2017 Voting Guide

Election Day: November 7, 2017

Candidates

Region 1
No endorsements

Region 2
Ray E. McLaughlin III for North Ridgeville City Council-At-Large
loraincounty.com/government/candidates/
Debbie Ziccardi for Cuyahoga Falls City Council
www.ziccardiforcouncil.com

Region 3
No endorsements

Region 4
No endorsements

Region 5
Erin Upchurch for Columbus City School Board
www.upchurchforccs.com
Geoff Schnenkel for Marietta City Council
www.facebook.com/geoffforcouncil

Region 6
Yvette Simpson for Mayor of Cincinnati
www.yvettesimpson.com
Derek Bauman for Cincinnati City Council
www.derekbauman.com
Ozie Davis III for Cincinnati City Council
www.vote4ozie.com

Tamaya Dennard for Cincinnati City Council
www.tamayadennard.com

Michelle Dillingham for Cincinnati City Council
www.votedillingham.com

Greg Landsman for Cincinnati City Council
www.greglandsman.com

Chris Seelbach for Cincinnati City Council
www.seelbachforcouncil.com

P.G. Sittenfeld for Cincinnati City Council
www.pgsittenfeld.com

Wendell Young for Cincinnati City Council
www.keepwendellyoung.com

Kareem Moffett, PhD. for Cincinnati School Board
drkareemmoffett.com

Darlene Rogers for Judge of Hamilton County Municipal Court, District 4
www.rogersforjudge.com

**Region 7**
Dave Estrop for Springfield City Commission
www.facebook.com/electestrop

Darryl Fairchild for Dayton City Commission
www.fairchildfordayton.com

Shenise Turner-Sloss for Dayton City Commission
www.sheniseturner-sloss.org

**Region 8**
Brad Gowins for Wooster School Board
facebook.com/gowinsforwooster/
Statewide Ballot Issues

Ballot Issues and the Ohio Constitution by David Simic, NASW Ohio Intern

In this year’s election, we can vote on two ballot initiatives that if passed will be added to the Ohio Constitution. Ohio is among 18 states that allow the voter to initiate constitutional amendments. Most states allow only the state legislature to create potential amendments that are then voted on in the general election.

Ohio’s ballot initiative process began in 1912. It was near the end of the Progressive Era and Ohioans wanted to re-visit their state constitution. A constitutional convention was called, and after deliberation, the delegates proposed 41 amendments to the Constitution rather than write a new document. One of the proposed amendments was to institute the initiative and ballot system. It passed a statewide vote, giving us our current system for citizen-initiated constitutional amendments.

Issue 1: Rights for Crime Victims (Marsy’s Law)

Overview
Issue 1 is a ballot initiative also called Marsy’s Law. Similar legislation has been passed in five other states, starting with California in 2008. The amendment would expand the rights of victims (defined broadly as anyone “directly and proximately harmed” by the offense) during court proceedings to equal the rights of the accused. The expanded rights include rights to safety, dignity and privacy, timely notification of all proceedings regarding the offense, and the right to be heard during every stage of the public proceedings.

Marsy’s Law was named for Marsalee (Marsy) Nicholas who was murdered in 1983. One week after her death, Marsy’s mother and brother were confronted by her accused murderer in public, having no prior knowledge that he had been released on bail.

Marsy’s Law will be on the ballot this year in eight states in addition to Ohio. This well-funded initiative is led by Marsy Nicholas’ brother, Dr. Henry Nicholas, who has expressed a commitment to include Marsy’s Law in the United States’ Constitution.

Read the ballot language here.

Considerations for social workers
This amendment boasts bi-partisan support and has been endorsed by many organizations, including county prosecutors and domestic violence and sexual assault victim advocacy organizations. Find the full list of endorsing organizations here. Noteworthy organizations have formally opposed Marsy’s Law citing concern for civil rights infringement. The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio¹ and Ohio

¹ Vote No on State Issue 1 [E-mail to the author]. (2017, October 18).
Public Defender Tim Young, who wrote the formal argument against the amendment\(^2\) have formally opposed Issue 1.

NASW supports the self-determination of victims of crime in all situations, acknowledging the right of victims to define the harm done to them and the services that would work to be most helpful to them, regardless of the goals of the service program.\(^3\)

Marsy’s Law could cause burden to court systems that lack capacity to fulfill the victim reporting requirements. Social workers may find themselves responsible for fulfillment of these new rights within court systems.

