

NEWS AND NOTES - March 2018

Friend –

Tuesday is the first day of Spring - and with the longer days and (eventually) warmer weather come more opportunities than ever to be involved in building the "Big Blue Wave" in Portage County. In just under 50 days, we will be selecting our candidates for Governor and State Representative from a crowded and well-qualified field. With them, we will be selecting new members of our local Central Committee, who will lead our local Party into the future.

Between now and then, there are many events where you can meet and get involved our local candidates, and I encourage you to do that. You can also find information about them (and what they're working on) on the Party's [Facebook Page](#). Now is the time to learn about Democrats running in our local community and across Ohio, so we can effectively advocate for change this fall. I hope you'll join me in that very important work. You'll find easy plug in points below.

One last note. This edition of our newsletter marks one year since we first started reaching out to you electronically. We hope you have found this to be a useful resource. We are committed to continuing to improve it as we move forward. If there's anything else you think we should include here in the future, please don't hesitate to let us know by contacting County Treasurer Brad Cromes via [email](#). Thank you, as always, for all you do.

Onward,

Craig Stephens, Chairman
Portage Co. Democratic Party

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Campaign season is in full swing...and campaigns are hiring! The Ohio Democratic Party and Friends of Sherrod Brown are both looking for enthusiastic and passionate activists who can help ensure that the "Big Blue Wave" sweeps through our state! They're looking for recruits for the following positions:

Friends of Sherrod Brown - Outreach Coordinator (Veterans/Military Families); Field Organizers

Ohio Democratic Party - Data and Analytics Director; Deputy Digital Director; Deputy Coordinated Director; Distributed Organizing Director; Ohio House Campaign Managers

For full job descriptions and campaign hiring contacts, please contact Brad Cromes via [email](#).

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UPCOMING EVENTS

[Clites for State Rep Friend and Fundraiser](#) - March 22, 2018 - 4:30pm - 6:30pm - English Pub, 320 E. Main St., Ravenna, OH 44266

Please join Friends of Randi Clites for an event to get to know Randi and support her run for State Rep of the 75th House District. More information about her campaign and the event are available on her [Facebook page](#).

[March For Our Lives](#) - March 24, 2018 - 11am - 2pm - Highland Square, Akron, OH

Indivisible Northeast Ohio will be leading a rally with speakers advocating for sensible gun control measures. The group will begin meeting at the Highland Square branch library in Akron at 11 am, then march to the Akron Municipal Courthouse and City Hall and hold a rally in the park across from city hall.

[Ohio Federated Democratic Women Convention](#) - April 5-7, 2018 - Bertram Inn, [600 N. Aurora Rd., Aurora, OH 44202](#)

The Federated Democratic Women of Ohio will be hosting their Annual Spring Convention at the Bertram Inn and Conference Center April 5th, 6th and 7th, featuring a Saturday luncheon at noon and candidates for Governor. Susanna French, President of The National Federation of Democratic Women is planning on attending and speaking on their organization! For more information, contact, Norma Welling, President, 330-801-1446.

[Federated Democratic Women Meeting](#) - April 10, 2018 - 5pm - 6:30pm - Delciello's, [161 N. Chestnut St., Ravenna, OH 44266](#)

Join our Federated Democratic Women at the first of their newly reformatted meetings. This mid-week cocktail hour is meant to be more informal, and a way of generating excitement around Democratic candidates and causes. First up is County Treasurer Brad Cromes, who will talk about the work his office is doing and the challenges and opportunities for Democrats in 2018.

[Gubernatorial Debate: Part V - April 10, 2018 - 7pm - 8:00pm - Streaming Online](#)

The 5th debate of the Democratic Primary for Governor will be held at Miami University's Middletown campus. Members of the studio audience will be able to ask questions during the town hall-style debate. WLWT-TV will air the debate live starting at 7 p.m., and the Journal-News website will livestream the debate at www.journal-news.com.

