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Ohio Debate Commission announces moderators, launches question submissions and ticket requests for US Senate and Ohio Gubernatorial primary debates

CLEVELAND - The Ohio Debate Commission has announced moderators for each of its four primary debates, all of which will be held at the Paul Robeson Cultural and Performing Arts Center on the campus of Central State University in Wilberforce. The statewide nonpartisan organization also has opened its online question submission and general public ticket request links on their website, ohiodebatecommission.org. The ODC is looking for and encouraging Ohioans from across the state to participate.

On Monday, March 28, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Curtis Jackson, News Anchor at Spectrum News, will serve as moderator for the US Senate Democratic Primary debate. Morgan Harper, Traci “TJ” Johnson, and Congressman Tim Ryan are expected to participate.

Karen Kasler, Bureau Chief, Ohio Public Radio & TV Statehouse News Bureau, will moderate a 90-minute US Senate Republican Primary debate on Monday evening starting at 7 p.m. Pending an upcoming meeting with the candidates’ representatives, the seven hopefuls who made the Ohio ballot are expected to participate: State Senator Matt Dolan, Mike Gibbons, Josh Mandel, Neil Patel, Mark Pukita, Jane Timken and JD Vance.

Tuesday, March 29 will start with Rick Jackson, Senior Host and Producer, Ideastream Public Media, as moderator for the Ohio Gubernatorial Republican Primary debate, scheduled for 11 a.m.-12 p.m. The ODC is in communication with the campaigns of Joe Blystone, Jim Renacci, and Governor Mike DeWine. Former state legislator Ron Hood’s campaign has not responded to email and phone outreach.

The two days of debates will conclude on Tuesday evening with Lucy May, WVXU Cincinnati Edition host, as moderator for the Ohio Gubernatorial Democratic Primary debate, set for 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Both John Cranley and Nan Whaley have agreed to participate.

“As a statewide collaborative, we’re committed to highlighting expertise and issues from around Ohio,” said Jill Zimon, Executive Director of the Ohio Debate Commission. “These four professionals offer a great mix of experience across platforms, and from across our state.”
Anyone in Ohio can submit questions in writing or video by visiting ohiodebatecommission.org and clicking on the “Submit a Question” banner or by clicking on the “Submit Questions” button in the footer. Questions can also be submitted directly at this link. Free tickets can be requested online through the “Events” section of the website.

Media organizations throughout the state will broadcast all the debates live and also stream them on their websites and social media platforms. The Ohio Debate Commission will publish a “where to watch and listen” guide on its website prior to March 28 and March 29 for each debate.

This year’s debates are the first to be held in-person by the Ohio Debate Commission since before COVID-19. The debates will have live audiences of up to 400. The ODC will adhere to Central State University’s COVID-19 guidelines for the audience members, candidates, volunteers, and staff.

About Central State University: Central State University, located in Wilberforce, Ohio, is a regionally accredited 1890 Land-Grant University with a 135-year tradition of preparing students from diverse backgrounds and experiences for leadership, research, and service. The University, which has been named HBCU of the Year by HBCU Digest, fosters academic excellence within a nurturing environment and provides a strong liberal arts foundation and STEM-Ag curriculum leading to professional careers and advanced studies globally.

About the Ohio Debate Commission: The ODC is a collaboration of civic organizations, media organizations, and universities working to create debates of the highest quality for the highest statewide offices and distributing that content to every corner of the state. The commission was founded in early 2018 and includes media entities in every market in Ohio. More information can be found at ohiodebatecommission.org.

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