

**POLL**

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tion" in Ohio government. Both parties are looking to the results of Tuesday's vote as a rough verdict on the handling of the ethics and investment scandals that have swept state government this year — and as a possible springboard to success in the 2006 statewide elections and beyond.

The battle within Ohio is drawing national attention from observers eager to see the outcome of "reform" issues in a bellwether political state that clinched the 2004 election for President Bush.

Polls on statewide issues are notoriously volatile. Many voters acknowledge they have not studied the complicated constitutional amendments and may not make up their mind until the last minute. As many as one in five Ohioans remain undecided on a couple of the issues, the poll indicates.

Another caveat to the survey results: Out of necessity, the Dispatch Poll provided respondents with a greatly condensed version of each issue. Unedited, they run about seven typewritten pages.

The mail poll of 1,872 registered Ohio voters Oct. 24 through Thursday has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

The \$2 billion bond proposal that includes Gov. Bob Taft's coveted Third Frontier plan is state Issue 1. Issues 2-5 are the Reform Ohio Now measures.

Poll participant Mark Beriman, 29, is supporting all four "reform" issues.

"We have a dysfunctional political culture in general where there is no accountability and money has far too much influence," said the Columbus resident, a Democrat who is director of the Tobacco Public Policy Center at Capital University.

Jeff Hill, a retired social worker from Hilliard, also backs Issues 2-5.

"They may not be a cure-all, but it's better than what we have now," said Hill, 54, an independent.

"The scandals that are coming to light are indicative of having one party in control of everything. With one party, there is a tendency to get greedy, to get sloppy and to think you are above the law," he said. "The only way you can have checks and balances is to have more balanced representation."

But Mark Fisher, a 44-year-old warehouse clerk, smells outside influences in the election-reform measures — particularly from the national AFL-CIO.

The Zanesville resident is particularly critical of Issue 4, noting it would hand judges authority to pick members of a bipartisan commission that would draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

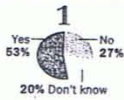
"It seems like we're going to pick the people in charge based on the judges," said Fisher, a Republican. "I don't trust all the judges. Too many of them try to make law from the bench rather than interpret the law."

He also is skeptical of the claim that the issue would take politics out of setting legislative districts.

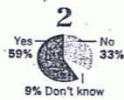
"I know how politics are. There's nothing neutral on either side."

Joel Mahlman, a 44-year-old production coordinator from

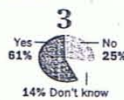
**State-issue poll results** Ohioans' views on Issues 1 - 5:



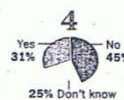
► Issue 1 is a three-part, \$2 billion bond package that includes \$500 million for Gov. Bob Taft's Third Frontier program; a 10-year, \$1.35 billion bond issue to pay for roads, bridges and water projects; and funding for industrial parks.



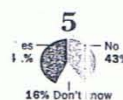
► Issue 2 would permit voters to cast ballots by mail or in person at the appropriate county boards of elections up to 35 days before an election without stating a reason.



► Issue 3 would revise limits on political contributions made by individuals, political-action committees and political parties, including reducing from \$10,000 to \$2,000 the maximum amount an individual could give to a statewide candidate.



► Issue 4 would create an appointed five-member independent commission to draw legislative and congressional districts every 10 years, with an emphasis on creating competitive races.



► Issue 5 would move responsibility for overseeing elections from the Ohio secretary of state to an appointed five-member board.

Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding. The mail poll of 1,872 registered Ohio voters was conducted Oct. 24 through Thursday. The margin of sampling error is 2.5 percentage points.

**A close call**

Dispatch Poll respondents were more sharply divided over state Issue 5 than any other proposal on the statewide ballot. A demographic breakdown of their responses: Subtotals may not add up to 1,872 because not all participants answered every question. Poll taken Oct. 24 through Thursday; margin of sampling error is 2.5 percentage points.

PARTY	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Democrat	771	54%	28%	17%
Republican	589	23	65	12
No party affiliation	468	43	39	18

GOVERNOR CANDIDATE VOTED FOR IN 2002	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
John Eastman	50	44%	48%	10%
Timothy F. Hagan	539	56	32	13
Bob Taft	823	29	57	14
Did not vote	336	45	30	24

EDUCATION	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Postgraduate degree	313	47%	42%	12%
College graduate	503	43	43	15
Some college	513	40	44	16
High-school graduate	429	38	43	19
Some high school or less	72	35	36	29

AGE	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
18-24	85	34%	35%	31%
25-34	181	49	33	18
35-44	293	38	42	20
45-54	406	46	42	13
55-64	373	40	46	14
65-74	294	38	49	13
75 or older	205	41	43	16

SEX	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Male	907	41%	48%	11%
Female	930	42	38	21

Source: Dispatch research

RACE	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
White	1,625	40%	45%	16%
Black	151	54	25	21
Other	45	49	40	11

