



2026

Candidate Scorecard

See how candidates measure up
on the issues that matter for LGBTQ+
Ohioans and their families.

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3.

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For a full analysis of the candidates and stakes of the upcoming November 3, 2026 election, visit the Equality Ohio 2026 LGBTQ+ Voter's Guide by scanning the QR Code or visiting [Equalityohio.org/votersguide](https://equalityohio.org/votersguide)



What Do Candidate Grades Mean?

All candidates were assessed based on a variety of factors related to their support for LGBTQ+ equality and inclusion, including their legislative records (if they have previously held office), overall career track records, public statements, campaign platforms and other accomplishments.

Judicial candidates were evaluated with the additional criteria of their rulings, independence from partisan politics and the consistency of their judicial philosophy.



Champion of equality



Strong record & clear support for LGBTQ+ Ohioans



Mostly strong record OR insufficient record but supportive campaign platform



Mixed record OR insufficient record & unclear campaign platform



Mostly poor record OR insufficient record & concerning campaign platform



Poor record & likely to harm LGBTQ+ civil rights

Equality Ohio 2026 Candidate Scorecard

Statewide

- U.S. Senator
- Governor
- Secretary of State
- Attorney General
- Ohio Supreme Court (x2 races)

Leaders at the statewide level are key decision-makers when it comes to policies that impact LGBTQ+ Ohioans and their families. Make sure you get the facts about where these candidates stand before you vote.



U.S. Senator



A

Sherrod Brown

- He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996—one of the few red or swing state representatives to do so—and was a staunch advocate for the Equality Act.
- He has long supported legislation to expand nondiscrimination protections and defend marriage equality and civil rights for all.
- His 2024 campaign faltered on public support for transgender Ohioans, his current campaign publicly seeks equality for all Ohioans.



F

Jon Husted

- He has a longstanding record opposing LGBTQ+ equality, including previously supporting efforts to ban same-sex marriage.
- He criticized Governor DeWine's veto of legislation banning gender-affirming care for transgender minors.
- He championed HB 8, Ohio's "Don't Say Gay/Trans" law.

Governor



Amy Acton

- She opposes the politicized attacks coming from the Statehouse and has pledged to support under-represented communities as governor.
- She has advocated for reproductive freedom, public education, and workers' and union rights as core priorities.
- As former Director of the Ohio Dept. of Health during COVID-19, she has built her campaign on dignity, inclusion, and equity for every Ohioan.
- A recent anti-trans remark has resulted in a status change from "A" to "pending", reflecting unaddressed harm and an open door for accountability.



Vivek Ramaswamy

- He supports bans on gender-affirming care and has referred to transgender identity as a "mental health disorder."
- He has characterized the broader LGBTQ+ movement as "cult-like" and aligned himself with national culture war messaging targeting LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- He has been a vocal critic of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and supports restrictions on reproductive healthcare access.

Secretary of State



Allison Russo

- She is a leading advocate against HB 8, Ohio's Don't Say Gay/Trans and Forced Outing Bill.
- She has consistently supported policies promoting LGBTQ+ equality, inclusion, and personal freedom throughout her time in the legislature.
- She played a key role in defeating the August 2023 Issue 1 power grab and helped secure reproductive freedom protections in the Ohio Constitution.



Robert Sprague

- His alignment with broader conservative policies and voting restrictions raises concerns for LGBTQ+ communities that have faced barriers to political participation.
- He has emphasized restricting voter access by expanding photo-ID requirements and eliminating ballot drop boxes.
- He has closely aligned his campaign with the priorities of the Trump administration rather than expanding voter participation.

Attorney General



B

John Kulewicz

- He has positioned himself as a strong advocate for LGBTQ+ Ohioans at a time when civil rights protections are being challenged in state and federal courts.
- He has pledged to push back against federal overreach and defend Ohioans from policies that threaten personal freedoms and equal protection.
- He brings 44 years of legal experience, including arguing cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and courts across Ohio.