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[3rd Annual Citizens for Cromes BBQ - April 12, 2018 - 5pm - 7pm - English Pub, 320 E. Main St., Ravenna, OH 44266](#)

This year's event not only supports Brad's work as our County Treasurer, but also his run for the Democratic Party State Central Committee and our local United Way. Individual reservations are \$35/person, \$60/couple. We're also offering sponsorships at the \$100, \$250, and \$500 levels. Please make checks payable to "Citizens for Cromes," and mail to 550 E. Riddle Ave., Ravenna, OH 44266. Contributions can also be made online at www.bradcromes.com.

[Portage Co. Young Dems Day of Action - April 21, 2018](#)

The Portage County Young Democrats will kick off the 2018 campaign in earnest with this canvassing event. More information to follow on their [Facebook Page](#).

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ELECTIONS UPDATES

VOTER REGISTRATION: The voter registration deadline for the May 8, 2018 Primary Election is Monday, April 9th. Are you registered to vote? Find out [here](#) - and get that way!

BALLOTS POSTED: Curious what's on your ballot this May? The Board has now posted ballots online. [Take a look](#), do your homework, and be prepared when early voting starts!

POLL WORKERS NEEDED: The Board of Elections is in serious need of poll workers in advance of the Primary Election on May 8, 2018! Poll workers earn \$20 for attending training, and \$120 for Election Day. Trainings start 3/26. Find out more about the job (and fill out an application) [here](#), or call the Board at [330-297-3511](tel:330-297-3511).

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GET TO KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES - Candidate for State Rep. Alice Freitas

Traditionally in this section, we focus on profiles of our elected office holders. Given that our Primary Election for the 75th Ohio House District being vacated by Kathleen Clyde is contested by 3 talented local activists, we think giving you some information on each of them is a better use of this space for the time being.

This month, we are profiling Alice Freitas, a recent Kent State graduate and political activist. We sat down with Alice to discuss her candidacy, and a lightly edited version of our conversation follows.

Thanks for taking the time to chat with us Alice. Can you give us a little background about yourself? Where did you grow up? Where did you go to school? What's something unique about you that sets you apart?

"I went to school and grew up in Stow, Ohio. I had a truly enriching experience at Stow Munroe Falls High School. During my time at Stow, I developed a passion for improving the world through public policy. During my high school career, I participated in speech and debate, including giving impromptu, in-depth speeches on domestic and foreign policy. After my time at Stow, I turned to Kent as the place I wanted to spend my adult life. I came to Kent because of the history that this community and Kent State University had in being an instrument of change. Kent is the community that has given me the tools to become the person I wanted to be. It is because of Kent's accepting and progressive attitude towards all people that I was able to "come out of the closet" about being transgender. I am the first transgender person to ever be on the ballot in Ohio, a fact I am proud to champion."

What are you most proud of having accomplished in your career to date?

"My career thus far has consisted primarily of activism. My proudest accomplishment is getting a non-discrimination ordinance passed in Kent in 2017. I worked with Equality Ohio and other local political groups and activists to get the ordinance passed. We attended city council meetings and met with local officials to persuade them of the importance not only of passing the ordinance, but also of ensure that (1) it included sexual orientation and gender identity; (2) it applied to housing, public accommodations, and employment; and (3) it imposed tangible penalties to landlords, business owners, and employers who discriminate. All of these were included in the final bill, which passed unanimously. It was a truly collaborative experience that showed me the value of coming together to see our goals realized."

What challenges facing our community are the most troubling to you?

