



**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®**

Voter's Guide - Issues

November 3, 2015 General Election

League of Women Voters of Kent, League of Women Voters of Northern Portage County

Information on State Issues 1-3 was provided by the League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund.

In most cases information on ballot issues was provided by the governmental body placing the issue on the ballot.

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The League of Women Voters of Ohio, founded in 1920, is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Complementing it is the League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund that provides nonpartisan information and educational services to citizens.

Prior to each state and national election, the League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund provides nonpartisan information on statewide candidates and issues to its local Leagues and Ohio voters. This information is used in Voters’ Guides which are distributed by local Leagues throughout the state.

On the ballot for the November 3, 2015 General Election are three state issues:

- **Issue 1, to create a bipartisan Ohio Redistricting Commission;**
- **Issue 2, to limit writing a monopoly into the state constitution; and**
- **Issue 3, to legalize marijuana and create a business structure for marijuana growth and sales.**

The summaries of the three ballot issues were prepared by the League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund. The pros and cons listed for each issue are abbreviated versions of the arguments put forward by the respective issue campaigns. The title listed for each issue is the official title assigned by the Ohio Ballot Board.

All of this year’s state ballot issues propose to amend the Ohio Constitution. There are three ways to amend the Ohio Constitution: proposal by the General Assembly; proposal by the people through an initiative petition; by constitutional convention. In all cases, proposals submitted to the voters must be approved by a majority of those citizens voting on them to become a part of the state constitution.

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Statewide Ballot Issues

Issue 1: Creates a bipartisan, public process for drawing legislative districts

(Proposed by Joint Resolution of the General Assembly)

Proposing to enact new Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 of Article XI and to repeal Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 of Article XI of the Constitution of the State of Ohio.

A YES vote means approval of the constitutional amendment.

A NO vote means disapproval of the constitutional amendment.

A majority YES vote is required for the amendment to be adopted.

If approved, the proposed amendment will take effect immediately after Election Day.

League Explanation of Issue 1:

Issue 1 would amend the Ohio Constitution to change the way state legislative districts (but not U.S. Congressional districts) are determined. Every 10 years, Ohio draws new legislative district lines based on changes in population as reported in U.S. Census data. Issue 1 replaces the Apportionment Board with a bipartisan Ohio Redistricting Commission. If Issue 1 passes, members of the Commission will include:

- The Governor
- Auditor of State
- Ohio Secretary of State
- Appointee by the Speaker of the Ohio House
- Appointee by the President of the Ohio Senate
- Appointee by the Minority Leader of Ohio House
- Appointee by the Minority Leader of Ohio Senate

The Ohio Redistricting Commission will be responsible for creating district maps for the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate. Issue 1 establishes rules for map-making. It ensures compactness and keeps communities together by prohibiting splitting governmental units, like counties or cities, unless necessary. Issue 1 prohibits partisan gerrymandering. No General Assembly map shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party. Issue 1 creates more transparent map-making by requiring public hearings. If the amendment is passed, it will become part of the constitution immediately; however, the new rules for drawing districts will not be applied until the next time districts are redrawn beginning January 1, 2021, after the next U.S. Census.

Issue 1 encourages bipartisan map-making. For the maps to last ten years, at least two members of the minority party will have to vote in favor of it. If only one party supports a particular map, the district lines will only last four years. Map-making will be subjected to stricter criteria, including the

requirement that the districts reflect the statewide partisan preferences of voters, sometimes called representational fairness.

PRO:

1. Prohibits partisan gerrymandering-- *“No General Assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a party”* will be written into the rules in the Ohio Constitution.
2. Requires transparency and public hearings, encouraging accountability to the electorate.
3. Districts will better protect community cohesiveness by limiting government units such as counties and cities from being split.
4. Eliminates the continuation of previous gerrymandering by removing language from the current Ohio Constitution that requires new maps to be “reasonably consistent” with old maps.