F

Keith Faber

- His record aligns with the Ohio Republican caucus that has consistently opposed expanding protections for LGBTQ+ Ohioans.
- During his time in state government, Ohio Republicans advanced numerous policies restricting LGBTQ+ rights and protections for transgender youth.
- As Attorney General, he would likely continue advancing priorities that frequently target LGBTQ+ equality and reproductive freedom.

Ohio Supreme Court



Jennifer Brunner

- She dissented when the Court allowed enforcement of Ohio's ban on gender-affirming care.
- As the Court's only Democratic justice for much of her tenure, she has consistently defended individual liberties and equal protection under the law.
- She brings decades of public service experience across all three levels of Ohio's judiciary.



Colleen O'Donnell

- She has not established a public history of advocating for LGBTQ+ rights or civil rights protections.
- Her record reflects a consistently more conservative judicial approach.
- Concerns have been raised about how her judicial philosophy may impact cases involving LGBTQ+ Ohioans and other civil rights issues.

Ohio Supreme Court



A

Marilyn Zayas

- Her demonstrated commitment to fairness, equal access to the courts, and impartial application of the law earns her high marks on equality.
- She has focused on improving access to justice and reducing barriers and costs for Ohioans navigating the court system.
- She was appointed three times within a 40-day span by Ohio's Chief Justice to sit on the Ohio Supreme Court, an uncommon distinction that underscores her expertise and the respect she has earned across the judiciary.



F

Dan Hawkins

- He joined the Court's majority allowing enforcement of Ohio's ban on gender-affirming care for transgender minors to proceed.
- His alignment with rulings that restrict access to gender-affirming care has raised questions about his approach to civil rights protections.
- His broader record includes limited direct commentary on LGBTQ+ issues.

Equality Ohio 2026 Candidate Scorecard

Congressional Districts (CD)

- CD01 – Northern Cincinnati, Warren Co., Hamilton Co.
- CD09 – Toledo and Northwest Ohio
- CD13 – Akron, Portage Co., Stark Co., Summit Co.
- CD15 – Columbus and Central Ohio

At the federal level, congressional representatives are Ohio's voice in national policy decisions. Make sure you know where these candidates stand on the issues that impact LGBTQ+ Ohioans and their families.



CD01

Northern Cincinnati, Warren Co., Hamilton Co.



Greg Landsman

- He has consistently supported LGBTQ+ equality through his voting record and public advocacy in Congress.
- He is endorsed by national organizations such as The Human Rights Campaign for his commitment to nondiscrimination and civil rights protections.
- He has secured federal funding for local projects and returned millions in resources back to his Southwest Ohio district.



Eric Conroy

- His campaign has included rhetoric targeting transgender youth in school athletics.
- His public positions on transgender rights have drawn concern from LGBTQ+ advocates.
- A former CIA Case Officer and Air Force veteran, his platform centers on tax cuts, border security, and national security issues.

CD09

Toledo / Northwest Ohio



B

Marcy Kaptur

- She has spoken up for LGBTQ+ communities in support of the Equality Act and, at one time, earned a 100% rating from the Human Rights Campaign.
- The longest serving woman in the U.S. House of Representatives, she has focused on economic growth, Great Lakes protection, and advocating for working-class Ohioans.
- She recently joined 8 Democrats in voting for HR 2616, a bill that is anti-trans equality.



F

Derek Merrin

- He supported several anti-equality measures during his eight years in the Ohio legislature.
- As former leader of the Ohio House Republican Caucus, he aligned with the broader anti-LGBTQ+ agenda in the Statehouse.
- He led efforts to cut state income taxes, expand school choice, and require photo-ID to vote.

CD13

Akron, Portage Co., Stark Co., Summit Co.



Emilia Sykes

- As a member of the Congressional Equality Caucus, she has been a strong ally in opposing anti-LGBTQ+ bills.
- She co-sponsored the Equality Act to provide federal non-discrimination protections.
- She has secured over \$300 million in federal funding for her district and returned over \$15 million directly to constituents.



