

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

Friend -

You'll notice that it's no longer July. Our newsletter was a little delayed this month because there has simply been so much activity.

First, I want to congratulate our State Rep. Kathleen Clyde on her tremendous fundraising accomplishment in her effort to become Ohio's next Secretary of State. The \$342,000 she raised and \$425,000 she has on hand overall are a great start to her campaign. She deserves credit for her hard work, and our continued support. Find out how you can get involved at [www.kathleencyde.com](http://www.kathleencyde.com).

Our County Treasurer, [Brad Cromes](#), also hosted a fundraiser this past month. His annual BBQ attracted more than 50 donors, putting him on track to continue serving as a steward of our local tax dollars.

And those things say nothing of the hundreds of calls you made to push back - successfully - against Republicans' disastrous plan to repeal Obamacare.

The support you offer our candidates at the national, state and local levels is impressive, and much appreciated. This coming month will feature many more opportunities to get involved - particularly in support of [Sen. Sherrod Brown](#). You can find details below.

On a personal note, I want to remind you that this year's picnic, which Ruth and I have had the pleasure of hosting in August for more than 20 years, has been cancelled due to changes in my medical condition. I sincerely appreciate your past attendance and support, and I look forward to continuing to fight with you in the days ahead.

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

Onward,

Craig Stephens, Chairman  
Portage Co. Democratic Party

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## CALL 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 continues. We have submitted nearly 300 signatures to ODP in our first bunch, and will continue to collect more, with a final goal of working with your partners to gather the more than 6,000 needed from Portage County. If you can volunteer to help collect signatures, 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).

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### [Sherrod Brown for U.S. Senate Fundraiser](#)

*August 5, 2017 - 1 - 2:30pm - Laziza Restaurant, 195 E. Erie St., Kent, OH 44240*

You are invited to join other local leaders in showing our support for Ohio's champion for workers, Sen. Sherrod Brown. Tickets start at \$150/person. More details available at the link above.

### [Sherrod Brown for U.S. Senate Door Knocking](#)

*August 12, 2017 - 10am - 2pm - Portage County Dems HQ, 210 S. Meridian St., Ravenna, OH 44266*

No one works harder to promote and protect middle- and working-class Americans than our Senator, Sherrod Brown. Next year, Sherrod will be in a real fight to prove to Ohioans that he - and Democrats generally - have their backs. We're knocking on doors that Sherrod won in 2012 and Donald Trump won in 2016 to remind voters who's really on their side.

### [Portage County Financial Wellness Fair](#)

*August 19, 2017 - 9am - 1pm - Maplewood Career Center, 7075 State Route 88, Ravenna, OH 44266*

Portage County's first-ever Financial Wellness Fair, hosted by Treasurer Brad Cromes, seeks to connect residents to high-quality financial decision making tools in a fun, low-pressure environment. Come for the free breakfast, lunch and door prizes, stay to interact with local vendors and hear from experts in a number of finance-related fields. Details available at the event page above.

### [Portage County Randolph Fair](#)

*August 22 - 27, 2017 - Randolph Fairgrounds*

The Party is still looking for volunteers to help man our booth at this year's Randolph Fair. Contact Federated Democratic Women President Pat Nelson for details.

### [Indivisible March on Ohio Statehouse](#)

*August 26, 2017 - Columbus*

Women in the United States were granted the right to vote on August 26, 1920, when the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was certified as law. Thus in 1971, August 26th became designated as "Women's Equality Day" in America. We intend to acknowledge the 97th

Anniversary of the 19th Amendment in 2017 and beyond. Details at the link.

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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](#).

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## FROM OUR OFFICIALS - Treasurer Brad Cromes

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

Treasurer Brad Cromes (D - Ravenna) was [appointed](#) in January 2015 to finish the term of Vicki Kline, who had been elected Commissioner the previous fall. Before taking office, Treasurer Cromes worked as Deputy Director of the Portage County Board of Elections, and was the coordinator of the effort to repeal the anti-worker Senate Bill 5 in 2011. He was elected to a full term this fall. We sat down with Treasurer Cromes to talk about how he came to his position, what he's been working on since becoming Treasurer, and what his vision is for the office long term. Lightly edited notes of that conversation follow.

*Talk a little bit about how you came to the Treasurer's Office...what made you want this job?*

"Well, for as long as I can remember I have been interested in public service. While I'm very proud of the work I did at the Board of Elections - and protecting the vote is very important - the Treasurer's Office has an opportunity to help people with dollars-and-cents, pocketbook issues. That's an impact that means something to people in their daily lives, and it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up."

