



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

City Contribution Limits to Candidates	2
Voting Dates	3
Upcoming Forums	4

Applied Information Resources is a non-profit, public policy research and community information organization dedicated to:

- Citizen education on public issues.
- Assisting human service organizations in evaluating their programs, and
- Providing the best possible information to decision makers responding to changing human and urban needs.

Applied Information Resources

830 Main Street, Suite
900 Cincinnati, Ohio 45202-2193

Staff

William K. Woods
Edward Burdell
Alice B. Schneider

Applied Information Resources Continues Its Work On Political Reform

by Bill Woods

Voting Rights

After its two year involvement educating citizens about the need for Congressional redistricting reform in Ohio, AIR celebrated on May 8th when voters overwhelmingly approved Issue I, the Constitutional Amendment that will end gerrymandering in the state. With that campaign successfully completed, AIR turned its attention to two other political reform issues.

With the midterm elections taking place this fall, protecting voting rights and helping people to know the stumbling blocks that could prevent them from voting loom as important assignments. Furthermore, Cincinnati voters have an opportunity this November to reestablish a contribution limit to Council and Mayoral campaigns that was weakened in 2005.

Ohio is one of the states where laws have been enacted in recent years that make it difficult for some people to vote. It has a tough voter-ID law, and its process of purging voter rolls of individuals who have failed to vote in two elections has unregistered thousands of Ohioans.

Done in the name of efficiency, Secretary of State John Husted's purging process was approved by the U.S. Supreme Court in June. Meanwhile, the number of eligible citizens who vote has steadily declined, and Cincinnati's percentage dropped to less than one-third of its eligible voters in 2017.

The Voter Participation Project predicts that Ohio's vote total this November could decrease by 880,000 votes from 2016, and that most of the drop-outs will be young people, African-Americans, Hispanics, and unmarried women.

As a first step, AIR is organizing a Community Issues Forum at Christ Church Cathedral on Thursday September



(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

13th entitled "Voting Rights- Protecting Voting Rights and Focusing On Efforts To Register and Motivate People To Vote." This noon time Forum will feature a panel of speakers such as Elizabeth Brown, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area, who are currently involved in

registering voters and motivating them to vote.

A Forum co-sponsor is an informal coalition of grassroots organizations that recently came together because of their common concern about voting this fall. It includes the NAACP, the Poor People's Campaign, The Faith Community Alliance, Project AMOS, MARCC, For

Our Future Fund, and representatives of organized labor.

All the participants are either planning or currently conducting activities focused on registering voters or getting out the vote. AIR was invited to join this coalition and will work with AIR its members in the weeks ahead.

City Contribution Limits to Campaigns

The second reform opportunity this fall concerns a local campaign finance issue. Back in 2001, AIR helped organize a successful effort to pass a series of campaign finance reforms packaged in a City Charter Amendment. One of the reforms established contribution limits for individuals, political action committees, and parties, and the initial limit for a person contributing to a Council or Mayoral campaign was \$1,000. This limit was weakened in 2005 by a flawed guideline provided to a Council candidate by the City's Election Commission.

That year, Council candidate John Cranley requested from the Election Commission a decision about how a contribution from a legal liability company should be classified. The Commission, established by the Charter Amendment in order to insure adherence to campaign finance regulations, over stepped its powers by determining that each LLC should be regarded as a person. This decision meant that a person could give \$1,000 to a can-

didate and then through his or her LLC contributes another \$1,000.. Although little known and never given further public review, the Commission's decision led to unfair manipulations by certain individuals.

Not only did certain LLC owners give personal and company contributions, but it led to some people establishing multiple LLCs for the purpose of giving large amounts of money to a Council or Mayoral candidate. Several candidates have reaped huge benefits from this expansion of the definition of individual contributions. For instance, one candidate received an estimated \$500,000 from seventy-five LLCs in his recent campaign. Last year, former Judge Mark Painter, civic leader Don Mooney, and Councilman Wendell Young, sought to close this unfair loophole in the law.

When they were rebuffed by the Elections Commission they mounted lawsuit against the Elections Commission and Mayor Cranley. Joined by other reformers who

were part of the 2001 Charter Amendment campaign, the suit claimed the in making its decision about LLCs the Elections Commission exceeded its authority. This suit led to an informal settlement that this issue would be placed on the ballot as a Charter Amendment proposal for voters to decide.

That is where the issue stands today. City Council at its first meeting in September is scheduled to place on the November ballot a proposal to eliminate the ability of the owner of LLCs to give a personal contribution to candidate and then follow up with contributions from his or her LLCs. Individuals can either give personal contributions or a contribution from one of their LLCs, but not both. AIR plans to work with other reform groups to educate voters about this opportunity to restore the intent of the 2001 contribution limits that were designed to make "big money" less of a factor in Cincinnati's elections.

CONTRIBUTIONS HELP AIR, INC. WITH COMMUNITY WORK

AIR depends on individual contributions to support our work. We are a charitable 501(c)(3) organization and your contributions help fund such projects as campaign finance reform, political reform and studies in racism and homelessness in Cincinnati. We invite you to assist us as AIR takes on community issues and challenges.

\$1000 \$500 \$100 \$50 \$25

Make your tax-deductible checks **payable to: AIR, Inc.** and send to:

Applied Information Resources
830 Main Street, Suite 900
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

You can now donate online at www.airinc.org

Voting Dates to Remember

Tuesday, Oct 9th, last day to register to vote in the Nov 6th General Election.

Wednesday, Oct 10th - Early voting begins for the Nov 6th General Election (**Oct 10-26** / M-F 8-5, **Oct 27** / Sat 8-4, **Oct 29-Nov 2** / M-F 8-7, **Nov 3** / Sat 8-4, **Nov 4** / Sun 1-5, **Nov 5** / Mon 8-2)

Tuesday, Nov 6th - Election Day - Polls open from 6:30am-7:30pm

Absentee ballot applications will be mailed to every registered voter for the November 6 election.



Preview of Upcoming Community Issues Forums

The forums are held in the Christ Church Cathedral's third floor Forum Room, unless otherwise noted, and they are generally held twice a month on Thursdays at noon. They are free and open to all.

Thursday , September 13, 2018 Voting Rights – Protecting Voting Rights And Focusing On Efforts To Register And Motivate People To Vote

Thursday , September 27, 2018 Critical Issues that candidates should be addressing: Panel Discussion

Thursday , October 11. State Issue1 : Neighborhood Safety, Drug Treatment, and Rehabilitation Amendment

Thursday , October 25 County and City Ballot Issues

Thursday , November 8 What Happened On November 6: Insights About The Election

Thursday , November 29 Local Responses to Immigration Policies – An Update

Thursday , December 13th. TBD

Come join us for these Forums, and do bring a friend. Lunch can be purchased for \$6.50, or you can bring a brown bag. Parking is available in the garage of the building across the street from the Cathedral on 4th Street between Broadway and Sycamore. For video clips of past Forums, go to www.airinc.org.