

PRIMARY ELECTION RECAP

By: Julianna Moyer & Sherri Warner

The Highlights:

- Trump-backed J.D. Vance emerged victorious in a crowded Republican primary field for U.S. Senate. Vance will face U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan in November.
- Former Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley won the Democratic primary for governor, while incumbent Mike DeWine secured the Republican nomination.
- Further evidence of Trump's hold on the state is apparent with the victories of Max Miller, Madison Gesiotto Gilbert, and JR Majewski.

U.S. Senate

Hillbilly Elegy author J.D. Vance secured the Republican nomination for the Ohio U.S. Senate election following an endorsement late in the race from former President Donald Trump. Once solidly in the middle of the pack, Vance – with Trump's endorsement – triumphed over four other established candidates: former state treasurer Josh Mandel, former Ohio Republican Party chair Jane Timken, Cleveland businessman Mike Gibbons, and state senator Matt Dolan. In one of the most expensive and contentious primary races in Ohio's history, all candidates but one vied for Trump's endorsement during the entirety of the race, with some (including JD Vance) having to walk back controversial statements they had made about the former president. State senator Matt Dolan was the lone Republican challenger who did not seek Trump's blessing; this tactic provided him a surge in the polls near Election Day, but he still fell short in third place. Vance's victory shows Trump still holds considerable political sway in Ohio.

Vance will face current **U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan** in the November general election. Ryan, who ran against progressive political newcomer Morgan Harper and IT executive Traci "TJ" Johnson, handily won the Democratic nomination. Ryan has steadily raised significant money from Democratic-aligned backers, including twenty sitting U.S. senators. However, the 10-term congressman likely faces an uphill battle in an increasingly red state.

U.S. House

Ex-President Trump's hold on the state is evident also in the victories of **Max Miller** and **Madison Gesiotto Gilbert** in their U.S. House primaries. Gilbert will face Democratic State Rep. **Emilia Sykes** from Akron in what is expected to be a competitive race. Miller, running in Ohio's newly drawn 7th Congressional District and favored to win, will run against Democratic political newcomer Matthew Diemer from Bay Village.

Moreover, Trump-backed candidate **JR Majewski** pulled off a surprising win in Ohio's 9th Congressional District. Majewski defeated State Sen. Theresa Gavarone and State Rep. Craig Riedel and will face long-time incumbent U.S. Rep. **Marcy Kaptur** in the November election.

Incumbent **Shontel Brown** won the Democratic primary rematch in Cleveland against progressive anti-establishment candidate Nina Turner. It is expected Brown will retain her seat in November.

Statewide

Former Dayton Mayor **Nan Whaley** will face incumbent **Mike DeWine** in the race for governor. Whaley's primary opponent, ex-Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley, conceded last evening with just above 35% of the Democratic vote.

The most moderate of the GOP candidates for governor, DeWine failed to secure more than half the vote in the primary, ending up with 48%. Former U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci secured 28% of the vote, with Joe Blystone and Ron Hood at 21% and 2% respectively. Governor DeWine has faced significant criticism from many in the party over his actions and orders at the onset of the pandemic. He was fortunate that both Renacci and Blystone ran and split the vote of his detractors.

Incumbent Secretary of State **Frank LaRose** defeated former state lawmaker John Adams in the GOP primary. He will face Democratic candidate **Chelsea Clark** from Cincinnati. It is likely LaRose will hold his position in November.

Redistricting Update

The Ohio Redistricting Commission convened at 2 p.m. this afternoon – with two new faces in its midst. Senate President Matt Huffman and House Speaker Bob Cupp, both Lima Republicans, appointed Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) and Rep. Jeff LaRe (R-Canal Winchester) respectively to sit on the Commission. The official word is that McColley and LaRe will bring fresh ideas to the stalled redistricting process. However, selecting appointees two days before the May 6th deadline outlined by the Ohio Supreme Court is causing speculation that the appointments were more about delaying the process than cultivating new ideas.

The Commission also faces a May 28th deadline outlined by a federal court. If the Commission fails to produce a viable map that passes the Ohio Supreme Court's scrutiny by the 28th, the federal court will impose the invalidated 3rd map for the 2022 cycle and set an August 2nd primary election for Statehouse seats.

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