

Fundraisers in the capital during the first six months of the 125th session

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Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund

Fundraisers held in Columbus

Since the 125th session of the Ohio General Assembly began, the legislators have been struggling with an unwieldy budget and a number of controversial issues including tort reform, video slot machines and concealed weapons. From the time that session began, our legislators and caucus committees have thrown 109 fundraisers. All four caucus committees held one fundraiser a piece.

One hundred-four (104) of these fundraisers were held on session days. Four fundraisers corresponded with days that the General Assembly held committees hearings. Representative Joyce Beatty (Democrat-Columbus) held the only fundraiser during a day with no legislative activities. Seventeen (17) fundraisers were held during breakfast hours and 86 during cocktail/dinner hours. One fundraiser was held right before session during lunchtime. Senator Jeff Jacobson was the only member of the General Assembly who held a fundraiser right before session. Senator Jacobson hosted an event from 11:30am-1:00pm on March 25.

Only Representative Larry Price (Democrat-Columbus) and Senator Ray Miller (Democrat-Columbus) held fundraisers in their districts.

# of Members of the General Assembly	# of Fundraisers by Legislators and Caucus Committees 1/03-5/31/03	# of House Session Days	# of Senate Session Days
132	109	38	35

Majority of Legislators Raised Money

One hundred five (105) legislators held fundraisers in Columbus during the first six months of session. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the Democratic legislators held fundraisers, and nearly 80% of Republican legislators.

The Early Birds Get the Worm

Senator Marc Dann (Democrat-Liberty Township) held the first fundraiser by a Democratic candidate on February 5. Senator Dann was appointed to replace Tim Ryan who is now serving in the U.S. House. Representative Steve Austria (Republican-Beavercreek) held the first fundraiser by a Republican candidate on February 11. The House Democratic Caucus held their first fundraiser on January 29; the Ohio House Republican Campaign Committee held theirs on February 12.

Victory's Mine

Not surprisingly, our legislators' favorite spot for fundraisers was Victory's on South High Street in Columbus. Twenty-one candidates and one caucus committee held fundraisers at Victory's. The second most popular location was Tony's Restaurant on Beck Street in Columbus with fifteen fundraisers. The Athletic Club in downtown Columbus and Plank's Biergarten in German Village both came in third with eleven fundraisers each.

For a list of fundraisers by location, visit www.ohiocitizen.org.

Term-Limited Incumbents

Twenty-three of the fundraising incumbents will be term-limited out of their office when their current term ends. Election law does not prohibit fundraising for other offices or for the caucus. Nine of these incumbents are from the Ohio House and fourteen are from the Ohio Senate.

Term-limited fundraising candidates in the Ohio House

Candidate	Party/Hometown	Year Term-limited
Representative Jamie Callender	R-Willowick	2004
Speaker Pro Tempore Gary Cates	R-West Chester	2004
Majority Floor Leader Patricia Clancy	R-Cincinnati	2004
Speaker Larry Householder	R-Glenford	2004
Representative Ed Jerse	D-Euclid	2004
Representative Lynn Olman	R-Maumee	2004

Representative Bryan Williams	R-Akron	2004
Representative Charles Wilson, Jr.	D-Bridgeport	2004
Representative Ron Young	R-Painesville	2004

Term-Limited Fundraising Candidates in the Ohio Senate

Candidate	Party/Hometown	Year Term-limited
Senator Jeffrey Armbruster	R- N. Ridgeville	2006
Senator Louis Blessing	R-Cincinnati	2004
Senator Dan Brady	D-Cleveland	2006
Senator Jim Carnes	R-St. Clairsville	2004
Minority Leader Greg DiDonato	D-New Philadelphia	2004
Senator Eric Fingerhut	D-Cleveland	2006
Senator Robert Gardner	R-Madison	2004
Senator Robert Hagan	D-Youngstown	2006
Senator Leigh Herington	D-Ravenna	2004
Ass't. President Pro Tempore Jay Hottinger	R-Newark	2006
Ass't. Minority Leader Mark Mallory	D-Cincinnati	2006
Senator Scott Nein	R-Middletown	2004
Senator C.J. Prentiss	D-Cleveland	2006
President Doug White	R-Manchester	2004

Recommendations

The Center recommends more transparency in government by doing the following:

- 1.) Campaign finance filings during off-election years** would greatly improve campaign finance disclosure. Any fundraising activities during off-election years are not reported until January of the following year. Quarterly filings would provide a more complete and up-to-date picture of contributions received by candidates, especially the incumbents who are policy makers. The public shouldn't be in the dark during off-election years.
- 2.) Voting records should be available on-line.** Voting records are available in the House and Senate Journals but not widely available to the public. Searchable voting records on-line would help re-engage the public and shed sunlight on activities at the Statehouse.

3.) Lobbyists should file electronically so that a searchable database can set up on the Joint Legislative Ethics Committee and Legislative Inspector General's site www.jlec.ohio.gov. These filings should include contribution information as well as gifts. **Currently contributions by lobbyists are found in candidate and party committee reports. They are not reported on lobbyist forms. Many of those who attend fundraisers in Columbus during session are lobbyists. Lobbyist contributions should be more easily available on-line.**

Methodology

Many of the fundraisers included in this study were announced publicly. The Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund (formerly the Citizens Policy Center) obtained fundraising information from allies. Letters requesting confirmation were sent to each of the candidates. The Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund documented as many fundraisers as possible but it is likely that the Fund was unable to collect all activity. The number of fundraisers held during this time period and the amount each candidate raised will not be available until the next campaign finance filing on January 30, 2004.

Ohio Citizen Action has a whistleblower hotline. To report any suspicious or illegal fundraising activities, call toll free 1-888-777-7135.

For an Excel spreadsheet of fundraisers including host, their district, location of fundraiser and time, visit www.ohiocitizen.org. If you would like the information in Access 2000 call Brandi Whetstone at 614-263-4111.