembly. Not all 88 counties in Ohio are fortunate enough to have a designated legislative liaison. CCAO's mission is to effectively advocate for county government. I have full expectations when sitting down with CCAO that they're making the best decision for Ohio.



How can county officials work with you, in your role on the Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs committee, to further this partnership?

I encourage not only for local county officials to partner with CCAO but also to use their voice in democracy to contact my office directly of any bills that would impact the county. As the ranking member of the Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee, it is my duty to lead the minority party to pass bills out of the Committee that will benefit all of Ohio, not just our districts that encompass certain counties.

What advice do you have for people testifying in front of the committee? How can a witness best connect with lawmakers on the committee?

My best advice for those testifying in front of the committee is to prepare for any impactful questions that would relate to the state as a whole. For an example, a policy that would benefit Franklin County may negatively impact Hocking County. Give us an alternative solution to entertain to the other members of the General Assembly in order to make a final committee vote. Our contact information can be found on the official OhioSenate.Gov website. Feel free to contact members of the committee directly prior to your testimony as each member of the committee represents several different socio-economic demographics throughout Ohio.

LEGISLATOR Q & A
SENATOR NATHAN MANNING

Counties have experienced a re-energized state-county partnership this General Assembly. How do you see this relationship continuing in the future?

It is true that in 2019, we made strides in improving the partnership between state and local governments. This past summer, we passed a budget that I foresee working to the benefit of local governments across the state. The main operating budget (HB 166) included increased funding for indigent defense, children’s services, and the Local Government Fund, all of which will benefit those at the county level.

Frequent communication between different levels of government results in positive outcomes for the people we serve, thus, I foresee the partnership between the state and county governments continuing to advance as we move into the second half of this General Assembly.



How can county officials work with you, in your role on the Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs committee, to further this partnership?

While I believe that it is beneficial for all Ohioans to share their thoughts with those who represent them in Columbus, it is especially important for state and local elected officials to maintain open lines of communication with one another.

As the Chair of the Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee, I would encourage all county officials, throughout the state to feel free to reach out to both my office, and the office of their state senator with any and all thoughts or concerns over legislation in the committee.

What advice do you have for people testifying in your committee? How can a witness best connect with lawmakers on the committee?

I would advise individuals wishing to testify before the committee to keep in mind that committee members are at your service. The best way that a witness can connect with lawmakers on the committee is to simply be yourself, share your thoughts on the issue at hand, and any personal stories that might accompany your take on that topic.

I tend to find it especially beneficial when a witness can testify to the actual language included in the legislation being evaluated. While general testimony is useful, raising specific concerns or recommendations for the actual language often proves incredibly valuable.

CORSA NEWS

CORSA – SOFTWARE UPDATES FOR 2020

by Ali Redmond, CORSA Member Services Manager

Happy New Year! And in anticipation of the new year the CORSA staff has been working diligently implementing updates to the claims reporting process and the MVR platform.



Origami – Claim Submission

We have completed the migration of our claims system to Origami, which will involve a change in online claim reporting. The claims reporting link from the Claims page of the CORSA website will take you to the Origami portal where you will enter your new Origami user name and password, and then submit your claim.

One Origami username and password was issued to each CORSA Member which you should have already received. Each Member may then share their user name and password as necessary for their claims reporting process.

To assist you in familiarizing yourself with the new Origami online claim reporting portal, we offered several opportunities for members to attend a short (30 minutes or less) webinar. If you would like to review the webinar again, a recording is available for members on the CORSA website.

Please feel free to call Beth Miller (614) 220-7989 or Katie Linger (614) 220-0637 if you have any questions.

Samba – MVR Reporting

CORSA is excited to remind you of the transition to SambaSafety continuous driver monitoring which became effective January 1, 2020. Samba platforms have changed, and this change results in a significant upgrade in service that benefits CORSA members. Not only will the look of the system be completely different, it will include continuous

monitoring. This means you will no longer receive annual MVRs. A driver's motor vehicle record will be updated immediately upon driver activity and alerts regarding this driver activity will be sent to your email. For example, you will be notified that a driver incurred two points for speeding as soon as it is recorded on the driver's record by the Ohio BMV.

