



## **Election 2012: Preview**

Ohio has long been recognized as a swing state and bellwether of national politics. In fact the phrase “so goes Ohio, so goes the nation” is commonly used by political pundits and strategists to describe the impact of Ohio elections on the presidency. While it is still unclear who the Republicans will nominate to run against President Obama, Ohio is likely to play a more significant role in the selection of the Republican nominee than previously thought as Ohio lawmakers last year temporarily split Ohio’s primary moving the presidential and Congressional races to June. However, before adjourning for the holidays, legislative leaders in the Ohio General Assembly settled on an agreement to hold one primary on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

With three separate winners coming out of Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina – Ohio’s primary will be particularly important because the demographics of our state closely mirror the nation as a whole, we have a large number of delegates (66) up for grabs, and because our primary will be held on “Super Tuesday” along with 10 other states and territories that are holding Republican Presidential Primaries or Caucuses and of all the states voting on “Super Tuesday” only Georgia has more delegates than Ohio.

Now that the Ohio legislature and Apportionment Board have both finalized the Congressional and state legislative maps, Farm Bureau leaders can begin the important process of getting to know which legislative districts they live in now, who their candidates are and how to get involved in their campaigns. To help get started, the new 2012 legislative district maps for Ohio’s Congressional delegation, the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate are attached to this political update along with a list of candidates that filed to run in legislative races for the March 6<sup>th</sup> primary.

Adding to the excitement and importance of the Presidential race, Ohio voters will also vote on the following statewide and legislative offices that are all up for grabs in 2012:

- One of Ohio’s two U.S. Senate seats (seat currently held by Sen. Sherrod Brown)
- All 16 seats in Ohio’s Delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives
- 3 Associate Justices of the Ohio Supreme Court (seats currently held by Justices Cupp, O’Donnell, and McGee-Brown)
- ½ of the Ohio Senate seats (even numbered districts)
- All 99 seats in the Ohio House of Representatives

At the local level Ohioans will elect or re-elect many of their county officials including certain:

- Auditors (unexpired term, if applicable)
- Commissioners
- Coroners
- Engineers
- Clerks of Courts
- Recorders
- Prosecutors
- Treasurers
- Sheriffs

In addition, Secretary of State Jon Husted recently reported that there will be 101 levy, tax, and bond issues on the March Primary Ballot to fund education in Ohio.

Farm Bureau members are encouraged to get involved in the 2012 elections by volunteering for and learning about candidates both at the local and state levels. Visit the candidates' campaign websites and look for more information to be posted to Ohio Farm Bureau's election website [www.farmvotesmatter.org](http://www.farmvotesmatter.org) as we approach Ohio's March Primary and the November General Elections.

Here are just a few ideas for county Farm Bureaus and individual county Farm Bureau leaders to consider for ways to get involved in the 2012 elections – please contact your county Farm Bureau Organization Director or OFBF Director of Political Education Doug Foxx if you have any questions or would like to discuss these activities in greater detail.

### **County Farm Bureaus**

- Complete informal incumbent review evaluation form during county Farm Bureau board meetings and submit to state office by June 15, 2012 and participate in Open Seat Screenings in legislative districts where an incumbent is not running for re-election
- Ask county Farm Bureau leaders to host candidates for an hour or two during the county fair – use this as an opportunity to walk the candidate around the barns and introduce him/her to the agricultural community, talk about issues important to your county and Ohio agriculture as well as show off the 4-H/FFA youth programs
- Host a Meet the Candidate's Reception in conjunction with your County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting
- Work with local Chambers of Commerce, League of Women Voters, Rotary/Kiwanis Clubs, and/or other organizations to host a Candidate Forum, be sure to publicize this event well and build a large attendance
- Conduct a Voter Registration Drive within your county Farm Bureau membership and your community

### **You as an Individual**

- Research your local and statewide candidates – get to know their background, policy positions, and philosophies on issues. Visit their campaign website, attend events where they speak, and read about them in the newspaper, make an educated choice about who to support
- Winning an election often costs a great deal of money so consider donating personal funds to candidates, Ohio Farm Bureau's Agriculture for Good Government Political Action Committee and/or your local political party
- Volunteer for candidates and/or your local political party by:
  - Making phone calls to candidate's supporters or potential supporters
  - Going door-to-door for a candidate to distribute literature and meet voters
  - Walking in parades with candidates or attend local events where they are speaking or work a shift at campaign headquarters
  - Helping to distribute yard signs and pick them up after the election
  - Creating a Farmer Support Committee to advise a candidate on agricultural issues and to reach out to other farmers in the county for support
- Host a house party or farm tour for a candidate or issue that you support – invite your friends, family, and neighbors to come get to know the candidate or learn more about an issue