

New Philadelphia *Times Recorder*  
October 18, 2006

## **No, No, No, Yes**

If you're taking our word on the remaining four state issues, remember these words in this order: No, No, No, Yes. Our goal in this space today is to simply define the issues and the reasons we're against most of them and why we're in favor of the last one, Issue 5.

### ISSUE 1

Issue 1, which dealt with Ohio's Workers' Compensation law, has been ruled off the ballot by Secretary of State Ken Blackwell. That decision was upheld by the Ohio Supreme Court. So, this year ignore anything about Issue 1. There is, in effect, no Issue 1.

### ISSUE 2

We are against State Issue 2, which if passed would raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 per hour to \$6.85, effective Jan. 1, 2007.

Issue 2 proposes an amendment to the Ohio Constitution, which in and of itself is enough reason to vote against such an initiative. We don't like constitutional amendments because bad ones are hard to fix. You don't have to look further than the constitutional amendment limiting state lawmakers to two terms as an example of bad public policy that is nearly impossible to fix.

But there are other reasons to be against Issue 2.

One is our belief that any change to the minimum wage law ought to come from the federal government so that the playing table for employers and employees is equal across state lines. In addition, an increase in the federal Earned Income Tax Credit could provide an increase in income for low-wage earners without putting any extra burden on employers who might otherwise cut back on jobs available for students, who tend to hold minimum wage jobs.

Another reason is that, if passed, Issue 2 allows employees access to all other employees' salary records, which is indeed, as opponents claim, a massive intrusion into personal privacy. If you worry about identity theft, you don't want to vote for this issue.

Vote No on Issue 2.

### ISSUE 3

We are opposed to passage of Issue 3, the gambling issue.

Passage of Issue 3 primarily would benefit Cleveland, allowing construction of casinos there (but not elsewhere) and allowing slot machines at the state's seven horse racing tracks.

Issue 3 proposes an amendment to the state's constitution (see Issue 2 above) and touts scholarship money derived from gambling proceeds as bait to persuade voters.

Perhaps the time has come to allow the state to reap the benefit of controlled casino gambling. Most of our neighboring states have or are in the process of allowing some form of casino gambling. In addition, casinos in Canada just a few hours' drive from the interior of our state also are siphoning Ohioans' entertainment dollars.

But Issue 3 benefits only Cleveland – not Columbus, or Toledo, or Cincinnati – and lines the pockets of the owners of the specific casinos and the seven tracks.

We think Ohioans ought to vote on a proposed law (not a constitutional amendment) that would allow construction of well-regulated casinos in all of our major metropolitan areas should those areas seek them as economic development tools and as long as voters in those areas agree.

As it is written today, we think Issue 3 is a bad bet and urge a No vote.

#### ISSUES 4 AND 5

Issues 4 and 5 are the smoking issues. In our mind, Issue 4 is bad and Issue 5 is good.

Issue 4 proposes another constitutional amendment (bad) and actually permits smoking in public places, including restaurants, bars and bowling alleys.

Issue 4, supported by a group that calls itself SmokeLess Ohio, doesn't really propose a smoking ban except in a lot of public places that already have banned smoking.

Among the players is RJ Reynolds and other tobacco companies. Because it proposes a constitutional amendment, Issue 4 – if it passes – will trump Issue 5 even if Issue 5 passes.

So, if you're in favor of a smoking ban, you must vote against Issue 4.

Issue 5 – backed by a group called SmokeFree Ohio – on the other hand, proposes a law to ban smoking in bars, restaurants, bowling alleys and even in private clubs that have employees. Issue 5 is endorsed by the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Assn. and presumably by just about every physician on the face of the earth.

Its goal is to remove the threat of secondhand smoke to patrons and employees who would rather not have to breathe smoky air. We've conducted a couple of informal surveys and the results are surprising. Even some smokers in private clubs have said they would welcome such a law.

Bottom line is that Issue 5 would go a long way in helping Ohio to become healthier. It also might encourage some smokers to quit. Wouldn't that be something? We encourage a Yes vote on Issue 5.

Remember, No on Issue 4 and Yes on Issue 5.

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You can clip this part out and take it with you to the polling place:

Issue 1 – Ignore.

Issue 2 – No.

Issue 3 – No.

Issue 4 - No.

Issue 5 – Yes.