To make this as efficient as possible, CORSA Members were asked to go into their Samba account by Nov. 20, 2019, to make sure that the driver roster was up to date and that all former (e.g. retired, resigned, etc.) and inactive (e.g. FMLA leave; Military Leave) employees are removed from the list and the current list contains employees who currently drive as part of their job or may drive. This would ensure that when your account was migrated at the end of December that you are getting driver monitoring feeds for only active employees. This will prevent unnecessary driver monitoring.

Mishay Benson from SambaSafety provided a series of training sessions both before and after the account migration to ensure everyone would be comfortable with the system and how to pull reports that were being used before the transition. If you would like to review the webinar again, a recording is available for members on the CORSA website.

Please contact CORSA Loss Control Manager Frank Hatfield, fhatfield@ccao.org, (614) 560-1474 for further information.



CEBCO NEWS

THE LATEST NEWS FROM CEBCO

by Mike Kindell, Managing Director of Health and Wellness

CEBCO continues to grow

The CEBCO consortium added Perry County (258 employees) on Oct. 1, 2019. Adams County (174 employees) and Belmont County (563 employees) on Jan. 1, 2020; and Gallia County (180 employees) on Feb. 1, 2020. With the addition of these counties, CEBCO provides Medical and Rx coverage to 39 counties, servicing more than 11,500 employees and 26,000 members. CEBCO continues to provide financial strength and price stability to our member counties with an average increase of 0.9% for the 2020 renewal. CEBCO provides a vast array of wellness and health management services, along with the Engage App that allows members to have access to all of their benefits and programs offered through CEBCO.

CEBCO named Best in Class

In November, 2019, Arthur J. Gallagher, a global leader in insurance, risk management, and consulting services, awarded CEBCO with a Best in Class Award. Out of over 4,000 private companies and public entities, only 106 qualified as Best in Class for health care cost control. Best in Class performance looks at a 2-year trend in health plan premium increases or decreases, priority placed on managing health benefits costs and the perceived success of healthcare cost management strategy. Reducing employee healthcare cost shifting and targeting waste in benefits spending and offering a competitive benefits with limited integration of wellbeing elements. Best in Class Healthcare cost control methods rely less on plan design changes and more on removing waste from the system and equipping employees with cost transparency tools and second opinion options. Best in Class employers also are willing to seek out better pricing for their plans. Best in Class employers also put more stock in the value of creating a stronger culture than their peers and look for ways to attract and retain talent. CEBCO will receive their award in 2020!

Annual CEBCO Membership Meeting

Scheduled for April 3 at 10 a.m., at the Columbus Airport Embassy Suites. We encourage commissioners, as well as, appropriate administrative staff to attend. The program will



CEBCO Member Counties

include a review of CEBCO financials, an overview of the current programs, and a preview of new programs that CEBCO is considering. In addition, each year there are four seats (3-year term) that expire on the CEBCO board of directors and elections will be held for those seats. Additional information will be distributed in the next few weeks.

Union County named one of the Healthiest Employers in Central Ohio

Union County has been recognized as one of the 2019 finalists of the Healthiest Employers of Central Ohio, a nationally recognized awards program powered by the Springbuk Health Intelligence Platform. Union County was honored on December 20, 2019 for their outstanding commitment to employee health and exceptional corporate health programming. As an award finalist, Union County has demonstrated a strong commitment to the health and wellbeing of their team members. As a result of the CEBCO Wellness Program, last year, over 83% of the County's employees completed a rigorous health evaluation, and 77% of spouses also completed this evaluation. Of those participants, 84% shared their test results with their primary care physician or other care providers, which allowed for ongoing dialogue or follow-up. Building an awareness of potential health risks and overall health status is a catalyst to generating desired health outcomes. Our wellness program promotes self-awareness and fosters positive engagement designed to build lifelong healthy habits and lasting health outcomes, one step at a time.

