

**PORTAGE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY**  
**NEWS AND NOTES - JUNE 2017**

Friend -

The summer months are "time off" for many people - but not for our local Democratic Party. We are working hard to move forward on progressive change in our community.

Right now, that means working actively to circulate petitions to put fair Congressional districts on the ballot in Ohio and end gerrymandering. Later this summer, it will mean appearing at local fairs and festivals to talk about our values with voters. We're also actively fundraising to ensure we have the resources we need to support our candidates locally in the future, and will be celebrating all we do together at our picnic later this summer.

Find out more about what's going on below. If you have suggestions on how we might improve this newsletter, or events and activities you'd like us to share in the future, please forward them via email to Brad Cromes at [cromesbl@gmail.com](mailto:cromesbl@gmail.com).

Thank you again for all you are doing this summer to turn up the temperature and keep our elected officials accountable.

Onward,

Craig Stephens, Chairman  
Portage Co. Democratic Party

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## **CALLS TO ACTION**

*NOTE: The following is an update from Bob Howard, member of the Central Committee from Brady Lake, [Portage County Progressives](#) leading organizer, and the point person for the redistricting ballot initiative effort in Portage County.*

The petition drive to put the **"Fair Districts" reapportionment issue** on the ballot is proceeding at a moderate pace. We have submitted nearly 300 signatures to ODP in our first bunch, and will continue to collect more, with final submission to the Ohio Democratic Party before July 5th.

There will be several public gatherings at various Fourth of July celebrations around Portage County this coming weekend. Such events around the County offer excellent opportunities to share information about the need for a fair redistricting process in Ohio, and to gather signatures for our petitions. We know several people plan to circulate petitions, and more circulators will certainly help.

We hope you will get a petition from us and work the crowds at one of these fine events.

**This Saturday, July 1st, downtown Kent will host the Kent Heritage Fest.** The Portage County Democratic Party will sponsor a booth, and we can always use more circulators and volunteers to help out with the petition drive for an hour or two between 10:00am and 7:00pm at the Heritage Fest. Volunteers will be on hand at the booth to distribute blank petitions and to accept your completed petitions once you are done soliciting. We will gladly accept any number of signatures.

Bob (and anyone wishing to join him) will also be in the PCDP office at 210 S. Meridian St. in Ravenna next Monday, July 3rd, from 11:00am to 1:30pm to accept petitions.

If you can volunteer this weekend to help collect signatures, help out at the Heritage Fest, want an additional petition, or have petitions to turn in at other times, please contact Bob at 330-931-1186 or at [murnhoward@gmail.com](mailto:murnhoward@gmail.com). He will be happy to give you a fresh petition or accept your completed (from 1 to 60 signatures) petitions at his home in Brady Lake at mutually agreed times, until around 6:00pm on July 3rd.

We hope to see a significant increase in supporters, circulators and signatures this 4th of July weekend through July 3rd. All valid signatures will be counted towards our target of 6000 signatures from PortageCounty, either this year or for 2018. All signatures collected now, once validated, will apply for each year's ballot as needed.

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The Federated Democratic Women of Portage County and our local Party are looking for volunteers to work at KentFest on July 1, 2017 and the Portage County Randolph Fair, August 21-27, 2017. To sign up, please contact Pat Nelson at [patricia.w.nelson@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.w.nelson@gmail.com) or [330-322-9417](tel:330-322-9417).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### [Chair's Circle Fundraiser](#)

*July 10, 2017 - 5 - 7pm - Kent State Hotel & Conference Center, 215 S. Depeyster St., Kent, OH 44240*

This event will feature Congressman Tim Ryan, who will discuss our country's direction and how Democrats can help America fulfill its true promise. This is the Party's only fundraiser, and underwrites all our activities in support of local candidates and causes each year. Tickets are \$300 for individual patrons, \$500 per couple.

### [2nd Annual Citizens for Cromes BBQ](#)

*July 26, 2017 - 5 - 7pm - Kent American Legion, 1945 Mogadore Rd., Kent, OH 44240*

Join us for a BBQ fundraiser in support of County Treasurer Brad Cromes. Treasurer Cromes will give an update on progress his office is making in improving services for local taxpayers, and present his vision for our County's future. Come early for meats and sides, and stay late for games including human foosball (weather permitting), corn hole, and much more! Cash bar will also be provided. Tickets are \$35/person, \$60/couple. Sponsorship opportunities are also available at the \$100 (Bronze), \$250 (Silver), and \$500 (Gold) levels. Please make checks payable to "Citizens for Cromes," and mail to 550 E. Riddle Ave., Ravenna, OH 44266.

