

## News Release

For Immediate Release



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## Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber Announces Positions on Ballot Issues

CINCINNATI—September 15, 2009— The Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber today announced its position on seven state and local ballot issues that will appear on the Nov. 3 ballot. On Monday, the Chamber's board voted to accept the recommendations of its Policy and Ballot Issues Committee, a bipartisan group of local business leaders.

“One of the Chamber’s most significant roles is to act as an advocate for the local business community in every level of government,” said Rita McNeil Danish, vice president of government affairs with the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber. “Ultimately, we are most interested in advancing issues that are good for business and will accelerate our regional economy.”

The following is an overview of those positions:

- Endorse State Issue 3: The Ohio Jobs and Growth Plan would amend the state’s constitution to bring casino gambling to Ohio by authorizing a single casino in the cities of Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus and Toledo. The proposed casino in Cincinnati would be located at Broadway Commons and mandates \$250 million in private investment. The proposal would create \$47.1 million in estimated tax revenue to Hamilton County, the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County School Districts. Additionally, estimates indicate that the annual statewide tax revenue will be \$600 million. The casinos will create 23,000 construction-related jobs and 15,000 permanent jobs from ongoing operations, according to an economic impact report from the University of Cincinnati. ***The Chamber supports and recommends a “yes” vote on Issue 3 due to job creation, the substantial local tax revenue for the Cincinnati USA region and the sizeable investment in the urban core.***
- Endorse the Cincinnati Public Schools Levy: CPS is seeking renewal of an operating tax levy, first approved in 1980, that now accounts for \$65 million of the district's \$467 million budget. Ohio provides 43 percent of the CPS budget which was cut by \$6 million for 2009-10. ***The Chamber supports and recommends a “yes” vote on the levy due to the critical importance of education in producing a quality workforce for the Cincinnati USA region and the role CPS plays in aiding this critical priority.***
- Endorse the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Levy: The library is seeking its first-ever tax levy to compensate for an annual funding shortfall between \$16 and \$30 million in the 2010 budget due to a decline in state tax revenues. The library receives 87 percent of its total budget from state tax revenues and relies on contributions, fines, fees, restricted grants, investment return and other income for the remaining 13 percent. Additionally, The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County is the only major library system in Ohio that currently receives no local funding. ***The Chamber supports and recommends a “yes” vote on this levy due to the role the library plays in furthering quality education and building a strong workforce for the Cincinnati USA region.***

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## Chamber Ballot Issue Positions

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- Endorse Cincinnati Museum Center Levy: The Cincinnati Museum Center is seeking the renewal of a tax levy to provide funding for occupancy costs and maintenance of Union Terminal. **The Chamber supports and recommends a “yes” vote on this levy due to the Cincinnati Museum Center’s position as a major cultural and architectural asset of the Cincinnati USA region.**
- Endorse the Hamilton County Family Services and Treatment Levy: Hamilton County is seeking the renewal of a tax levy to provide funding for program alternatives to incarceration for drug and alcohol offenders. The renewal amount of the Family Services and Treatment Levy is a substantial decrease from the previous levy—a levy that previously funded Drake Hospital. **The Chamber supports and recommends a “yes” vote on this levy because it will result in lower costs to the criminal justice system and also will increase jail capacity.**
- Endorse the Hamilton County Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Levy: Hamilton County MRDD is seeking the renewal of a tax levy to provide funding for programs serving individuals and families confronting a range of medical, social and educational challenges. MRDD depends on local funds for 75 percent of its revenue. **The Chamber supports and recommends a “yes” vote on this levy because it is critical to the continued success of the MRDD. Funding of MRDD is a state-mandated county responsibility, and passage of the levy is critical to avoid further demands on limited county resources.**
- Oppose the Cincinnati Water Works Ballot Initiative: This ballot initiative would amend the City of Cincinnati's Charter to require a vote of approval from the electorate before the city could transition the Cincinnati Water Works to a regional water district. **The Chamber opposes and recommends a “no” vote on this ballot initiative because the amendment represents bad governance as it would impede the city from appropriately managing policy decisions.**
- The Chamber previously announced its opposition to the Passenger Rail Ballot Initiative: This ballot initiative would amend the City of Cincinnati's Charter to require a vote from the electorate before the city could spend any money or resources on all passenger rail projects. This would include, but is not limited to, light rail, street car and passenger train service. **The Chamber opposes and recommends a “no” vote on this ballot initiative because the language, as written, would hinder the consideration of transportation options, impede county, state or federal funding for transportation projects and inhibit economic development. Additionally, the amendment represents bad governance as it would impede the city from appropriately managing policy decisions.**

### **About the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber:**

The Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber is the nation's fifth largest chamber, representing the interests of nearly 6,000 member businesses. Its mission is to capture Cincinnati USA as one of the world's favorite American business centers. The Chamber serves its membership and the Cincinnati USA community through economic development, government advocacy, festivals and events, regional vision and collaboration, money-saving benefit programs, leadership and networking opportunities and educational programs. Twice in the last decade, the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber has been recognized as the national chamber of the year.

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