



2024 Candidate Scorecard

Evaluating Candidates for U.S. Senate and Ohio Supreme Court on LGBTQ+ Equality & Inclusion

Election Date:
November 5th, 2024

Brought to you by the Equality Ohio Policy Team

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How to Interpret Letter Grades:

- A** | Strong record & promising future in office
- B** | Mostly strong record or insufficient record but supportive campaign platform
- C** | Mixed record or insufficient record & unclear campaign platform
- D** | Mostly poor record or insufficient record, but concerning campaign platform
- F** | Poor record & likely to harm civil rights in office

How Senate Scoring Works | For executive office candidates, unlike the General Assembly scores, we graded candidates on the totality of their career track records, including accomplishments, public statements, and campaign platforms, and we took into account both improvements or backsliding over time.

How Judicial Scoring Works | For Judicial candidates, we used slightly different criteria than the rest of Ohio's elected offices. Along with respect for civil rights and general ethics, we looked for independence from partisan politics and consistency in judicial philosophy. Like the other statewide offices, we graded candidates on the totality of their career track records, including accomplishments, public statements, and campaign platforms, and we took into account both improvements or backsliding in their positions or rulings on issues regarding social justice.



2024 Candidate Scorecard

United States Senate Candidates

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A Sherrod Brown (incumbent)

Sherrod Brown, a U.S. Senator for Ohio since 2007, champions Ohioans' rights against special interests. He advocates for affordable healthcare, higher wages, job creation, and social justice. Known for his bipartisan efforts, Brown prioritizes working families over partisan politics. He sponsors and supports legislation to protect constitutional rights and democratic values, and actively supports the LGBTQ+ community. Brown consistently advocates for addressing systemic injustices, reflecting these values in his voting record.



F Bernie Moreno

Bernie Moreno is a lifelong car dealership owner. Having never served in government, Moreno lacks a public voting record to evaluate, so his campaign statements must be more heavily relied upon than his opponent. To date, Moreno's Senate campaign is rooted in populist rhetoric, and he attacked his primary opponents specifically on the basis of their support of LGBTQ+ rights, with PAC ads even naming Equality Ohio during the contentious primary. As a business owner turned politician, his short political record and shift from pragmatism to polarization raise concerns. His scapegoating of minorities and backsliding of support for LGBTQ+ equality earns him a failing grade.

2024 Candidate Scorecard

Ohio Supreme Court: Seat 1 Candidates

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A Justice Michael Donnelly (incumbent)

Justice Michael Donnelly is a current Ohio Supreme Court Justice, serving on the bench since 2019. He is respected for his judicial temperament, integrity, and commitment to constitutional principles. He advocates for addressing sentencing disparities and supports bipartisan efforts for transparent sentencing. Justice Donnelly's legal expertise, dedication to a fair democracy, and his commitment to social justice warrant a high score.



D Judge Megan Shanahan

Judge Megan Shanahan is a Common Pleas Judge serving Hamilton County since 2015. Judge Shanahan's numerous close affiliations to special interest groups suggest a strong likelihood of judicial prejudices. Her support for problematic bail reform programs and tough-on-crime rhetoric also shows a willingness to uphold harmful policies. These factors, along with her publicly stated willingness to overturn long-standing precedent, raise questions about her ability to preserve constitutional rights, earning her a low score.

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Ohio Supreme Court: Seat 2 Candidates

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F Justice Joseph Deters (incumbent, but vacating)

Justice Joe Deters has been a Supreme Court Justice since 2023, having been appointed by Governor Dewine to fill the vacant seat left by Chief Justice Kennedy following the 2022 election. His long record of advocacy for extreme punishments – including in favor of a government firing squad and weaponizing state abortion laws to prosecute pregnant people and doctors – raise serious concerns about his commitment to constitutional principles. His history of selective recusals further undermines his credibility. His track record and stated positions make him a problematic choice for a Supreme Court Justice and his history of corruption and prejudicial rulings warrant the lowest possible score.



A+ Justice Melody Stewart (incumbent)

Justice Melody Stewart has been a Justice on Ohio's Supreme Court since 2019. Justice Stewart, she is the first African American woman to be elected to the Supreme Court in Ohio. She has a long track record of protecting constitutional rights, democratic values, and fair representation. Her consistent rulings, transparency, and respect for precedent solidify her reputation as a principled jurist, earning her high recognition, and a high score on this year's scorecard.

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Ohio Supreme Court: Seat 3 Candidates

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A- Judge Lisa Forbes

Judge Lisa Forbes is serving on Ohio's 8th District Court of Appeals since 2021. Forbes boasts a diverse background before reaching the bench. With experience in Congress and as a business litigator, alongside extensive community involvement, she possesses a deep understanding of legal and governmental processes. Committed to justice and restoring public trust, Judge Forbes's impartial approach to statutory analysis reflects her dedication to upholding democratic values and civil rights protections and has earned her a high grade.



C- Judge Dan Hawkins

Judge Hawkins is a Common Pleas Judge in Franklin County and has served since 2019. Judge Hawkins has extensive legal experience, but mixed public statements, some of which raise concerns about his stance on LGBTQ+ rights and social justice. However, his history of being elected in a diverse area suggests an ability to maintain a more measured judicial outlook compared to more zealous judicial activists on the ballot this year. Concerns about his record but faith in Hawkins's ability to exercise judicial restraint earn him a moderate score.



2024 Candidate Scorecard

Ballot Initiative to Tackle Gerrymandering

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SUPPORT

In response to political party operatives and politicians gaming district map drawing, citizen activists have organized a 2024 ballot initiative to address gerrymandering, a term used to describe partisan political groups drawing districts to benefit their preferred candidates or undermine the representation of other communities. The current process, led by partisan elected officials, has led to a marked increase in extremist legislation and rhetoric in state and federal legislatures.

The initiative proposes replacing the current system with a commission of 15 Ohio citizens, meeting specific conflict-of-interest criteria, to draw legislative districts. This initiative aims to ensure proportional representation and prevent the disempowerment and disenfranchisement of Ohio voters, marking a crucial step toward ending gerrymandering.

LEARN MORE



For a more detailed analysis of the candidates and stakes of the upcoming November 5 election, and to see how current statehouse lawmakers are stacking up so far, check out Equality Ohio's Scorecard page. Scan the QR Code above or visit: [Linktr.ee/EqualityOhio](https://linktr.ee/EqualityOhio)