CCAO SERVICE CORP NEWS

CCAO SOLAR SAVINGS PROGRAM GETS A REFRESH

by Keith Blosser, CCAO Managing Director of Operations

The CCAO Energy Executive Committee has approved moving forward with a Statewide Solar Energy Summit for all counties. New technologies and market conditions are now making it possible to consider real long-term savings with Ohio green energy. This is a market change, and one that is many years in the making.



The CCAO Solar Energy summit will be taking place on Feb. 7, 2020 at the Double Tree Hotel (175 Hutchinson Ave.) in Columbus. It is from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. with lunch served after.

Registration is up on the CCAO website. There is no cost to attend, but if you are going, please register so we have an appropriate count for lunch.

All counties are welcome to attend. You do not need to be in the CCAO Energy program to attend. But please register.

This is an informational meeting to learn more about the entire energy sector in Ohio and how it has changed significantly over the last few years. As the energy foot-print of the counties are intertwined with electric and gas, updates will be provided on those areas as well as how they now relate to the emerging solar opportunities we now have for counties in solar. Generation changes and capacity changes all play a role in our new opportunity. Solar Array costs have come down dramatically. When you combine that with a way not to have yearly riders on your green energy supply, you have a very competitive long term hedge that counties can now have the benefit from.

The program goal is to be able to provide electricity to all 88 counties by developing a very large solar array, over many acres. The CCAO solar site has the potential to be the largest solar field in the state. If this project goes forward, it would provide green

energy at a competitive price, and it will be “home grown” in Ohio and will not only be available to all counties, but to county residents, as well as through the CCAO Government Aggregation Program.

This summit is an informational meeting to gauge the interest from county leaders so that CCAO and our program partner, Palmer Energy, can determine if there is enough real interest to move forward with the project. A letter of intent template will be made available at the meeting for counties to review and provide back to us at a later date so we can measure the participation interest. We would like to have all 88 counties participating at the meeting. County commissioners, county executives, county council members, administrators, facility managers and clerks are all welcome to attend this summit. Please go onto the CCAO website and register to attend!

SAVE THE DATE

CCAO Statewide Energy Summit

Introducing NEW Solar Power Initiative

February 7, 2020

9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

DoubleTree Hotel - Worthington

(North of Columbus off outer belt I-270 & Route 23)

Hot lunch served after the summit

Open to ALL Ohio counties! More info to come!



Questions? Contact
Keith Blosser at 614-220-7978
or kblosser@ccao.org.



COUNSELOR'S CORNER

MANAGING EMPLOYEES IN AN ELECTION YEAR

Marc A. Fishel, Partner, and Meghan Brickner, Associate at Fishel Downey Albrecht & Riepenhoff LLP

As another election season approaches, employers should be informed as to how to manage employee politics in the workplace. Studies have shown that political talk is more common in the workplace than it was in the past and has the potential to impact employee productivity.¹ According to the Society for Human Resources Management, in 2016, 1 in 4 employees reported negative workplace conversations about politics. Workers were more likely to avoid co-workers due to these negative political conversations. Obviously, these experiences are not conducive to a productive workplace. The overall tone of political talk tends to be negative and the issues are increasingly more personal to employees.

The question for public employers is how to legally minimize the disruptions caused by political discussions and activities while recognizing employees' rights under the First Amendment. While public employers cannot ban political speech in the workplace all together, they can put certain restrictions in place. Public employees are afforded First Amendment protection, however, such protection is not absolute. Public employers may impose reasonable time, place and manner restrictions concerning political speech; however, they cannot be overly broad limitations. In addition, these restrictions cannot favor political speech on behalf of one party or candidate over others.

The United States Supreme Court has provided guidance to help determine if a public employee's speech is protected in the case of *Pickering v. Bd. Of Edu.*, 391 U.S. 563 (1968). A court will apply what is known as the *Pickering* Balancing Test. Under this test, the court first determines whether the employee's speech is regarding a matter of public concern. If it is, the court balances the interests of the employee, as a citizen, in commenting on matters of public concern against the employer's interest in efficient public service. In *Pickering*, the employee's speech related to expenditures by a school district which also happened to be his employer. The court held this type of discussion involved a matter of public concern. On the other hand, personal

grievances of an employee likely will not be protected under the First Amendment. *Connick v. Myers*, 461 U.S. 138 (1983).