### [Portage Democrats Annual Picnic](#)

August 19, 2017 - 12 - 3pm - Stephens Farm, 2467 Alexander Rd., Atwater, OH 44201

The Portage County Democratic Party's Annual Picnic will be held August 19, 2017 at the Farm of Chairman Craig Stephens. The event is free and open to all Democrats (though a covered dish is suggested and appreciated). Come and join us!

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## **ELECTIONS UPDATE**

The filing deadline for local school board and township trustee is 4pm on August 9, 2017. Are you interested in running? Contact us on our [website](#). To learn more about how the Ohio Democratic Party can support your candidacy, check out the Main Street Initiative [here](#).

*Editor's Note: Our last newsletter congratulated Kent City Council candidates Gwen Rosenberg, Roger Sidoti, and Michael DeLeone on their victories. In our enthusiasm, we neglected to note that all three must be elected at the General Election in November, and will potentially face write-in or independent competition. We regret the error - and remain committed to helping these fine candidates win Council seats this fall!*

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## **FROM OUR OFFICIALS - Coroner Dr. Dean DePerro**

*This section highlights the work of our local elected Democrats.*

Dr. Dean DePerro (D-Kent) was [appointed](#) to finish the final term of long-time Portage County Coroner Dr. Roger Marcial in January 2014, and was elected to a full term of his own last November. Before taking office as Coroner, Dr. DePerro worked as an internist in Barberton, Ohio, and has a long history of working with Hospice programs to bring comfort to patients at the end of life. We sat down with Dr. DePerro to talk about how he came to his position, how we can address the exploding opioid crisis in our community, and what his vision is for the office long term. Lightly edited notes of that conversation follow.

*When you were named Coroner, you succeeded a long-time fixture in local politics in Dr. Roger Marcial. Can you tell us about how you came to seek this job, and what following Dr. Marcial has been like for you?*

"Following Roger Marcial, for me, was a huge task. I have built and hope to continue building on his example as a representative of ethics, integrity and involvement."

*What made you want to be a doctor?*

"I had allergies as a kid, and my family doctor took me under his wing. I found I had an appetite for medicine."

*You were born in Austintown, and much of your early work was at St. Elizabeth's. What brought you*

*to Kent and Portage County?*

"I always envisioned myself in a little town. My wife and I love Kent. Being a college town, there's lots to do. I take a lot of pride in telling people I'm from Kent and Portage County. I'm concerned about community affairs here."

*As Coroner, obviously you see the end result of the opioid crisis that's sweeping our community. What does that look like from your perspective?*

"With tighter restrictions on prescription drugs, people are turning to other drugs with deadly results. As of today, 26 individuals have died from overdoses in our County this year, with another 5 likely cases pending the results of blood tests. That's 31 before the end of June; in all of last year, we had 47, which was by far the most we'd ever had. I got involved with the sales & use tax advisory committee because I tired of walking into death scenes with a 21 year-old overdose victim in one room, and his young family in the next. We'll have to raise those kids as a society, and the problem is only growing."

*How do we deal with it?*

"I believe we must focus on intervention and prevention. That will have a real impact if we commit to it - an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

*Thanks very much for your time today, Dr. DePerro.*

"My pleasure."

*To learn more about what Coroner Dr. Dean DePerro is working on, visit his website [here](#).*

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## **ICYMI - NEWS AND NOTES**

Dispatch (Columbus) - [Whaley slams drugmakers in gubernatorial campaign](#) - May 23, 2017

"The heroin epidemic is no accident," Nan Whaley, who is the mayor of Dayton, says in the video. "It started with the drug companies. Whaley has made the role of pharmaceutical companies in the opioid epidemic a big part of her campaign. She says drug companies should pay for the damage they have caused.

Vindicator (Youngstown) - [Medicaid, food stamps likely on Trump's chopping block](#) - May 23, 2017

An \$800 billion cut to Medicaid in the Trump administration's proposed \$4.1 trillion budget could hobble Ohio's fight against the opioid epidemic. Reports from the Washington Post and CNN, citing individuals familiar with the plan but who have requested anonymity, indicate the administration's budget, to be unveiled today, will propose cuts totaling \$1.7 trillion, including the \$800 billion reduction to Medicaid.

