WHAT HAPPENED ON NOVEMBER 8TH? WVXU POLITICAL COMMENTATOR HOWARD WILKINSON OFFERS HIS INSIGHTS ABOUT THE ELECTION
(by Bill Woods for StreetVibes)

Pundits will be writing about the factors determining the fall election for months to come. At the November 17th Community Issues Forum, Political Commentator Howard Wilkinson of WVXU offered some initial insights about what happened nationally, locally and in Ohio. With many attendees still in shock or in mourning, the Forum was as much a therapy session as it was a provider of political analysis.

"Why did Trump win?" asked Wilkinson. He then cited several reasons that were especially in play in Ohio. For Presidential elections in modern times, he noted, "Ohio has been a bellwether state that the winners carry."

One key factor in Trump's victory was his appeal to white male voters. Nationally, Trump carried male voters by 12-percent, while in Ohio the number was 23-percent. He handily won in depleted industrial areas such as Youngstown, and piled up a large majority in Southeast, Ohio. It appears that the President-elect received the support of a high percentage of Labor Union members, as his message about restoring industrial jobs resonated with this group of voters. Wilkinson said that he could sense a lack of enthusiasm for Clinton at the annual Labor Day picnic at Coney Island.

Wilkinson contends that Hillary Clinton did not come through as a champion of the working people who had watched their standard of living decline. She did not spend enough time campaigning in industrial and rural areas in decline, and she did not craft an effective message that spoke to the concerns of this constituency. On the other hand, Trump had a simple slogan for these angry voters.

Wilkinson pointed out another group that went more heavily for Trump in Ohio than nationally. Among white women with a college education, their percentage for him nationally was 51 to 45. In Ohio, however, this number was 55 to 41percent.

One factor that should be figured into an analysis of this election, according to Wilkinson, is the drop in the number of voters. After coming out in massive numbers for Obama, the African-American vote declined by 5-percent this fall. Negative advertising also discouraged people from voting, and potential voters were faced with choosing between two of the most unpopular candidates of modern times. "People voted out of anger," declared Wilkinson, "and he predicts there will be a lot of voter remorse in the coming months.

Switching gears, Wilkinson discussed how Hamilton County is becoming Democratic. The elections of Denise Driehaus, Aftab Pureval, and Marilyn Zayas-Davis provide evidence for his contention. Cincinnati, he concluded, is now such a Democratic stronghold, that the Republican

Party will be hard pressed to come up with candidates for City Council and for Mayor.

Two subjects that emerged from questions and comments from Forum attendees focused on the inaccuracy of the polls and the huge role of social media in the election. Polling, admitted Wilkinson, now misses huge blocks of voters. The fact that so many households no longer have traditional telephones is a trend that pollsters have not yet come to grips with.

The disturbing trend that so many people get their information through social media was discussed. Instead of voters making up their minds utilizing essentially the same set of facts, many people are reading or hearing false information and fabricated stories on the Internet. Since democracy depends on compromise and coming together on essential policies and programs, a situation where large numbers of Americans are making decisions based on completely different realities bodes ill for the future.