Carey Coleman

- His campaign messaging raises concerns that he will oppose federal regulations protecting LGBTQ+ Ohioans.
- He is a longtime Northeast Ohio radio host and former TV meteorologist.
- His platform emphasizes fiscal discipline, energy independence, and "family stability."

CD15

Columbus and Central Ohio



B

Don Leonard

- Advocates have faith that he will be a passionate advocate for constituents and listen to the concerns of the LGBTQ+ community.
- He has worked for ten years as an Assistant Professor at OSU's Knowlton School of Architecture.
- His campaign focuses on the affordability crisis Ohioans face in healthcare, housing, and childcare.



D

Mike Carey

- He supported the Respect for Marriage Act in 2022, which enshrined federal protections for same-sex marriage.
- The extreme culture war push by congressional Republicans earns him a cautious score.
- He has served in the U.S. House since 2021 and previously worked at a coal company.

Equality Ohio 2026 Candidate Scorecard

Senate Districts (SD)

- SD03 – Madison Co., Pickaway Co., Southern Franklin Co.
- SD13 – Lorain Co., Huron Co.
- SD27 – Portage Co., Summit Co.

The Ohio State Senate helps to set policy and enact laws that directly impact the lives of Ohioans. Find out where these senate candidates stand on issues that matter most to LGBTQ+ Ohioans and their families.



SD03

Madison Co., Pickaway Co., Southern Franklin Co.



A

Stacie Baker

- Advocates have faith he will serve LGBTQ+ communities passionately.
- He has advocated for livable wages, fully funded public schools, mental health access, and affordable housing and childcare.
- He serves on the Reynoldsburg City Council as Council President Pro Tempore and chairs its Finance Committee. During his tenure here, he supported LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination protections and a ban on conversion therapy for minors.



F

Michele Reynolds

- She has supported anti-equality legislation, including the gender-affirming care ban for minors and the “Don’t Say Gay/Trans” bill.
- She has been a passionate advocate for housing and championed preservation of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.
- She has served as a State Senator since 2022 and previously as a Madison Township Trustee.

SD13

Lorain Co., Huron Co.



A

Joe Miller

- He has been a strong ally for the LGBTQ+ community with a consistent voting record.
- As a former educator, he champions a new school funding model that is constitutional and equitable.
- He has served as State Representative since 2018 after nearly 20 years as a high school teacher.



C

Gayle Manning

- She has a mixed record: she supported the gender-affirming care ban for minors, but ultimately opposed the trans bathroom ban and the “Don’t Say Gay/Trans” bill.
- She has served as State Representative since 2018 and previously served for eight years in the Ohio Senate, including as Majority Whip.
- She spent 37 years as an elementary school teacher prior to her legislative career.

SD27

Portage Co., Summit Co.



A

Mike Roberto

- His focus on ensuring Ohio works for everyone, including the LGBTQ+ community, has earned him our high score.
- He believes a high-quality education is a right for every child and has emphasized fiscal responsibility alongside care for people.
- He has more than 34 years in education, most recently as Superintendent of Aurora Schools (2020–2025).



F

Steve Demetriou

- He has been consistently in favor of anti-equality legislation during his tenure.
- He has been a State Representative since 2022 and has received the Bronze Star Medal for his service in Afghanistan.
- He built a small business from three employees to over sixty in three years.

House Districts (HD)

- HD06 – Columbus West Side
- HD10 – Columbus and Southwest Franklin Co.
- HD17 – Southwest Cuyahoga Co.
- HD23 – East Cleveland and Lake Co. Area
- HD31 – Northern and West Summit Co.
- HD35 – Northern Summit Co., Portage Co., and Southern Geauga Co.
- HD36 – Dayton and East Montgomery Co.
- HD39 – Northern Montgomery Co.
- HD49 – Canton Area
- HD52 – Elyria, North Ridgeville, Avon
- HD53 – Lorain Area
- HD60 – Southern Delaware Co.
- HD75 – Wood Co.
- HD78 – Allen Co.
- HD84 – Mercer Co.
- HD88 – Seneca Co.