CON:

1. Many Ohioans are not Republican or Democrat. Third parties and Independents are not represented on the Commission.
2. Issue 1 does not address the process for determining U.S. Congressional districts.
3. The Ohio Redistricting Commission is not independent from legislators; legislative members can still influence the process.
4. Bipartisan Commission members can make “sweetheart deals” that can result in districts that are not representative of the state’s overall partisan preferences.

Issue 2: Anti-monopoly amendment; protects the initiative process from being used for personal economic benefit

(Proposed by Joint Resolution of the General Assembly)

Proposing to amend Section 1e of Article II of the Constitution of the State of Ohio.

A YES vote means approval of the constitutional amendment.

A NO vote means disapproval of the constitutional amendment.

A majority YES vote is required for the amendment to be adopted.

If approved, the proposed amendment will take effect immediately after Election Day.

League Explanation of Issue 2:

Issue 2 would prohibit an initiative petition amendment to the Ohio Constitution that would give special business rights to a certain person or entity. Specifically, Issue 2 would prohibit an initiative that creates a monopoly, cartel, or oligopoly; specifies or determines a tax rate; or confers a commercial interest, commercial right, or commercial license to any person or entity for the purpose of exclusively enriching its members and prohibiting others from engaging in similar enterprises.

If Issue 2 passes, the Ohio Ballot Board will be required to evaluate any proposed initiative petition to determine if it violates the prohibition above by creating a limited commercial interest. If such an initiative is proposed, the Ballot Board will be required to separate the proposed initiative into two parts

– one part asking voters to override the limited business interest rule, and the second part describing the proposed new initiative – with both parts needing a majority vote for the initiative to pass.

If both Issue 2 and Issue 3 are approved by the voters, it is unclear what will happen, because they would create conflicting sections within the state constitution. The Ohio Supreme Court will likely have to resolve the matter if both issues pass.

PRO:

1. Exclusive financial deals for special interests should not be enshrined in our state constitution.
2. The state constitution should be used to protect fundamental rights for all individuals, not cluttered with special interests.
3. Nineteen states have constitutional provisions banning monopolies and protecting free and fair commerce; Ohio should too.

CON:

1. The constitution should not be amended to interfere with the constitutional initiative process and block a measure approved by the voters.
2. The language is too vague and may unintentionally preclude future policy or tax issues from being brought forward as an initiative.
3. Issue 2 gives the Ballot Board too much discretion to declare a proposed initiative to be a monopoly and force it to jump through two hurdles instead of one.

Issue 3: Grants a monopoly for the commercial production and sale of marijuana for recreational and medicinal purposes

(Proposed by Initiative Petition)

Proposing to add Section 12 of Article XV of the Constitution of the State of Ohio.

A YES vote means approval of the constitutional amendment.

A NO vote means disapproval of the constitutional amendment.

A majority YES vote is required for the amendment to be adopted.

If approved, the proposed amendment will take effect 30 days after Election Day.

League Explanation of Issue 3:

Issue 3 has a two-fold objective: (1) to legalize marijuana for personal and medical use and (2) to establish rules for growth and sales.

Growth and cultivation of marijuana will be limited to ten pre-determined, specific “grow sites” situated throughout the state. The ten sites already have designated investors. There will also be a number of pre-determined “quality control” sites throughout the state to test the product being cultivated. About 1,100 retail outlets will be allowed to sell marijuana, but they must buy it only from the ten specified sites and cannot develop their own supplies.

Individuals may grow up to four plants and possess up to eight ounces of actual product at one time. The four plants must also be bought from the ten specified wholesale grow sites. Under this initiative, individuals possessing or cultivating over 100 grams of marijuana would be committing a felony. Selling marijuana outside of the sanctioned outlets would also be a felony, with a possible sentence of up to one year in prison.

PRO:

1. Marijuana will, within the strict limits specified in the initiative, become legal to cultivate, use, and sell in Ohio for medicinal and personal use.
2. Issue 3 creates rules for a tightly controlled industry. The system of designated grow sites and quality control testing areas will ensure that the marijuana grown at these sites will address standards of public safety.
3. Issue 3 will create tens of thousands of jobs in Ohio and will eventually generate millions of dollars in tax revenue to support local government services.