In *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, 547 U.S. 410, (2006) the plaintiff, a deputy district attorney, alleged that his employer retaliated against him due to his speech, in violation of the First Amendment. The plaintiff, while working as a deputy district attorney, prepared a memorandum explaining his concerns regarding an allegedly inaccurate affidavit used to obtain a search warrant in a pending criminal case. The plaintiff alleged that his supervisor retaliated against him as a result of this memorandum. The court ultimately determined that the employee's allegation of retaliation failed because he was not speaking as a citizen for First Amendment purposes since he wrote the memorandum pursuant to his official duties. The First Amendment did not prohibit managerial discipline based on the employee's expressions made pursuant to official responsibilities.

Employers are permitted to put restrictions in place to prevent the negative effects of political talk in the workplace. These restrictions must be applied equally regardless of the employee's political views. Constitutionally permissible restrictions include:

- Prohibiting candidacy for public office in a partisan election;
- Prohibiting candidacy for public office in a nonpartisan general election if the nomination to candidacy was obtained in a partisan primary or through circulation of nominating petitions identified with a political party.
- Prohibiting the circulation of official nominating petitions for any candidate participating in a partisan election.
- Prohibiting campaigning by writing for publications, by distributing political material, or by writing or making speeches on behalf of a candidate for partisan elective office, when such activities are directed towards party success;

¹ <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/politics-at-work.aspx>

- Prohibiting solicitation, either directly or indirectly, of any assessment, contribution or subscription, either monetary or in-kind, for any political party or political candidate.
- Participation in a political action committee which supports partisan activity.

However, permissible activities for employees include the following:

- Registration and voting.
- Expression of opinions, either oral or written
- Circulation of nonpartisan petitions, petitions that do not identify with any particular party, or petitions stating views on legislation.
- Attendance at political rallies
- Display of political materials at the employee's home or property.
- Wearing political badges or buttons or display of political stickers on private vehicles.

Outside of the workplace, social media can also provide an outlet for employees to discuss politics. While the same First Amendment legal standards apply to social media, it is much easier for employees to engage in protected political activity. For instance, in one case, a court held that two sheriff's office employees engaged in protected political speech when they "liked" the sheriff's political opponent's Facebook page. *Bland, et al. v. Roberts*, 730 F.3d 368 (4th Cir. 2013).

However, as with speech in the workplace, First Amendment protection on social media is not absolute. For example, in a recent case, the court found that the Plaintiff, a deputy chief of a police department, was speaking as a citizen on a matter of public concern when the Plaintiff posted a picture of the confederate flag accompanied by the phrase "it's time for a second revolution" on Facebook. *Duke v. Hamil*, 997 F. Supp. 2d 1291(N.D.Ga.2014). However, the court ultimately found that the employer's interest in maintaining the police department's good working relationships and reputation outweighed the plaintiff's interest in speaking.

It is important that employers adopt personnel policies addressing employee's social media use. Employers are permitted to place limitations on the

use of computers and personal electronic devices for political activity while on a duty. As for off-duty social media use, Employers are also entitled to put limitations in place. Employers may regulate and discipline employees for the disclosure of confidential or proprietary information. Additionally, employers can regulate, or ultimately ban, the use of their image, insignia, or logo on social media as well as any political speech that is intended to claim the employee is speaking in their official capacity about a political matter.

Elected officials must also be cognizant of their regulation of political speech by citizens on government-run social media accounts. This tends to become an issue during election season, when constituents make comments about the elected official on the government-run social media page, and only the unfavorable comments are deleted. The First Amendment prohibits the government from engaging in unlawful censorship of speech. However, the government may place certain restrictions on the types of comments permitted in the forum by creating a Social Media Comments Policy, so long as the policy is "viewpoint neutral" and the restrictions are related to the purpose of the page. It is important that social media comments policies are applied in an even-handed manner. Negative comments related to the public agency may not be taken down just because they are critical of the agency. The moderator must only remove comments that violate the agency's policy.

