

# Jewish Federation and Foundation of Greater Toledo

## Meetings with Candidates Highlight Many Similarities and Differences

By Daniel Pearlman, Director, JCRC

Last month, the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) organized meetings for lay and professional leaders in the Toledo Jewish community with all three candidates running for office in Ohio House District 41 and both candidates for Ohio Senate District 11. This will be the first, and likely the last, primary election under newly redistricted state maps that are expected to last only two years before another round of redistricting occurs.

Visiting the Jewish Federation were House candidates Nancy Larson (D), Josh Williams (R), and Colin Flanagan (D). Visiting Senate candidates included Ohio Representative Paula Hicks-Hudson (D) and Tony Dia (R). Howie Beigelman, Executive Director of Ohio Jewish Communities (OJC) based in Columbus, and Casey Holck, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of the YMCA, also attended.

House District 41 covers Sylvania and other areas and includes the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo, Temple Shomer Emunim, Congregation B'nai Israel, and Chabad House. Each Ohio Senate district comprises three Ohio

House districts. Senate District 11 covers House Districts 41-43, so it includes the above Jewish organizations plus Congregation Etz Chayim and Toledo Hillel; the latter two fall in House District 43 along with Ottawa Hills and parts of West Toledo.

"This was a great opportunity to meet and discuss the issues with the candidates running for our state House and Senate districts," expressed Charles Wittenberg. "It is not often we can discuss the issues directly with the candidates and learn their positions and perspectives. There were certainly stark differences among all of them. It was educational for the candidates, as well, as they learned about the Jewish community and gained an appreciation of the issues that are important to us as Jews."

In addition to learning why each candidate is running for office and some of their goals if elected, JCRC prepared a policy background on five topics: rising antisemitism, community safety and security gaps, issues of religious liberty, Toledo-Israel partnerships, and the "divisive topics" bills that have been intro-

duced in the Ohio House that may have implications on how the Holocaust and other essential chapters of history can be taught in schools. On most of these issues, with a few exceptions, candidates agreed with one another and with our communal agenda, regardless of their party affiliation.

For many in attendance, this was a refreshing realization. "We heard from all five candidates for the state House and Senate, and each conveyed their perspectives well; [it was] a truly informative day," expressed Alan Benjamin. "I was pleased that each was willing to speak to members of the Toledo Jewish community – and I came away knowing who would receive my vote!"

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit representing a diverse community, the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo values and is deeply committed to bipartisanship. Even with our community's diversity, there are many issues which have consensus in the Jewish community.

Election Day is Tuesday, August 2, and polls will be open from 6:30 am to 7:30 p.m. If you are in line by 7:30 p.m., you cannot be turned away. If you do

not know your House or Senate district, visit the Ohio Secretary of State website for an interactive map of the districts and searchable by address at [www.FindMyDistrict.OhioSOS.gov](http://www.FindMyDistrict.OhioSOS.gov).

Absentee voting and early in-person voting has begun at 3737 W. Sylvania Avenue, Suite 121. Use Entrance C, located in the back of the building. Hours vary by day; visit [www.LucasCountyOhioVotes.gov](http://www.LucasCountyOhioVotes.gov) for more information.

The Jewish Federation's Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) represents the Greater Toledo Jewish community, Israel, and Jews to the general community; establishes collaborative relationships with other ethnic, racial, civic and religious groups; promotes the interests of Jewish organizations and other agencies through government relations at the federal, state, and local levels and the media; and educates and advocates on important issues, seeking consensus with a commitment to Jewish values.

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