"Our community is facing many serious challenges. The most prominent issues are (1) the opiate crisis; (2) graduates, especially teachers, struggling to handle student debt, especially given that people are struggling to find good paying jobs; and (3) the rise of discrimination. To help solve the opiate crisis, I want to move the focus of government to treating addicts for their medical and mental health needs rather than punishing them as criminals. To do this, I wish to increase funding addiction treatment, including long-term psychological treatment in addition to emergency rehabilitation. Many of the deaths occurring take place when addicts who ceased using drugs during emergency rehabilitation treatment relapse. By providing funding for long-term treatment options, I hope to move Ohio's attitude towards treating addiction to a comprehensive program that guides addicts from their decision to detoxify all the way to living their lives as non-drug users. Doing this should decrease the incidence of relapse, prevent deaths due to overdose, and decrease the rate of drug addiction to non-crisis levels. Additionally, I want to decrease the number of deaths due to overdose by providing Narcan to every emergency worker in the state. My hope is that every siren in the State of Ohio is equipped with all the medical tools and training to prevent deaths due to overdose. This policy, when combined with my comprehensive treatment funding, is what the State of Ohio needs to decrease addiction rates to non-crisis levels. I hope to address the issue of student debt and unemployment by providing Ohioans the resources they need to be competitive in the high-tech economy that is displacing the manufacturing economy in the midwest. One measure that will improve this is providing increased funding to trade schools, while also expanding the Ohio Opportunity Grant. Additionally, I would like Ohio to focus scholarship funding on students seeking a degree in education. At present, we have a shortage of great teachers, but not because we lack intelligent and qualified people in Ohio. Rather, those talented and hardworking people are reluctant to pursue a career as a teacher because the level of student debt combined with low pay for teachers make entering the field of education a less attractive option for bright students in Ohio. It is our duty as elected officials to make satisfying our needs for teachers an economically rational option in addition to being a labor of love. Finally, I wish to address the issues of discrimination with several measures in state law. Under Ohio law, there is no cause of action for tenants and employees who face discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. This is a glaring hole in Ohio's non-discrimination statute and my intent is to ensure that Ohio law catches up with the policy needs for all Ohioans. The benefit for such a policy is two-fold. The first and most obvious benefit is making Ohio communities more compassionate. However, doing so also ensures that talented workers do not leave Ohio for states that will protect their rights more effectively. Additionally, I want to prioritize funding for the Ohio Human Rights Commission so that it has the resources necessary for investigating and prosecuting instances of discrimination."

What opportunities are you most excited about for Portage County and Ohio going forward?

"Ohio presents a truly unique culture for the goals I hope to achieve in office. Ohioans combine midwest hospitality with the open-mindedness to extend that hospitality to all people. This provides us with the opportunity to protect the rights and dignity of all Ohioans without losing the warmth and charm that people come to expect when leaving the East Coast for the heartland of America. While there are people who are still working to understand the increasingly diverse nature of the world we are coming into, the compassion and love that Ohioans show for their communities makes me optimistic that we will be successful in providing for everyone in this great state."

Thanks again, Alice, and good luck this spring!

For more on Alice's campaign, follow her on [Twitter](#) or send her an [email](#).

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ICYMI - NEWS AND NOTES

New York Times - [Parkland Massacre Thrusts Guns Into Mid-Term Spotlight](#) - February 27, 2018

"...And in Ohio, the moderate Democratic candidate for governor, feeling heat from his left, is embracing a more stringent gun-violence platform than his past relations with the N.R.A. would suggest. The [mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School](#) in Parkland, Fla., has thrust gun rights into the midterm campaign, scrambling traditions in both parties as the debate shifts toward firearms restrictions."

Record-Courier - [Portage County Commissioners work on priorities](#) - February 27, 2018

"What should the priorities of the county administration be now and in the future? That was the focus of conversation this morning during the first work session of the Portage County Board of Commissioners. The board recently agreed to host work sessions on Tuesdays to hash out details on a range of topics."

Advance Ohio - [Democratic committee 'deeply concerned' about O'Neill candidacy](#) - February 28, 2018

"The candidacy of Bill O'Neill, the former Ohio Supreme Court justice who quit the court to run for governor, could hurt down-ballot Democratic candidates should he become the party's nominee in the race, a party background check committee has determined."

Plunderbund - [Issue 1 Is a Victory For Citizen Activism](#) - February 28, 2018

"Ohioans will have an opportunity to support this bipartisan reform on the ballot on May 8, 2018 in the form of Issue 1, in large part due to volunteers who care about our democracy and gave hours upon hours of their personal time to make elections fairer. While these wins don't happen as often as we'd like, when it does, it gives us faith in our democracy—that when we use the tools that we are given as citizens, we can make a difference."

Record-Courier - [Portage low-cost Home Improvement Loan Program funds available](#) - March 2, 2018

"We initially approved the program for up to \$1 million in lending. As of today, our partner banks have issued approximately \$600,000 in loans, and we would like to see more of that available money being utilized to improve our community," said County Treasurer Brad Cromes. Cromes said feedback in his office and at participating banks called for higher caps."

