

Sierra Club political endorsements for Central Ohio

2016 is a major election year, and the political committees for the local, state, and national Sierra Club groups have been working throughout the year to gather the information from candidates running for local and state office, and to make political endorsements.

The Ohio Chapter Political Committee, made up of political committee chairs from each of the seven local groups, met several times starting with the annual chapter retreat in January. We created a single questionnaire for all candidates for state legislature that asked about: The questionnaire was sent to all Democratic and Republican candidates for state legislature in key areas of Ohio. Of those who received the questionnaire in Central Ohio, six Democrats returned it. The Political Committee for the Central Ohio Group then met with each of these candidates for an in-person interview. We then recommended a slate for endorsements for approval by the Central Ohio Group Executive Committee, and subsequently brought the slate of endorsements to the Ohio Chapter Executive Committee for discussion and approval.

Our endorsements

As a result of this process, the Ohio Sierra Club and Sierra Club Central Ohio Group are pleased to endorse the following candidates for state legislature in 2016:

Kristin Boggs – Ohio House District 18

Boggs is strong on smart development. Transportation, walkable neighborhoods, and safe bikeways are among her priorities. She would also fight efforts to eliminate Ohio's renewable energy standards, and seek to increase investments in solar, wind, and energy efficiency. Boggs is considered a rising star in the Democratic leadership and likely to have a place in state government for a long time.

Michael Johnston – Ohio House District 19

This is Johnston's second try at this seat in Westerville and New Albany, and we think he can win. Johnston wants to bring back renewable energy standards, clean up farm runoff into lakes and streams, and protect state parks. He discussed several ideas for holding polluters accountable for runoff into water and enacting regulations on fracking such as requirements to get earthquake insurance and fund wider roads. He is also sympathetic to environmental whistleblowers.

Kristopher Keller – Ohio House District 24

Keller is already an environmental champion, having worked on the plastic bag issue in Clintonville. He is committed to bringing back renewable energy standards, converting coal

areas to clean energy jobs, and protecting state parks from fracking. Keller wants to see measurement and reporting to show how the externalized costs of fossil fuels far outweigh the costs of shifting to renewables.

Bernadine Kennedy Kent – Ohio House District 25

Kent was instrumental in exposing data tampering and fraud in the No Child Left Behind programs in Columbus. From this we know she has guts and is willing to stand up and do the right thing. On environmental issues, Kent helped the Community Bill of Rights anti-fracking campaign make contacts in the African-American community in Columbus. She is interested in drinking water and environmental justice, and eager to learn more about environmental issues from the Sierra Club.

David Leland – Ohio House District 22

Leland is extremely passionate about his work and "sticks to his guns" on the issues. He believes that the white lines used for bike lanes are not enough, and that instead of focusing on more highways, we should provide alternative transportation. Leland said Ohio should be ahead of the curve when it comes to clean energy jobs, but that we should give displaced workers training and time to adjust. He also spoke about an allocated fund for conservation for our state parks, and would vote against logging or mining.

Adam Miller – Ohio House District 17

Miller is active-duty military and spoke to the committee from JAG training in Virginia. His top environmental priorities are: to fully fund the Ohio EPA so it can actually regulate, not just issue permits; to increase regulations and taxes on fracking in Ohio; and to be proactive in state and regional planning on landfills. Miller wants to be on the Finance Committee where he can help to direct resources.

Heather Bishoff -- Ohio House District 20

Bishoff was given a fast-track endorsement for this seat in eastern Franklin County based on her previous endorsement in 2014 and her continued support of environmental protection issues.

U.S. Congress

Besides the Central Ohio legislative elections, the Ohio Sierra Club is also endorsing two candidates for U.S. Congress from Ohio: Rep. Joyce Beatty, the Democratic incumbent in U.S. House District 3, and Ted Strickland who is challenging Republican Rob Portman for Senate.

Joyce Beatty has a consistent track record of pro-environmental votes, earning her a 96 percent lifetime score from League of Conservation Voters. This past year she voted against bills that would stop the EPA Clean Power Plan, gut protections for national parks and wildlife in constructing new pipelines, pre-empt state laws on labeling genetically modified foods, and classify toxic coal ash as a non-hazardous waste. She voted for bills that would strike down attempts to remove some species from the Endangered Species Act and prohibit consideration of the social cost of carbon.

Closer to home, Beatty helped John Glenn International Airport in Columbus get a federal grant for new equipment to clean up air pollution, and helped Ohio State University get a grant to develop new methods for cleaning up nuclear waste.

Ted Strickland for Senate

Strickland is running the nation's most expensive Congressional election against incumbent Sen. Rob Portman, a Republican who has taken more than \$1.7 million from the oil and gas industry. Portman has a long record of anti-environmental votes. For example, in 2015 he voted to block the EPA Clean Power Plan and Clean Water Rule, sell national wildlife refuges and forests, and fast-track trade agreements that threaten environmental regulations.

Strickland, who was governor of Ohio from 2006-10, met with members of the Ohio Chapter Political Committee for an hour-long interview covering a wide range of environmental issues.

His track record includes:

- As governor, Strickland worked to pass Ohio's renewable energy and energy efficiency standards. Unfortunately the state legislature gutted these standards after he left office.
- As governor, Strickland secured a large grant from the Obama administration for Ohio to build rail lines between each of its major cities. Unfortunately one of Gov. Kasich's first actions upon taking office in 2010 was to send this money back to Washington.
- Strickland has stood firmly against international trade deals that do not have protections for workers and the environment, starting with NAFTA in the 1990s through the Trans-Pacific Partnership today. He would be a staunch opponent of the TPP in Congress.

Although Ohio has one progressive environmental senator in Sherrod Brown, we need to replace the regressive Portman with another environmental champion. We strongly endorse Strickland.