*What you have done since becoming Treasurer to work on those "pocketbook issues"?*

"We've done a number of things I'm proud of. One of the first things we did was revamp our website. There's now 60-plus pages of information out there on all sorts of topics, and while we touch on our office's operations, the real focus was on providing people information they could use. There's information there about saving, budgeting, debt and credit management, and a whole host of other issues, targeted at students, seniors, member of our military, and other groups. We also re-wrote our office delinquency policy to make it as fair and consistent as possible, put a kiosk in the office to help people find their money, created a station to connect folks with information from the CFPB (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau), and renegotiated our office contracts to give our taxpayers the fairest deal possible.

I'm really excited about the next step, though: our Financial Wellness Fair August 19th will be a 'real world' activity that will connect our residents with finance professionals in a fun, non-threatening

environment. I'm excited about seeing what comes of it."

*So, in addition to those things, what else have you done to make the office operate efficiently?*

"We've recently launched a new set of payment tools that'll make paying your taxes as easy and convenient as it can possibly be. Our new online payment portal lets taxpayers pay online, claim their parcels, and even receive email bills and text message updates. It does all that at a user fee rate that's significantly lower than the one under our prior contract (*Editor's Note: The payment site is available [here](#)*).

*Any other accomplishments you want people to know about?*

"Just a couple. We also launched a [Home Improvement Program](#) early in my tenure, which I think offers a tremendous service by connecting homeowners to below-market home equity loan credit. Over time, that will help stabilize and improve our property values, and I'm looking forward to seeing that take off. I'm also on the Board of the Land Bank as Treasurer, and we recently announced that we've earned over \$1.5 million in grant funds to do the same sort of neighborhood stabilization work the Home Improvement Program is aimed at. These are tremendous tools for our community, and should do a lot of good."

*Ok, good. Let's wrap this up...what're you working on now, and what's next?*

"Right now, I'm in the middle of writing an office personnel manual that guarantees a living wage for my staff, offers protections for LGBTQ employees, allows for truly family-friendly leave practices, and ensures that staff are receiving training on topics like sexual harassment and up-to-date office management. That sounds boring, but I think it accomplishes a couple of things. It sets an example for others to follow, creates opportunities for collaborating with other County offices, and perhaps most importantly, protects taxpayers by making sure my staff have high-quality training and can provide high-quality service. I'm also working on an office procedure manual for many of the same reasons.

Once the manuals are done, I'd really like to work with my colleagues in other offices to come up with some standard 'best practices' we can use across different agencies, and to identify projects we can work together on to improve service for our taxpayers. One idea in that line is creating a countywide internship program, so that we can provide services that might otherwise fall through the cracks while at the same time giving students needed training and creating a positive exposure to public service. This is a great career field, and we owe it to the public to make sure there's another wave ready to fill these jobs as they open."

*Thanks for your time, Mr. Treasurer!*

"My pleasure. If anyone has suggestions for how to improve my office, they can always call me at [330-297-3586](tel:330-297-3586) or email [bcromes@portageco.com](mailto:bcromes@portageco.com)."

To learn more about what Treasurer Cromes is working on, visit his office website [here](#).

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## ICYMI - NEWS AND NOTES

Beacon Journal Editorial (Akron) - [At the Statehouse, a Pattern of Neglect](#) - June 23, 2017

"Take from the Local Government Fund and give to the fight against the opiate epidemic. That's what the Republican majority in the Ohio Senate proposes in its two-year budget plan approved this week. Few provisions capture so neatly the fiscal problem facing the state. Ohio lacks sufficient revenue to invest in its leading priorities."

Enquirer (Cincinnati) - [Rob Richardson Jr. pursues Ohio treasurer job](#) - June 26, 2017

"Richardson is a national labor attorney who does securities litigation monitoring and served nine years as a University of Cincinnati board member, most recently as president. 'I am a good fiscal steward, Richardson said. Richardson is the first Democrat to enter the race."

Record-Courier - [Records case decided in favor of Commissioners](#) - June 27, 2017

"A court case against the Portage County Board of Commissioners was recently decided by the Eleventh District Court of Appeals in favor of the board. The case was filed by Brian Ames in response to a September 2016 decision handed down by the Portage County Court of Common Pleas against Ames...The Court of Appeals sided with the commissioners, dismissing five errors alleged by Ames in the Common Pleas decision."

Advance Ohio (Cleveland) - [Addiction politics: How the opioid crisis is already shaping the 2018 election in Ohio](#) - June 29, 2017

"Candidates for statewide office next year already are developing campaign messaging, testing lines of attack and framing policy arguments around the opioid crisis, which is as bad in Ohio as anywhere in the United States."

Roll Call (Washington, D.C.) - [What' Ohio's Tim Ryan Up To?](#) - June 29, 2017

"I know as well as anybody how we reconnect with these voters we lost,' says Ryan, who spoke frequently with former President Bill Clinton during last year's campaign."