Employers should be proactive in combating the negative effects of political talk in the workplace. It is crucial to remind employees to treat co-workers with respect. Additionally, employers should encourage employees to report any concerns they may have, and address concern on a case-by-case basis. Taking such action will help prevent the negative impact of political conversations on employee productivity and maintain positive work relationships among employees.

Fishel Downey Albrecht & Riepenhoff LLP (FDAR) is a mid-sized Columbus, Ohio, based law firm with a statewide practice. FDAR's purpose is to provide high-quality, affordable legal services. Our focus is meeting our clients' needs with respect to litigation, employment and labor, government liability, business disputes and contracts. Our continuous growth is reflected in our ability to remain on the cutting edge of our areas of practice.

CCAO LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Carl Davis, Monroe County Commissioner
1st Vice President	Tim Bubb, Licking County Commissioner
2nd Vice President	Deborah Lieberman, Montgomery County Commissioner
Secretary	Lori Kokoski, Lorain County Commissioner
Treasurer	Tom Whiston, Morrow County Commissioner
Past President	Julie Ehemann, Shelby County Commissioner
Member	Mike Halleck, Columbiana County Commissioner

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Abbuhl	Tuscarawas County Commissioner
Ron Amstutz	Wayne County Commissioner
Tony Anderson	Fayette County Commissioner
Terry Boose	Huron County Commissioner
Armond Budish	Cuyahoga County Executive
R. Douglas Corcoran	Ross County Commissioner
Mike Crabtree	Scioto County Commissioner
Christopher Day	Preble County Commissioner
Denise Driehaus	Hamilton County Commissioner
Lenny Eliason	Athens County Commissioner
Jeffrey Fix	Fairfield County Commissioner
Patricia Geissman	Medina County Commissioner
Pete Gerken	Lucas County Commissioner
Dick Gould	Greene County Commissioner
Dr. Thomas Graham	Jefferson County Commissioner
DeAnna Holliday	Lawrence County Commissioner
Edwin Humphrey	Clermont County Commissioner
Shannon Jones	Warren County Commissioner
Casey Kozlowski	Ashtabula County Commissioner
Ryan Mack	Defiance County Commissioner
Gary Merrell	Delaware County Commissioner
Glenn Miller	Henry County Commissioner
John O'Grady	Franklin County Commissioner
Matt Old	Erie County Commissioner
Paula Prentice	Summit County Council Member
Randy Smith	Meigs County Commissioner
Brian Stewart	Pickaway County Commissioner
Douglas Weisenauer	Crawford County Commissioner

CORSA LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President** Dan Dean, Fayette County
- Vice President** Cory Noonan, Allen County
- Treasurer** Craig LaHote, Wood County
- Secretary** Dave Wilson, Guernsey County
- Director** Paul Haller, Jackson County
- Director** Jack Evans, Miami County
- Director** Tony Zartman, Paulding County
- Director** Chris Day, Preble County
- Director** Gary Merrell, Delaware County

CEBCO LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President** Jay Begg, Allen County Commissioner
- Vice President** Mike Welch, Ashland County Commissioner
- Treasurer** Marilyn John, Richland County Commissioner
- Secretary** Tony Bornhorst, Shelby County Commissioner
- Member** John Bayliss, Logan County Commissioner
- Member** Jeff Benton, Delaware County Commissioner
- Member** J.P. Ducro, Ashtabula County Commissioner
- Member** Lenny Eliason, Athens County Commissioner
- Member** Lewis Hilkert, Williams County Commissioner
- Member** Christiane Schmenk, Union County Commissioner
- Member** Mike Stegall, Darke County Commissioner
- Member** Ken Stiverson, Marion County Commissioner

CCAO COMMITTEES**Agriculture and Rural Affairs**

Chair: Chris Tony Bornhorst, Shelby County Commissioner

General Government and Operations

Chair: John O'Grady, Franklin County Commissioner
Vice Chair: Brian Stewart, Pickaway County Commissioner

Human Services

Chair: Paula Prentice, Summit County Council Member
Vice Chair: Kathryn Whittington, Ashtabula County Commissioner

Jobs, Economic Development and Infrastructure

Chair: Cory Noonan, Allen County Commissioner
Vice Chair: Judy Dodge, Montgomery County Commissioner