Plain Dealer (Cleveland) - [New Trump budget zeros out Great Lakes Restoration](#) - May 24, 2017

Trump's 2018 budgetary wish-list would slice the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative from \$300 million to zero. "Taking a blow torch to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative could cost Ohio jobs that rely on the Lake, and jeopardize public health by putting our drinking water at risk," said a statement from Sen. Sherrod Brown.

Fiscal Times - [The little guy's financial watchdog may soon be defanged](#) - May 24, 2017

The Trump budget calls for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to be "restructured." Republicans on Capitol Hill have long complained about the structure of the CFPB, created as part of the Dodd-Frank laws passed in response to the financial crisis. Since the CFPB was created, there has been only one director, Richard Cordray, a Democrat from Ohio appointed by former President Obama. Trump is said to be eager to get rid of Cordray, but is worried that firing him might spark a backlash.

Dispatch (Columbus) - [1 million Ohioans to lose coverage under Obamacare replacement](#) - May 25, 2017

The House Republican plan to replace Obamacare would increase the number of Americans without health insurance by 23 million over the next decade, concluded a report released Wednesday by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. About 1 million Ohioans would lose health coverage — 700,000 from the Medicaid expansion and an estimated 293,000 now on private health-care exchanges, the office of Sen. Sherrod Brown said.

Advance Ohio (Cleveland) - [Former U.S. Attorney Steve Dettelbach launches bid for Ohio Attorney General](#) - May 30, 2017

Steve Dettelbach, who stepped down as U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio last year to enter private practice, said Tuesday he is running for Ohio attorney general in 2018.

The Blade (Toledo) - [GOP veterans, Dem newcomers eye Ohio races](#) - June 5, 2017

Democrats, meanwhile...don't boast veteran political names. The party is looking to promote its farm team of current and former state legislators and mayors to the major leagues.

Register (Sandusky) - [Anthem pulling out of Ohio healthcare marketplace](#) - June 6, 2017

"The dangerous game President Trump and Washington politicians are playing just caused 70,000 paying customers in Ohio to lose their insurance and it will continue raising prices for everyone else. It's got to stop," Sen. Sherrod Brown said.

Record-Courier (Ravenna) - [Portage chosen for high court pilot program](#) - June 8, 2017

Portage County Common Pleas Court has been selected by the Ohio Supreme Court as one of only 12 such courts in Ohio to participate in a program aimed at determining if mediation is a fitting resolution for certain civil stalking cases. Judge Laurie Pittman announced this week that the court was selected by the Ohio Supreme Court's Commission on Dispute Resolution to participate in its Civil Stalking Protection Order Mediation pilot program.

Advance Ohio (Cleveland) - [Ohio Democrats need to speak to issues that "keep people up at night"](#) -

*June 9, 2017*

"We need to be talking to voters every month of the year, not just in the three months leading up to the election," new Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez said. "We need to better understand people's hopes and fears, and then we need to be moving forward to fight for them."

Record-Courier (Ravenna) - [Farm tax break would cost homeowners](#) - June 18, 2017

A plan by legislative Republicans to give a tax break to farmers would mean higher property taxes for Ohio homeowners and less revenues for schools. According to an analysis of proposed farmland value changes in the new two-year state budget, Ohio homeowners face more than \$60 million in unvoted property tax increases, while schools could face a loss of \$58 million in state and local tax revenue.

Record-Courier (Ravenna) - [Taxpayers have new options to pay bills](#) - June 19, 2017

In addition to email billing and text messaging, taxpayers can use the treasurer's new online payment tool to make one-time payments, or to set up an account that will allow them to "claim" parcels, view their tax bills, and track their payment histories. Taxpayers making payments in person at the treasurer's office will also now have the option of using credit and debit cards -- the first time such services have been available at the office since the late 1990s. "If you can use it to buy milk at Giant Eagle, you should be able to use it to pay your taxes," Treasurer Brad Cromes added. "We think these upgrades are a big step in that direction."

Reuters - [U.S. top court will not review Ohio 'perfect' ballot law](#) - June 19, 2017

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday left in place a lower court's ruling that barred private citizens from suing Ohio for allegedly impeding their ability to vote by requiring ballot forms to be filled out perfectly.

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**The Portage County Democratic Party**

<http://www.portagedemocrats.org/>

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