The Ohio State House helps to set policy and enact laws that directly impact the lives of Ohioans. Find out where these house candidates stand on issues that matter most to LGBTQ+ Ohioans and their families.



HD06

Columbus West Side



Christine Cockley

- As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, she has shown strong support for LGBTQ+ issues during her tenure as state representative.
- She believes every Ohioan deserves to thrive with safe neighborhoods, affordable housing, and quality education.
- She previously worked in the nonprofit sector as Executive Assistant to the President & CEO of YWCA Columbus.



Matthew Jackson

- He has not publicly committed to supporting specific LGBTQ+ issues.
- His campaign platform is largely undeveloped beyond broad conservative priorities.
- He is a military veteran and Fire EMS professional who served as a Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy for nine years.

HD10

Columbus and Southwest Franklin Co.



A

Mark Sigrist

- He has a strong voting record on LGBTQ+ issues during his first term in the Ohio House.
- He has introduced legislation to support veterans, improve pedestrian safety, and increase access for those with disabilities.
- He is a former Grove City Council Member who spent his career at Honda as a Planning Manager.



F

Denise D'Angelo

- She has pushed her school board to take formal stances against gender identity acceptance.
- She was previously endorsed by Moms for Liberty, which the Southern Poverty Law Center classifies as "extremist."
- She has served on the South Western City School Board since 2023 and owns a massage therapy practice.

HD17

Southwest Cuyahoga Co.



B

Megan Coy

- She is expected to be an advocate for LGBTQ+ issues as a champion of progressive values.
- She is a registered nurse and a second-term member of the Olmsted Falls City Council.
- She previously spent three years as a health educator on a college campus.



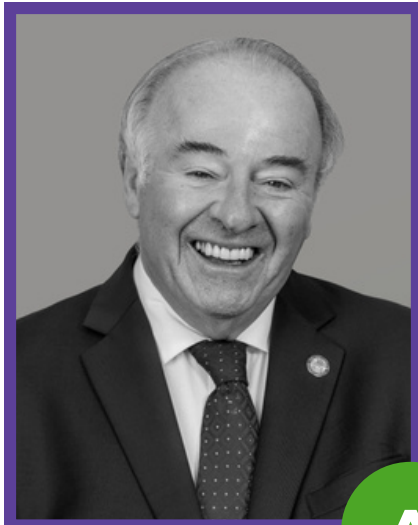
F

Mike Dovilla

- He has an anti-equality vote record on bills like the drag ban.
- He introduced HB 486, which would require instruction on the "positive influences" of Christianity in American history.
- He is a 24-year Naval officer in his first term back in the Ohio House after previously serving from 2011 to 2016.

HD23

East Cleveland and Lake Co. Area



A

Dan Troy

- He has a strong voting record on equality during his time in the Ohio House.
- He has played key roles in significant legislative initiatives, especially on budgeting and taxation.
- He is a 50-year member of the building trades union and a U.S. Army veteran with a long career in Ohio politics.



D

Julie Belich

- She has a concerning lack of public support for LGBTQ+ Ohioans.
- Her campaign lacks a developed platform.
- She currently serves on the Willoughby Hills City Council.

HD31

Northern and West Summit Co.



B

Noah Spinner

- Advocates have faith he will fight for progressive values, including LGBTQ+ rights.
- He believes in fully funding public schools and protecting workers' rights.
- He is an attorney at Vorys' Akron office and an appointed trustee for the Cuyahoga Falls Public Library.



F

Mike Kahoe

- His campaign has focused on culture wars and attacking transgender Ohioans rather than serving constituents.
- He has sent mailers opposing "men in women's sports."
- He previously served as a Revere School District Board Member and as the Workforce Program Manager for the Ohio Governor's Office.