Times-Reporter (New Philadelphia) - [Zack Space files paperwork to seek election as state Auditor](#) - June 30, 2017

"Space served two terms as U.S. Representative for Ohio's 18th Congressional District before being defeated in the 2010 general election by Bob Gibbs, R-Lakeville. Since then, through redistricting, Gibbs represents Ohio's 7th District and the 18th no longer exists. Prior to that, Space served as Law Director for the City of Dover and in private practice."

WVXU (Cincinnati) - [Can the Democratic Party get back on track, in Ohio and nationally?](#) - July 2, 2017

"(Ohio Dems Chair David) Pepper said the Ohio Democratic Party is trying to build a bench of young candidates, with its "Main Street Initiative," which recruits and runs young candidates for local offices."

Tribune-Chronicle (Warren) - [Some fear loss of Medicaid expansion](#) - July 5, 2017

"The Congressional Budget Office estimates the U.S. Senate's proposal would cover 15 million fewer people by 2026. But even as legislators at the federal level debate the future of the Medicaid expansion program, Ohio's Republican lawmakers are eager to stop, or at least slow, the program in one of the few Republican-run states that embraced the expansion. A provision in the budget, passed mostly on party lines by both branches of the Ohio General Assembly, would freeze new Medicaid enrollments in July 2018."

Politico - [Dems' new pitch to voters: A "Better Deal"](#) - July 5, 2017

"Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), who's building on his own long-running populist brand for his reelection battle next year, said the party always has to do more to push a "sharper economic message" focused on helping the working class. 'We never talk about it enough,' Brown said."

Observer (Charlotte) - [Liberals target the Rust Belt](#) - July 7, 2017

"Democratic Ohio Rep. Tim Ryan has lent his support to...the new progressive wave looking to redefine the Democratic Party. While he also believes a candidate doesn't need obscene amounts of money to run a credible campaign, he said this effort will build past the 2018 midterms. 'They're knitting the coalitions needed to build a solid Democratic Party over the long haul,' said Ryan...'They have an opportunity to galvanize in a year when so much of the mood of the country is going to be formed by what's going on in Washington.'"

City Beat (Cincinnati) - [Hamilton County's Living-Wage Torch Bearer](#) - July 11, 2017

"Aftab Pureval, Hamilton County's freshman clerk of courts, pushed his office to the forefront of the Ohio living wage movement Tuesday by declaring a \$16-an-hour minimum wage for most of his 212 employees as well as paid leave to care for newborns and sick relatives."

Advance Ohio - [Richard Cordray is running for Governor, Ohio judge says](#) - July 19, 2017

"Former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray is going to run for governor of Ohio, Ohio Supreme Court Justice Bill O'Neill said he was told last week by a mutual friend. O'Neill said the friend, whom he declined to name, 'openly stated' that Cordray is going to enter the 2018 Democratic gubernatorial primary."

Record-Courier - [Medicaid cuts would affect thousands in Portage](#) - July 23, 2017

"Almost 8,000 people across Portage County could lose their health care coverage and trigger a public health crisis if the federal government repeals the Affordable Care Act."

Crain's Cleveland Business - [Is Sherrod Brown the unifying force Democrats need?](#) - July 24, 2017

"Former Hillary Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon tells the paper that Brown can appeal to voters who have supported Clinton, President Donald Trump and Sen. Bernie Sanders, making him potentially "

uniting figure in the party." Brown himself demurs, saying, 'I come from here, I know how to win elections here — I get all that. But I just don't want to do it.'"

Advance Ohio - [GOP's "skinny bill" to replace Obamacare fails in Senate](#) - July 27, 2017

"U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, released a statement early Friday morning after the vote calling for a bipartisan effort to improve the nation's health-care coverage. 'This bill failed because people in Ohio and all across the country spoke out and shared their stories,' Brown said. 'Let's kick the drug company and insurance industry lobbyists out, listen to the people we serve and come together to lower prices and make healthcare work better for everyone.'"

Record-Courier - [Legal mess mulled in Streetsboro](#) - July 29, 2017

"Ten controversial charter amendments have created a legal dispute in Streetsboro, with the law director threatening to take action against the city, and members of city council taking steps to hire a lawyer of their own."

Record-Courier - [Helping the homeless and trafficked in Portage County find rest and restoration](#) - July 31, 2017

"Pastor Mark Miller and other community partners and area churches are transforming a 10-acre property across from Walmart on the Kent-Ravenna border into a warming and holistic healing center for the homeless."

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*For more news and notes on the activities of Democrats from around Ohio, subscribe to the Ohio Democratic Party daily update [here](#).*

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**The Portage County Democratic Party**

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

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