OHIO DEBATE COMMISSION SETS GENERAL ELECTION DEBATES FOR U.S. SENATE AND OHIO GOVERNOR AND A FORUM FOR CHIEF JUSTICE CANDIDATES

CLEVELAND – The Ohio Debate Commission has scheduled three events in advance of the November general elections—a U.S. Senate debate, an Ohio gubernatorial debate, and a forum in the race for the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio.

The gubernatorial debate is scheduled for Monday, October 10th; the US. Senate debate will be on Wednesday, October 12th, and the forum in the Chief Justice race is also expected to happen on one of those two days. All three events are to be held at the Akron-Summit County Public Library’s main auditorium.

All the certified candidates were contacted in mid-May with a save-the-date communication and again on July 1 with a formal invitation.

Nearly two dozen Ohio media outlets, from every market and every platform, as well as C-SPAN, have indicated their interest in broadcasting, distributing and/or covering one or more of the events.

The debates and forum are financially supported by The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Akron Community Foundation, GAR Foundation and, as well as AARP Ohio and the Kiplinger Program for Public Affairs Journalism.

The specific formats for the debates and forum and moderators will be announced at a later date, after negotiations with campaigns are complete. The debates and forum will be made freely available for broadcast and live-streaming in order to reach as many voters across the state as possible.

Dr. John C. Green, Director Emeritus of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, a widely known and highly regarded observer of Ohio and national politics, said, “Well planned debates with skilled moderators give voters a perspective on the candidates and their positions that stump speeches, editorial board interviews, and political advertisements simply cannot.”

“The public Library plays a critically important role in supporting democracy and an informed citizenry. The Board and staff of the Akron-Summit County Public library are delighted that the Main Library was selected to serve as the site for the Ohio Debate
Commission debates in October,” said Pamela Hickson-Stevenson, Executive Director, Akron-Summit County Public Library.

“AARP Ohio is working to elevate the voice of Ohio’s 50-plus voters, and we are proud to sponsor these important debates. We look forward to lively discussions as candidates address the issues and concerns that are important to older Ohioans and provide solutions that empower them to shape their own futures,” said State Director Holly Holtzen.

Republican Gov. Mike DeWine is seeking a second term as governor in the race against Democratic nominee, Nan Whaley, the former mayor of Dayton.

U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, a Northeast Ohio Democrat who has accepted the ODC invite, faces Republican nominee and author J.D. Vance in the U.S. Senate race to replace Senator Rob Portman, who is retiring at the end of this year.

Current Supreme Court Justices Jennifer Brunner, a Democrat, and Republican Sharon Kennedy are seeking to replace Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor, who is required to retire under age limitations for Ohio’s judiciary.

All the candidates have participated in Ohio Debate Commission programs previously. Then-Attorney General DeWine debated his gubernatorial opponent in 2018, and Justices Brunner and Kennedy participated in a virtual Ohio Supreme Court forum in 2020. Candidates Ryan, Vance, and Whaley participated in ODC primary debates in March 2022.

The Brunner, Ryan, and Whaley campaigns have agreed to participate.

Along with the Ohio Debate Commission, The University of Akron and the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics will co-sponsor educational programming for high school and college students on October 11. The programming will focus on higher education’s civic mission, which is to help students become engaged citizens who are capable of drawing on a wide array of information sources to make voting decisions during electoral campaigns.

“In an election cycle where voters have indicated how concerned they are about threats to democracy, candidates’ participation in high quality debates--and providing that content to as many Ohioans as possible--is more critical than ever. Our record shows our capacity to reach millions of Ohio voters with this important content,” said Jill Zimon, ODC Executive Director.

Information about submission of questions by the public and registration for tickets to join the live audience at the Akron-Summit County Public Library will be released later through social media and at ohiodebatecommission.org.
About Akron-Summit County Public Library: Akron-Summit County Public Library comprises the Main Library, 18 branch libraries, and mobile services. The system provides resources for learning and leisure, information services, meeting spaces, and programs for all ages that support, improve, and enrich individual, family, and community life.

About the Ohio Debate Commission: The Ohio Debate Commission is a nonpartisan collaboration of civic organizations, media organizations and universities started in 2018. It seeks to create the highest quality content for the highest statewide offices and distribute that content to every corner of the state. Its vision is a stronger Ohio, with well-informed voters and highly qualified public servants, candidates, and elected officials.

The ODC is a 501(c)(3). Read more at ohiodebatecommission.org.

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