HD35

Northern Summit Co., Portage Co., and Southern Geauga Co.



B

Samantha Salamon

- Her campaign platform includes fighting to protect children and defend human rights.
- She is Chief Counsel at ASIA, where she developed a holistic legal program for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.
- She is a celebrated victims' rights attorney and lifelong Northfield Center resident.



D

Vik Sandhu

- He has a lack of public support for LGBTQ+ Ohioans.
- He is a small business owner and a former Merchant Navy Officer who worked for MTM tankers for ten years.
- He has served as Fiscal Officer for Richfield Township and Co-Chair of a Small Business Advisory Committee.

HD36

Dayton and East Montgomery Co.



A

Rose Lounsbury

- As a former teacher, she saw firsthand the struggles faced by LGBTQ+ students and understands everyone deserves to live free from discrimination.
- She has pledged to fight to end the state-sanctioned bullying of LGBTQ+ children and families.
- She is a former public school teacher, the daughter of two retired teachers, and a mother of teenage triplets in public school.



D

Andrea White

- She has a mixed LGBTQ+ record, opposing the gender-affirming care ban for minors in committee and then ultimately supporting it on the House floor.
- She lacks the willingness to stand up for LGBTQ+ Ohioans when it matters most.
- She has served as State Representative since 2020 and is a former Clerk of Court for Kettering Municipal Court.

HD39

Northern Montgomery Co.



B

Daquan Neal

- As a strong advocate for marginalized communities, he has earned higher marks for equality.
- His campaign focuses on housing affordability, universal healthcare, and free school lunches.
- He is a Central State University graduate and former legislative aide in both the Ohio Senate and the Ohio House.



D

Mark Campbell

- He has a concerning lack of public support for LGBTQ+ Ohioans.
- His campaign platform is insufficient and prioritizes supporting law enforcement and affordability.
- He has served on the Huber Heights City Council for 37 years.

HD49

Canton Area



B

Krista Allison

- Advocates have faith she will be committed to serving all constituents, including the LGBTQ+ community.
- She has campaigned on ensuring seniors aren't left behind by rising costs and the need to fully fund public schools.
- She has spent a decade advocating for Ohio families, including as an Executive Director at the Ohio Department of Education.



F

Jim Thomas

- He has consistently supported anti-equality legislation and helped pass the drag ban in the Ohio House this session.
- He has served as State Representative since 2022 and is a licensed attorney.
- He was previously a professional tennis player for twelve years.

HD52

Elyria, North Ridgeville, Avon



Mike Baker

- He has been an outspoken ally for LGBTQ+ issues and will fight discrimination in housing, healthcare, and employment.
- He has pledged to ensure LGBTQ+ individuals are treated with fairness and dignity.
- He founded First Choice Photography in 2008 and has 15+ years of leadership in Scouting BSA.



Nathan Manning

- He has a mixed LGBTQ+ record, opposing the gender-affirming care ban for minors but supporting the “Don't Say Gay/Trans” bill (HB 8).
- He led the effort to pass major criminal justice reform legislation (Senate Bill 288) in 2022.
- He has served eight years in the Ohio Senate and previously four years as a State Representative.

HD53

Lorain Area



B

Matt Lundy

- His focus on education, consumer protection, and support for veterans and seniors has earned him higher marks for equality.
- He served on Avon Lake City Council and in Elyria city government as assistant safety/service director.
- He began his career in broadcasting and was named Television Journalist of the Year in North Carolina.



D

Brad Lacko

- He has a concerning lack of public support for LGBTQ+ Ohioans.
- He is a truck driver, small business owner, and 4th-generation farmer.
- His campaign emphasizes education, economic development, and public safety.

HD60

Southern Delaware Co.



B

Shelby Kimball

- Her focus on strong public schools, accessible healthcare, and veteran support has earned her higher marks for equality.
- She is a mom and a Marine Corps and Army National Guard veteran who served as a Patient Administration Specialist.
- She helps elevate patient and caregiver voices as a State Advocate for the National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias.