CON:

1. The state constitution should be used to protect the fundamental rights of all individuals, not to enshrine an extremely detailed plan creating exclusive financial deals for a group of special interest investors.
2. The initiative sets up an exclusive business scheme that eliminates competition to such an extent that independent business owners could be permanently locked out of what is projected to be a billion-dollar market and individual users who do not abide by the strict restrictions will still be subject to criminal penalties.
3. Issue 3 will flood Ohio with marijuana and marijuana-infused products, like candy and cookies, that put the public health and safety of Ohio's adults and children in danger.

Issue 4 Atwater Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 1.5 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$78,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The money will be used for road workers payroll and road material.

Issue 5 Brimfield Township Additional Levy

Amount: 1.9 mills Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$429,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2015.

Explanation: The money will be used for roads and bridges.

Issue 6 Charlestown Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 2.5 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$43,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2015.

Explanation: The money will be used for fire protection and EMS.

Issue 7 Deerfield Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 2.5 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$134,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The money will be used for fire protection and EMS.

Issue 8 Edinburg Township Renewal & Increase Levy

Amount: 2.1 mills Renewal & Increase Levy that would generate approximately \$87,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The money will be used for current expenses.

Issue 9 Mantua Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 1.5 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$169,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The Road Levy money will be used for contracts and road projects, such as paving, chip & seal, crack seal, ditching, tree removal, road striping, etc and also for materials, such as asphalt, road salt, gravel, culvert pipes, etc.

Issue 10 Mantua Township, Precinct C Local Option

Explanation: Placed on the ballot by Mantua Corners Bar & Grille, Inc., an applicant for a D-6 liquor permit. The passage of this issue for Mantua Corners Bar & Grille, a restaurant and bar located at 11697 State Route 44, Mantua Township, OH 44255, would permit the sale of wine, mixed beverages and spirituous liquor on Sunday between the hours of ten a.m. and midnight.

Issue 11 Nelson Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 1 mill Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$46,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: This revenue is recorded in the General Fund. It helps to pay for the day to day operations of the township. This is the only non-restricted Fund.

Issue 12 Palmyra Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 2 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$109,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The money will be used for fire protection and EMS.

Issue 13 Randolph Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 2 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$203,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: Randolph Township strives to keep our roads in good condition. The money generated by this levy will be used for the repair and maintenance of Randolph Township roads. The levy will also be used for equipment and employees' salaries and benefits to perform such maintenance.

Issue 14 Ravenna Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 3.5 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$48,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: These levy monies are used to support the general operating expenses of the Township including streetlights, cemetery, zoning regulations and enforcement, spring clean-up, building maintenance for all departments, and administration costs. This Levy will NOT increase property owners' taxes, it is a renewal.

Issue 15 Ravenna Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 5 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$122,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The Fire Levy pays for equipment, firefighter and paramedic personnel. These monies are also used to repair and replace fire trucks, ambulances, fire protective equipment, safety equipment, and life-saving EMS equipment. This Levy will NOT increase property owners' taxes, it is a renewal.

Issue 16 Ravenna Township, Precinct G Local Option

Explanation: Placed on the ballot by Tamarkin Company dba Ravenna GetGo #3327, an applicant for a D-6 liquor permit. The passage of this issue for Ravenna GetGO #3327, a neighborhood store at the northeast corner of East Main Street and Hazel Street, Ravenna Township, OH 44266, would permit the sale of wine and mixed beverages on Sunday between the hours of ten a.m. and midnight.

Issue 17 Rootstown Township Renewal Levy

Amount: 2.85 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$499,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The money will be used for the fire department's day to day operations, maintenance of fire vehicles and equipment and fire employee salaries and benefits.

Issue 18 Shalersville Township, Precinct C Local Option

Explanation: Placed on the ballot by Vivek 04, Inc. dba V Food and Beverage, an applicant for a D-6 liquor permit. The passage of this issue for V Food and Beverage, a retail food and beverage store located at 9045 State Route 44, Shalersville, OH 44266, would permit the sale of beer, wine and mixed beverages on Sunday between the hours of eleven a.m. and midnight.