RELIGION	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Protestant	829	35%	50%	15%
Catholic	492	41	45	14
Jewish	29	72	14	14
None	174	57	28	16
Other	28	44	32	24

UNION MEMBER IN HOUSEHOLD	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Yes	493	41%	41%	19%
No	1,327	41	44	15

ANNUAL INCOME	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Less than \$30,000	471	39%	38%	23%
\$30,001 to \$40,000	275	46	41	13
\$40,001 to \$50,000	193	45	40	15
\$50,001 to \$60,000	171	44	40	16
\$60,001 to \$70,000	132	42	44	14
\$70,001 to \$80,000	99	35	49	15
\$80,001 to \$90,000	63	38	49	13
\$90,001 or more	286	45	45	10

REGION	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Northeast	753	41%	42%	18%
Central	531	45	40	15
Southwest	175	38	46	16
Southeast	69	36	51	13
West	184	37	48	15
Northwest	130	42	46	12

TOTAL	RESPONDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
	1,872	41%	43%	16%

Deshler in northwest Ohio, also will be voting against Issues 2-5 because he says they don't address the fundamental problems of political corruption and infighting.

"It looks like they would just create more government," the Republican said. "It looks like there are some good ideas out there, but I don't see them as the solution."

"I don't trust any of the politicians anymore. I'm tired of listening to the news where the Republicans are accusing the Democrats of something and the Democrats are accusing the Republicans of something and no one ever gets anything done."

Mahlman does, however, support Issue 1 because of the potential to create jobs in Ohio. "With all of those jobs being sent overseas, we need to keep some of these jobs here," he said.

Lebanon lawyer David Fornshell, 32, said he'll vote "no" on all five ballot measures, including Issue 1, which he worries means handing legislators a blank

check for infrastructure projects, even though some may be worthwhile.

"I'm not really confident, particularly the way things have gone in the last 10 or 15 years with the General Assembly having a knack for spending more money," said Fornshell, a Republican. "Anything we do as voters to give them more authority to spend money makes me uncomfortable."

The multimillion-dollar ad campaigns surrounding the five issues are making an impact, but perhaps not in the way intended.

"They kind of disturb me," said John Mogle, 68, a semi-retired roofer from Tiffin.

He's especially bothered by the television spots that talk about taking power away from people.

"What the hell," he says, "we don't have that much of a say right now."

Dispatch reporters Catherine Candisky, Alan Johnson, James Nash and Jim Siegel contributed to this story. crowsland@dispatch.com

**How the Dispatch Poll was conducted in Ohio**

The Dispatch Poll was based on returns from 1,872 registered Ohio voters Oct. 24 through Thursday who say they intend to vote Tuesday. The Dispatch obtained a computerized list of all registered voters in Ohio from the secretary of state's office. A Dispatch computer then randomly chose who would receive ballots.

Voters receiving the ballots were asked to describe themselves by party affiliation, age, sex, race, education, income, religion, union membership and how they voted in the 2002 governor's race and 2004 presidential election.

Ballots of different colors were mailed to various regions of the state so The Dispatch could ensure that each area was represented in proportion to its voting strength. The areas, patterned on groupings of the state's six major media markets, are: northeast (20 counties); central (20 counties); southwest (eight counties); northwest

(12 counties); west (14 counties); and southeast (14 counties).

The standard margin of sampling error in a poll of this size conducted by The Dispatch is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points in 35 out of 100 cases. This means that if a poll is conducted 100 times, 95 cases the result will not vary by more than 2.5 percentage points from the result that could be obtained if all registered voters in Ohio were polled and responded. Error margins are greater for smaller samples.

Like all polls, the Dispatch Poll is subject to sampling error, but other than sampling error, other sources of error can be unintentional bias in the wording of questions, data-entry error or non-response bias. Non-response bias means those who responded may not reflect the views of those who did not participate.

The poll was designed, conducted and financed solely by The Dispatch.

**3 issues on way to passage, poll finds**

Plan to redraw legislative districts gets little support

By Darrel Rowland THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Voters apparently are ready to reform Ohio now — but only partway. In a nationally watched battle that could alter the landscape of Ohio politics, two of four statewide election-related issues seem ripe for passage in Tuesday's election, a new Dispatch Poll shows.

Ohioans appear ready to approve much stricter campaign-contribution limits and "no-entitlement" needed "early voting."

A proposal to put an independent board in charge of Ohio elections instead of the secretary of state could go either way. And arguably the most far-reaching measure on the ballot, one that would change the way legislative and

county commission districts are drawn, headed for defeat. A separate \$2 billion bond issue seems a likely winner.

The bulk of the attention is going to the four lengthy proposals generated by Reform Ohio Now, a coalition of mostly left-leaning groups.

While the issues themselves are sweeping in scope, the campaign has grown almost into a referendum on what critics dub the "culture of corrup-