F

Brian Lorenz

- He has consistently supported anti-equality legislation during his time in office.
- He has introduced legislation addressing sextortion, helping children with disabilities, and has secured \$10 million in Capital Budget funds for Delaware County.
- He has served as State Representative since 2023 and is a former Mayor of Powell.

HD75

Wood Co.



B

Rick Rettig

- Advocates have optimism he will protect LGBTQ+ Ohioans while in office.
- He has spent over 30 years in education and currently teaches personal finance at Perrysburg High School.
- He serves as President of the Perrysburg City Council and entered the race in mid-April after the prior candidate dropped out.



F

Haraz Chanbari

- He has supported the ban on gender-affirming care for minors and the drag ban during his tenure.
- He has been a State Representative since 2019, with more than two decades of military service.
- He is a Navy Reserve Commander and Army veteran of operations in Bosnia.

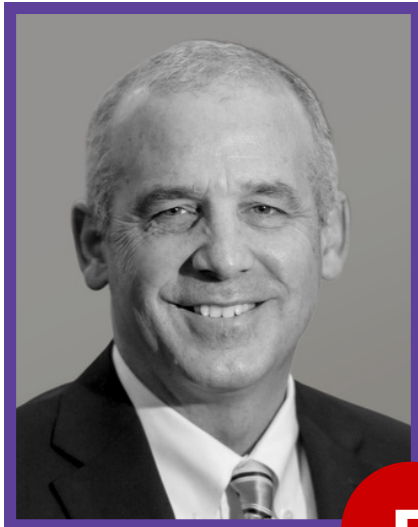
HD78

Allen Co.



Jeff Givan

- He is a member of the LGBTQ+ community and a founding member of the Lima Pride Alliance.
- He has worked to increase visibility for LGBTQ+ Ohioans in a part of the state where resources are limited.
- He is a community organizer who runs a commercial greenhouse that funds an addiction recovery program.



Matt Huffman

- He has single-handedly pushed state-sanctioned attacks on the LGBTQ+ community as Speaker of the Ohio House.
- He has consolidated power as one of the most influential voices in the Ohio Republican Party.
- He has championed bills to restrict reproductive rights and give parents control over student education.

HD84

Mercer Co.



Arienne Childrey

- She is the first out transgender woman to serve on a city council in Ohio.
- She is a passionate advocate for equality who believes Ohio is strongest when every person is treated with dignity, fairness, and equal opportunity.
- Her trailblazing advocacy and long-term commitment to community service have earned her Champion of Equality status.



Angie King

- She has sponsored the drag ban twice and personally voted for numerous anti-equality bills.
- She has served as State Representative since 2022 and was a Celina City Council member for 11 years.
- She helped shape Ohio's Universal Newborn Hearing Screening legislation.

HD88

Seneca Co.



B

Aaron Jones

- Advocates have faith he will fight for real issues impacting Ohioans, including the LGBTQ+ community.
- He has worked for 20 years at the Toledo Molding & Die plant and serves on the Tiffin City Council.
- He is a former Airborne Infantryman with the Army's 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment—The Old Guard.



F

Gary Click

- His tenure has been solely defined by an overwhelming focus on restricting the rights and freedoms of LGBTQ+ Ohioans.
- He has consistently pushed dangerous misinformation about transgender Ohioans, even sponsoring a "Detrans Awareness Day."
- He has served as State Representative since 2020 and was pastor at Fremont Baptist Temple from 2006 to 2025.

This November,

Make Your

Voice Heard!

Make sure you're registered to vote!

Your voice is your vote. Double-check your voter registration today—it's quick and easy! Scan the QR code here and make sure you're ready to vote this November.



Equality Ohio 2026 Candidate Scorecard

Thank you!

A special thank you to the following Equality Ohio staff and partners for making this scorecard possible:

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