Issue 19 Suffield Township Additional Levy

Amount: 1.25 mills Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$173,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2015 for fire protection and EMS.

Explanation: The money will be used for general operating expenses. Our payroll costs have gone up 55% since 2007, due to the need to increase staff, in order to maintain a timely response with a sufficient crew for our residents.

Issue 20 Rootstown Local Schools Renewal Levy

Amount: 5.98 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$1,045,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The money generated will continue to pay for the general operations of the district including classroom supplies, implementations of Ohio's New Learning Standards, utilities, fuel, transportation, special education costs, extra-curricular programs, as well as to pay for unfunded mandates established by the state and federal legislatures, and personnel costs so the district can continue to provide a quality education for students to become life-long learners.

Issue 21 Springfield Local Schools Renewal Levy

Amount: 1.8 mills Renewal Levy for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The money will be used for general and permanent improvements.

Issue 22 Springfield Local Schools Renewal Levy

Amount: 4.2 mills Renewal Levy for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The money will be used for emergency requirements.

Issue 23 Tallmadge City Schools Renewal Levy

Amount: 1.25 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$366,000 annually for a continuing period of time beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The monies will be used for the ongoing maintenance of our buildings and upkeep of property.

Issue 24 Tallmadge City Schools Renewal Levy

Amount: 7.5 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$2,718,000 annually for 10 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The monies are used in the day to day operation of the district including salaries/benefits, instructional supplies/equipment, utilities, etc...these are general fund \$ that the district relies on for the ongoing expenses of the education of our students...

Issue 25 Ravenna City School District/Reed Memorial Library Renewal Levy

Amount: 1.5 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$464,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: The money will be used for the operational costs of Reed Memorial Library.

Issue 26 Portage County District Library Additional Levy

Amount: 1 mill Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$2,400,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: Portage County Library District has identified a need for additional funding to better serve our residents. The 1 mill, 5-year levy will fund improved collections, staffing, programs and services, with more focus on early childhood and literacy services, workforce readiness and small business support, and enrichment programs for all ages.

Issue 27 Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities Renewal Levy

Amount: 1.8 mills Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$4,000,000 annually for a continuing period of time beginning in 2015.

Explanation: The renewal will convert the term from 5 years to a continuing period of time with no increase in taxes and would account for approximately 20% of the Board's revenue sources. Funds will be used for general operating purposes of the Board. Key initiatives include more integrated services/supports, person-centered choice making, employment, training options, civic participation, and quality of life decisions.

Issue 28 Garrettsville Village Additional Levy

Amount: 4.1 mills Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$201,000 annually for 3 years beginning in 2015.

Explanation: Placed on the ballot by initiative petition presented by the Committee to Keep Garrettsville Safe, the money would be used for public safety services.

Issue 29 Kent City Charter amendment

Explanation: Amend Section 66(a) of Article XV of the Charter to remove term limits for the Board of Health. Currently, they are limited to two five-year terms.

Issue 30 Kent City Charter amendment

Explanation: Amend Section 24C, Article VI, changing the number of signatures needed for initiative and referendum petitions. Currently it is 10% of qualified electors and this would change it to at least 10 per cent of the number of electors who voted for governor at the most recent general election for the office of governor.

Issue 31 Kent City Charter amendment

Explanation: Amend Section 5, Article II, removing a prohibition that present or former members of the Assessment Equalization Board, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and Charter Review Commission cannot be appointed as a City employee or an independent contractor during their term or for six months thereafter.

Issue 32 Kent City Charter amendment

Explanation: Amend Section 61(b) of Article XIII, removing term limits for the Planning Commission. Currently, they are limited to two five-year terms.

Issue 33 Kent City Renewal Levy

Amount: .73 mill Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$248,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2016.

Explanation: This is a Renewal Levy and it is the primary source of funding for staffing, operating, and maintaining the City of Kent's West Side Fire Station. The money from this renewal levy will be used for continuing the current level of service offered by the City of Kent Fire Department specifically related to the operation of the West Side Fire Station.

Issue 34 Kent City Renewal Levy

Amount: 1 mill Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$340,000 annually for a continuing period of time beginning in 2015.

