



Press Statement

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MARK PUKITA FOR US SENATE 2022

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J.D. Vance: A repackaged never-Trumper

COLUMBUS, OH, July 1, 2021 – J.D. Vance’s entry into the US Senate race to succeed Rob Portman calls for questions about who he is and what change, or lack thereof, he represents. Like other candidates, Vance portrays himself as an answer for “Trump supporters.” But is that reality or façade?

2016: Hillbilly Elegy

Vance’s book “Hillbilly Elegy” portrayed the plight of poor, white America (Trump supporters) as being the result of their own bad decisions and not due to bad decisions by government and business:

- “What separates the successful from the unsuccessful are the expectations that they had for their own lives. Yet the message of the right is increasingly: It’s not your fault that you’re a loser; it’s the government’s fault.”

Vance does not grasp the damage done to Ohio by the actions and “deals” of government elites, globalists, and venture capitalists (of which he is one). They grew richer by creating a thriving middle-class in China and opening our borders while devastating working-class America. He rejects working-class America as lesser than a “professional-class” he has joined:

- “The wealthy and the powerful aren’t just wealthy and powerful; they follow a different set of norms and mores. When you go from working-class to professional-class, almost everything about your old life becomes unfashionable at best or unhealthy at worst.”

Rob Portman labeled “Hillbilly Elegy” his favorite book of 2016¹.

2010-2017: Yale / California Venture Capitalist / Coastal Elite

Vance left his Ohio roots for Yale and California. In 2016, his book made him a darling of the Kasich, Portman, McConnell, never-Trumper wing of the Republican Party. Increasingly, he went from “professional-class” to “ruling-class.” Vance’s wife clerked for Supreme Court Justice John Roberts in Washington, DC in 2018.

2016-2017: A Never-Trumper

In 2016, Vance voted for never-Trumper Evan McMullin². Vance was overtly against Trump’s agenda, “I didn’t see any real evidence that he had much in the way of positive solutions that would address a lot of these concerns.” Vance vocally opposed Trump, “He [Trump] used rhetoric that’s not in the best interest of the party or country.” Like other elite never-Trumpers, Vance became a CNN³ and a National Review Contributor⁴.

2017-2018: Senate consideration and Portman, Kasich and McConnell

In 2017, after catching the attention of Republicans such as Rob Portman who were uncomfortable with Trump, Vance came back to Ohio from California to start plotting a Senate run. He enlisted Kasich strategist Jai Chabria⁵. Portman,

¹ BBC News: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-56748047>

² Cleveland.com: https://www.cleveland.com/politics/2016/12/hillbilly_elegy_author_jd_vanc.html

³ Adweek: <https://www.adweek.com/tvnewser/cnn-bolsters-its-roster-of-commentators-and-contributors/317459/>

⁴ National Review: <https://www.nationalreview.com/author/j-d-vance/>

⁵ Buzz Feed: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/henrygomez/jd-vance-is-now-seriously-considering-running-for-senate-in>

Kasich, and Mitch McConnell were all on “Team Vance” to run for Senate against Sherrod Brown. But all those never-Trumper sentiments were too fresh, and Vance backed out as Trump supported Jim Renacci against Brown. Now in, 2021, Vance is repackaged and hopes he can do what Portman and DeWine did in the past: fake out Ohioans. Vance needs them to forget his “empathetic” disdain for the “working-class” losers.

2019-2021: Predictable for Ohio, the #1 state for political corruption

Ohio is #1 for political corruption⁶ not due to one man but due to a team of unethical men and women: “Team Larry Householder.” They lack moral and ethical compass but can win, albeit dirty. Vance has brought two of the most prominent, non-indicted, “Team Householder” operators on board:

- Meagan Fitzmartin, who was a key figure in Jeff Longstreth’s “Team Householder” operations (Constant Content and JPL). She personally oversaw dirty money.
- Bryan Gray, who was involved with Householder, Neal Clark (now deceased by suicide), and others in HB6, payday lending and sports betting⁷.

Both Fitzmartin and Gray were also directly involved with “Team Householder” candidate recruiting, Generation Now and Growth and Opportunity PAC⁸. All based on a legislation-for-sale culture. Fitzmartin and Gray are to politics what venture capitalists are to business.

2021: Protect Ohio Values, managed in DC and funded from California

Protect Ohio Values (protectohiovalues.com) is Vance’s independent, but not really, Super PAC in the spirit of Larry Householder. It is funded with California money and operated from DC. Peter Thiel, the key backer, had supported Trump in 2016, but sat out 2020 explaining that he thought Trump could not win⁹.

Will the real J.D. Vance please stand up?

In 2016, Vance was a never-Trumper with disdain for a lazy “working-class” in favor of his “professional-class.”

By 2017, he caught the attention of Portman, Kasich, McConnell and even John Roberts.

In 2021, J.D. Vance assembled a team of ex-Householder operatives and a Super PAC with a disingenuous, meaningless name, Protect Ohio Values, which is run and funded from out-of-state.

Vance hopes we forgot so he can run as a “Trump Republican” in 2022.

Meanwhile, Josh Mandel wants us to forget his history of opportunism. Jane Timken wants us to forget her unwavering support of Mike DeWine and history as a Kasich money-bundler. Mike Gibbons wants us to forget his 2018 campaign that taught us what the word “milquetoast” means.

There is a better alternative: **Mark Pukita**. Pukita is a true citizen candidate with a job creation resume. Pukita offers a clear and powerful 7-point DISRUPT agenda (mark4ohio.com) that, unlike Vance, is clear and measurable. Pukita is the only US Senate candidate who stands against Ohio politics as usual.

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⁶ Columbus Dispatch: <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/2021/05/10/ohio-householder-prosecution-top-state-political-corruption-hb-6/4922865001/>

⁷ Cleveland.com: <https://www.cleveland.com/open/2020/10/lobbyist-accused-in-ohio-hb6-corruption-case-says-he-was-recorded-during-meetings-on-sports-betting-suspects-fbi-involvement.html>

⁸ Cincinnati Enquirer: <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2020/07/28/clermont-county-republican-reported-larry-householder-fbi/5527541002/>

⁹ The Verge: <https://www.theverge.com/2020/7/2/21312154/peter-thiel-trump-2020-election-campaign-shying-away-distancing>