Marsy’s Law could negatively impact the rights to due process for accused people, which should cause major concern. Since a similar law passed in South Dakota, officials have reported longer jail stays for the accused due to the time it takes to adequately report to all victims.\(^4\)

This amendment does not address the need for adequate funding to support victim’s services and ensure that victims are informed of their rights. There will continue to be a need for advocacy efforts to ensure that victim services are adequately funded and staffed regardless of the outcome of this ballot initiative.

**NASW Ohio’s position**

NASW Ohio has opted to remain neutral in considering Issue 1.

### Issue 2: Ohio Drug Price Relief Act

**Overview**

Issue 2 would require that State of Ohio agencies such as Medicaid, Ohio Public Employee Retirement, and the Ohio HIV Drug Assistance Program not pay more for prescription drugs than the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). The State and state entities would be required to negotiate with drug companies for drug prices below those paid by the VA.

Proponents of the bill indicate that it could save the state millions of dollars and would send a strong message of support for regulation of pharmaceutical industry pricing. Much of the controversy and disagreement comes around the logistics of the negotiations after the passage of the bill.

If Issue 2 passes, it would be the first constitutional amendment of its kind in the United States. In 2016, a nearly identical ballot initiative failed by a close margin in California (53% to 47%).

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Considerations for social workers

NASW supports the long-term goal of establishing a national health care policy that ensures access to the full range of services for all people regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender or gender expression, sexual orientation, cognitive or physical functioning, socioeconomic or immigration status, or geographic location. As such, NASW Ohio agrees with the premise of the amendment: that it is appropriate and necessary to create, legislate, and protect standards of pricing to keep medications affordable. NASW finds it unethical and unnecessary that some must choose between affording their medication and affording other basic needs in our current healthcare system.

Through strong lobbying efforts, the pharmaceutical industry has gained an immense influence on both state and federal legislators, making it very unlikely that any meaningful restrictions on the industry will come through the legislature at state or federal levels without major reforms in the ways campaigns are financed. Issue 2 is not the only proposal to rein in out-of-control medication pricing. Read about one other comprehensive suggestion here.

This amendment would not address the medication prices paid by the majority of Ohioans who have private health insurance or Medicare, and it contains no mechanism to ensure that any cost savings for the state are passed to consumers. Many advocates have expressed concern that the pharmaceuticals will compensate for lost profits by raising prices elsewhere.

The VA has historically paid 20-24% less than other agencies for prescription drugs. With access to those lower prices, proponents of the bill have predicted that it could save over $500 million which could be invested in schools and social service institutions, many of which employ social workers.

There are organized efforts advocating both for and against this amendment, though the “No” campaign has significantly more funding. The “Yes” campaign is run by Ohio Taxpayers for Lower Drug Prices which has raised $6.23 million as of September 23, 2017. Several well-known progressive politicians and institutions, including former presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, National Nurses United, city councilmembers from Cleveland, Cincinnati and Columbus, as well as a handful of state legislators, have endorsed this amendment.

Find the full list of endorsements here.

Resources to learn more about the arguments FOR Issue 2

- Yes on 2 FAQ
- The Ohio Drug Price Relief Act: Making Prescription Drugs More Affordable
- Factsheet on Issue 2 & Private Health Insurance
- Factsheet on Issue 2 & Seniors
- Factsheet on Issue 2 & Veterans
- What are the likely economic benefits to the state of Ohio from the Ohio Drug Price Relief Act?

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7 Mehlman, M. J., J.D. (n.d.). The Ohio Drug Price Relief Act: Making Prescription Drugs More Affordable (pp. 1-22, Rep.). Accessed at https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5Xs1bUxCKyXS3RwUW1ibC15a2xOVXlwMkIEV0phY1IzaThF/view
The NO campaign is run by Ohioans Against the Deceptive Rx Ballot Issue which has raised $16.23 million, funded entirely by representatives of the pharmaceutical industry. Notable institutions that have come out against Issue 2 include: Equitas Health, Caracole Inc., The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Ohio, various veteran groups, and more. You can find the full list of opposition agencies here.

Resources to learn more about the arguments AGAINST Issue 2
- No on 2 FAQ
- Analysis of Proposed Ohio Initiated Statute to Regulate State Prescription Drug Purchasing by Vorys Health Care Advisors
- Equitas Health Position Statement
- Caracole Inc. Position Statement

NASW Ohio’s position
NASW Ohio has opted to remain neutral in considering Issue 2. If the Issue passes, we encourage all social workers to stay engaged and informed as the details of implementation are discussed.