Explanation: Since this is a Renewal Levy, the monies it generates will be used to continue the current level of maintenance and operations that the Park and Recreation Department provides for the City's recreational activities. Without approval of this renewal, service cuts in the operations, maintenance and repair of the parks and bike trails would likely have to be made.

Issue 35 Kent City Renewal Levy

Amount: .43 mill Renewal Levy that would generate approximately \$146,000 annually for a continuing period of time beginning in 2015.

Explanation: Since this is a Renewal Levy, the monies it generates will be used to continue the current level of maintenance and operations that the Park and Recreation Department provides for the City's recreational activities. Without approval of this renewal, service cuts in the operations, maintenance and repair of the parks and bike trails would likely have to be made.

Issue 36 Kent City, Ward 5-Precinct A Local Option

Explanation: Placed on the ballot by Bricco Kent, LLC, dba Bricco, an applicant for a D-6 liquor permit. The passage of this issue for Bricco, a restaurant located at 210 S. Depeyster St. Suite100 & Patio, Kent OH 44240, would permit the sale of wine and mixed beverages and spirituous liquor on Sunday between the hours of eleven a.m. and midnight.

Issue 37 Ravenna City Additional Income Tax

Amount: Additional 0.25% income tax beginning in 2016.

Explanation: If approved, the income tax rate would increase from 2.25% to 2.5% for the purpose of paying costs of providing and maintaining firefighting, police protection, emergency medical and related emergency services operated by the municipal police and fire departments in the City of Ravenna.

Issue 38 Ravenna City, Ward 2-Precinct A Local Option

Explanation: Placed on the ballot by American Legion Post 0331, an applicant for a D-6 liquor permit. The passage of this issue for American Legion Post 0331, a fraternal organization located at 109 Elm Street, Ravenna, OH 44266, would permit the sale of wine and mixed beverages and spirituous liquor on Sunday between the hours of ten a.m. and midnight.

Issue 39 Streetsboro Amendment to Zoning Map

Explanation: If approved, the zoning map would be amended to rezone the properties located at 835, 855, 885 and 900 Classic Drive, Streetsboro, OH from B-Business to C-3 Highway Interchange Commercial. This would allow the properties to become permitted uses in the C-3 district. Currently they are legal non-conforming uses in the existing B district.

Issue 40 Streetsboro, Ward 1-Precinct A Local Option

Explanation: Placed on the ballot by CJT Streetsboro, Inc. dba Happy Moose Streetsboro, an applicant for a D-6 liquor permit. The passage of this issue for Happy Moose Streetsboro, a restaurant and bar located at 9436 State Route 14, Streetsboro, OH 44241 would permit the sale of spirituous liquor on Sunday between the hours of eleven a.m. and midnight.

Issue 41 Windham Village Electric Opt-Out

Explanation: If approved, the Village of Windham would have the authority to aggregate the retail electricity loads located within the incorporated areas of the Village and enter into service agreements for the sale and purchase of electricity, such aggregation to occur automatically except where any person elects to opt out.

Issue 42 Windham Village Natural Gas Opt-Out

Explanation: If approved, the Village of Windham would have the authority to aggregate the retail natural gas loads located within the incorporated areas of the Village and enter into service agreements for the sale and purchase of natural gas, such aggregation to occur automatically except where any person elects to opt out.

Issue 43 Kent City Charter amendment

Explanation: If approved, Article XIV Section 65(b) Democracy Day Public Hearing/Political Influence would be added to the Charter of the City of Kent. The City would be required to sponsor a public hearing in October to examine the impact of political influence resulting from campaign contributions by corporate entities. The City would be required to send a letter to state-level representatives, leaders of the Ohio House and Senate, U.S. Congressional representatives and both U.S. senators from Ohio. The letter would include a brief summary of the public hearing and a statement that the citizens of Kent in November, 2015 voted in support of a Citizen's Initiative calling for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution declaring (1) only human beings, not corporations, are legal persons with Constitutional rights, and (2) money is not equivalent to speech, and therefore, regulating political contributions and spending does not equate to limiting political speech.