U.S. News - [2 Democrats for Ohio Offices Want Open Redistricting Process](#) - March 2, 2018

"Former U.S. Attorney Steven Dettelbach, a candidate for attorney general, and state Rep. Kathleen Clyde, a candidate for secretary of state, told The Associated Press their plan adds accountability and openness requirements to the new, bipartisan redistricting process contained in a May ballot issue."

Columbus Dispatch - [Statewide races deserve debates](#) - March 4, 2018

"Even though the Ohio Republican Party already has endorsed Mike DeWine for governor, he and the party should offer debate opportunities to challenger Mary Taylor...All candidates of both parties should declare their willingness to participate in general-election debates, should they win their respective party nominations in the primary. This should be the case for the nominees for all of the state's executive offices."

Delaware Gazette - [Space hoping to restore faith in democratic process](#) - March 6, 2018

"According to Space's website, Zack Space for Auditor, 'Ohio's legislative districts are some of the most polarized and non-competitive in the country. ... While a convenient tool to advance political careers and exercise political dominance, these districts have served to both disenfranchise and divide us.'"

Toledo Blade - [Cordray wins backing of big labor](#) - March 6, 2018

"The move is another sign of major factions within the party coalescing behind the Cordray ticket even though the Ohio Democratic Party has not taken a stand and many voters have yet to start paying attention...The only candidate left standing from the prior three debates is state Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D., Boardman). The other three original participants have all dropped out to either endorse Mr. Cordray or join his ticket."

Record-Courier - [Commissioners approve Portage County Jail funding](#) - March 8, 2018

"Portage County Commissioners have approved spending roughly \$20 million for a jail expansion will add a 132-bed pod for female inmates onto the current Shalersville facility on Infirmary Road. The money comes from the quarter percent sales and use tax, which is expected to generate \$25 million over five years."

Advance Ohio - [Dennis Kucinich, candidate for governor, says legalizing marijuana can help with opioid crisis](#) - March 8, 2018

"Democratic candidate for governor Dennis Kucinich wants to fully legalize marijuana, a move he said would have positive implications for criminal justice, agriculture and even the state's ongoing opioid crisis."

New York Times - [Trump Won Ohio Handily. Populist Democrats Want It Back](#) - March 8, 2018

"As (Sherrod) Brown seeks a third term in (the U.S. Senate in) 2018, it is his brand of indignant populism setting the tone for Democrats in Ohio, where the governorship and several congressional seats are also up for grabs. Long a crucial swing state, Ohio may now be the most vital proving ground for a progressive economic message in Trump country."

Youngstown Vindicator - [Schiavoni, Dem lawmakers propose \\$15 an hour minimum wage](#) - March 13, 2018

"Almost 70 percent of new jobs in Ohio pay poverty wages, according to Policy Matters Ohio. 'Raising the minimum wage is good for our economy and good for business,' Schiavoni said today. 'When people are bringing home more money, they spend it in their local economy. That means increased demand for goods and services creating more jobs.'"

WAKR - [Rob Richardson On His Run For Treasurer](#) - March 14, 2018

Rob Richardson, Democratic Candidate for State Treasurer, talks about why he's running and what he'll do if elected on The Jasen Sokol Show.

MSNBC - *Rep. Tim Ryan: [Dems should stay on economic message in campaigns](#)* - March 14, 2018

"Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio) says 'When we stay on that economic message, that message that unites Democrats, Independents, Republicans...that works because that's what's on people's minds.'"

Record-Courier - [Portage commissioners make verbal funding promise to judge](#) - March 16, 2018

"Portage County commissioners appear to have agreed to partially fund a judge's request to increase staff salaries. The decision was made verbally, with no official documentation approved or signed...Probate Judge Robert Berger initially requested pay raises for nine key employees at the juvenile and probate courts, an additional deputy clerk for the juvenile court, \$18,000 to continue the Children First Parenting Class, and a 3 percent raise for all employees of both courts."

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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/>

The Portage County Democratic Party · 210 S Meridian St, Ravenna, OH 44266, United States

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