

Questions for state candidates

1. Homelessness

On any given night, nearly 11,000 Ohioans are experiencing homelessness—sleeping outside or in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. **What should the state do to help end homelessness?**

As a progressive candidate for Ohio, I firmly believe that addressing homelessness requires a comprehensive and compassionate approach rooted in human dignity and social justice.

I plan to emphasize a Housing First approach, which prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness without preconditions. This model has proven effective in other states and countries, as stable housing is the first step to addressing any other challenges individuals might face.

We should provide wraparound services that include mental health care, addiction treatment, job training, and placement services. By supporting individuals holistically, we can help them regain stability and independence.

Economic insecurity is a root cause of homelessness. We must fight for a thriving wage and ensure workers have stronger rights and protections, allowing them to live, including housing.

I advocate to tackle the systemic inequities that disproportionately affect marginalized communities and contribute to higher rates of homelessness as well. This means advocating for racial justice, gender equality, and the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.

We could also shift essential utilities and services into public ownership to reduce the cost of living. By controlling the costs of water, electricity, and heating, we can alleviate financial pressures on low-income households, thus reducing the risk of homelessness.

Implementing progressive taxation where the wealthiest individuals and corporations pay their fair share is necessary. Use this revenue to fund robust social programs, including housing initiatives, healthcare, and social services that address the root causes of homelessness.

2. Housing Challenges in Rural Ohio

Although millions of Ohioans throughout the state have trouble paying their rent or mortgage, housing insecurity in rural areas is often overlooked. Resources for rural

communities have decreased while housing issues have increased significantly. **How would you address the housing needs of our rural communities?**

We should address transportation barriers that can lead to housing insecurity by investing in rural public transit systems or community rideshare programs. This will help residents access employment, healthcare, and education, indirectly supporting stable housing situations and expand broadband access, enabling better access to remote work opportunities and digital resources for housing assistance.

We could establish government-funded and operated housing developments that are prioritized for rural areas. These projects can offer low-cost or subsidized rents, ensuring housing is treated as a public good rather than a commodity.

Additionally, advocate for progressive taxation policies that redistribute wealth to fund rural housing initiatives. Use these funds to invest in infrastructure, housing development, and support services for rural communities. Increase government investment in social services that provide holistic support, such as food security, healthcare, and education. This reduces the economic pressures that contribute to housing insecurity.

I will advocate for policies that establish housing as a basic human right, thereby obligating the government to ensure everyone has access to safe, affordable, and adequate housing

3. Ohio Housing Trust Fund (for state candidates only)

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF) is the number one source of state funding for local affordable housing development and homelessness programs in the state. Each OHTF dollar generate over \$8 in economic activity. The OHTF has been historically funded through a 50-50 split with county recorder fees, but revenues have declined in recent years. **Do you believe the state should ensure sufficient revenue for the OHTF? If so, how?**

Yes, I believe the state should ensure sufficient revenue for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF). Given the essential role it plays in supporting local affordable housing development and homelessness programs, it's critical to secure and even expand its funding to meet the growing needs.

As mentioned above, introduce or increase taxes on high-income earners and large corporations. Wealth redistribution is important as using this additional revenue to fund

the OHTF can help address housing inequalities and provide more robust support for those in need.

Invest in public housing and cooperative housing models. The state can play a more significant role by directly developing and managing housing projects, prioritizing affordability, and community welfare over profit. Profits generated from these initiatives can be reinvested into the OHTF.

Evaluate existing state subsidies and incentives that benefit large corporations or industries and redirect a portion of these funds toward the OHTF. By prioritizing social welfare programs over corporate incentives, the state can better address pressing housing issues.

Implement a small tax on financial transactions, such as stock trades or real estate transactions above a certain value. The revenue generated from such taxes could directly contribute to the OHTF, ensuring a steady flow of funds.

4. Additional Comments

Feel free to include any additional comments you may have about ways the state/federal government can reduce homelessness and/or expand access to affordable housing in Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss solutions!