Justice and Public Safety

Chair: Barb Lewis, Delaware County Commissioner
Vice Chair: Marilyn Brown, Franklin County Commissioner

Metropolitan and Regional Affairs

Chair: Gloria Rodgers, Summit County Council Member
Vice Chair: Kevin Boyce, Franklin County Commissioner

Small County Affairs

Chair: Steve Seitz, Wyandot County Commissioner
Vice Chair: Harold Montgomery, Gallia County Commissioner

Taxation and Finance

Chair: Daniel Dean, Fayette County Commissioner
Vice Chair: Marilyn John, Richland County Commissioner

Water Quality Task Force

Co-Chair: Pete Gerken, Lucas County Commissioner
Co-Chair: Doug Spencer, Auglaize County Commissioner

CCAO STAFF

Brandy Allen, Accountant
(614) 220-0640 | ballen@ccao.org

Sherry Barbosky, CORSA Underwriting Manager
(614) 220-7995 | sbarbosky@ccao.org

Keith Blosser, Managing Director of Operations
(614) 220-7978 | kblosser@ccao.org

Melissa Bodey, CEBCO Senior Benefit Specialist
(614) 220-7997 | mbodey@ccao.org

John Brownlee, CORSA Managing Director
(614) 220-7988 | jbrownlee@ccao.org

Debi Burnette, CEBCO Enrollment and Billing Specialist
(614) 220-0644 | dburnette@ccao.org

Thisbe Butcher, Finance Manager
(614) 220-7990 | tbutcher@ccao.org

Tricia Callihan, CORSA Program Assistant
(614) 220-7993 | tcallihan@ccao.org

Wendy Dillingham, CEBCO Senior Benefit Specialist
(614) 220-7992 | wdillingham@ccao.org

Albert Francis, CORSA Senior Claims Representative
(614) 220-0638 | afrancis@ccao.org

James Hale, CORSA Risk Control Consultant
(614) 246-1630 | jhale@ccao.org

Robin Garrett, CCAO Administrative Professional
(614) 220-0653 | rgarrett@ccao.org

Frank Hatfield, CORSA Risk Manager
(614) 220-0639 | fhatfield@ccao.org

Ken Hilty, CORSA Law Enforcement Consultant
(614) 357-6966 | khilty@ccao.org

Jon Honeck, Senior Policy Analyst
(614) 220-7982 | jhoneck@ccao.org

Tim Hoverman, Network Administrator
(614) 220-0655 | thoverman@ccao.org

Andrew Johnson, Communications Coordinator
(614) 220-7986 | ajohnson@ccao.org

Amanda Jones, CORSA Claims Representative
(614) 220-0636 | ajones@ccao.org

Mike Kindell, Managing Director of Health and Wellness
(614) 220-0645 | mkindell@ccao.org

Jeff Knapp, CORSA Claims Supervisor
(614) 220-0642 | jknapp@ccao.org

Marilou Lamb, Office Manager & Boards Liaison
614-220-7998 | mlamb@ccao.org

John Leutz, Legislative Counsel
(614) 220-7994 | jleutz@ccao.org

Katie Lininger, CORSA Senior Claims Representative
(614) 220-0637 | klininger@ccao.org

Rachel Massoud, Policy Analyst
(614) 220-7996 | rmassoud@ccao.org

Elizabeth Miller, CORSA Claim and Litigation Manager
(614) 220-7989 | emiller@ccao.org

Curtis Pratt, CORSA Claims Technician
(614) 220-0636 | cpratt@ccao.org

Alison Redmond, CORSA Membership Services Manager
(614) 220-7991 | aredmond@ccao.org

Adam Schwiebert, Policy Analyst
(614) 220-7981 | aschwiebert@ccao.org

Tori Sinclair, CEBCO Wellness Coordinator
(614) 220-0650 | tsinclair@ccao.org

Cheryl Subler, Executive Director
(614) 220-7980 | csubler@ccao.org

Hannah Whiston, Wellness/Benefits Administrator
(614) 220-0654 | hwhiston@ccao.org