SWITCH

From A2

"People come in and they talk. They're excited about what's happening. They just speak their minds and say, 'Yeah, I voted for Obama once, but now I'm Republican.' "

Arredondo

Former GOP chairman David Arredondo agreed Trump was vital to the success of the local party, which has made inroads in traditionally Democratic County offices.

Republicans now hold all three county commissioners' seats, the recorder's office and the coroner's post.

"In 2016 is where we started to see the shift in Lorain County," he said. "Because of Trump and his politics, blue-collar workers in Lorain County began voting Republican."

Board of Election data show in 2016 Republicans took the lead in party affiliations, 46,000 versus 41,300 declared Democrats.

But by 2020, Democrats were back on top.

Since then, the pendulum has swung back.

"After this year's primary, Republicans in Lorain County have 37,000 versus 28,000 Democrats," Arredondo said.

Asked about the significance that more than 70 percent of the county's total 221,000 registered voters are not affiliated with either party, he said that doesn't accurately reflect voters' attitudes because in Ohio the only way to declare a party affiliation is to vote in a partisan primary.

"Clearly a lot of those independent voters are voting Republican," he said. "Just look at our state offices."

Republicans have held every statewide executive post — governor and lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, auditor and treasurer — since 2010.

Arredondo, who led the county party from 2020 until April, said he was confident GOP dominance statewide would continue to fuel GOP success in local races in next month's election.

Sweda

Not surprisingly, Sharon Sweda, head of the Lorain County Democratic Party, is equally confident of her party's performance on Nov. 5 — especially with Vice President Kamala Harris at the top of the ticket.

Sweda said Harris "has emerged" as a stronger candidate than President Joe Biden for several reasons.

"Kamala Harris has the ability to really relate better with younger voters," Sweda said. "She has the advantage of having more youth, more energy. There's an excitement that surrounds her."

Sweda said Harris can offer change to voters unhappy with the Biden administration because, as vice president, she didn't set policy.

"I've been vice president on a lot of committees and boards and I'm going to tell you, vice president is the backup," Sweda said. "They are not the policymaker; they don't lead the ship."

Sweda said Harris "has a greater awareness that we have economic issues," pointing out that she has promised to restore the COVID-19-era $3,600 increase in the Child Tax Credit and proposed a $6,000 credit for families with newborns.

Harris also wants a $25,000 tax credit for first-time home buyers.

Sweda said Harris has the advantage on a key social issue: abortion.

"She will defend women's rights," Sweda said. "I think women feel safer, they feel more protected with her positions."

Sweda cited last year's landslide passage of a state constitutional amendment to ensure access to abortion and other forms of reproductive health care as evidence of the importance of the issue to Ohio voters.

Lorain County voters approved the amendment by a 63-37 percent margin.

"We exceeded the state average of 57 percent," for the amendment, she said.

Sweda acknowledged the loss of much of Lorain County's manufacturing workforce has hurt her party.

"We had U.S. Steel, we had Ford Motor Co., we had General Motors, we had the shipyards," she said "And those workers are predominantly union-supportive workers who rely on the values of the Democratic Party."

Winning back some of those traditional Democrats who now vote Republican will be a hard sell.

"I was in grad school when Trump first came on the scene in 2016," said a 32-year-old Lorain native who asked not to be identified. "He spoke to the disenfranchised individual, the little guy that had been forgotten.

"That's what I grew up around — hard working, middle-class, blue-collar people. Those folks seem to have been forgotten."

The son of biracial parents, he grew up in a Democratic household and as a teenager worked for Obama's first campaign.

"I went door-to-door for him in 2008, but I couldn't vote then," he said.

He said he was disappointed by Obama's first term and planned to vote for Republican Mitt Romney in 2012.

He changed his mind after a video was leaked of Romney speaking at a private fund ra… ac… ce… ea… in… be… who believe the government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it.

"My job is not to worry about those people," Romney said. "I'll never convince them they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives."

That video cost the man's vote.

"I wanted to vote for Romney in 2012," he said. "But Romney completely lost me with the comment about the 47 percent."

The man said he voted for Trump in 2016 and was impressed by his four years in the White House.

The man, who earned a master's in business administration and works in the field of finance, credited Trump's …ting the … unem… …arly for … wages, …, stable …last four years have been the complete opposite of that, which is why I will still vote for him this year."

While praising Trump's policies, the man said he'd rather the Republicans had someone else running for president.

"In the primary I voted for Nikki Haley," the former South Carolina governor, he said.

He pointed to Trump's penchant for name-calling and abusive rhetoric.

"Some of it was funny," he said. "But it's just gotten old."

He argued the Republicans would have a better shot at winning the presidency this year "if there would have been someone at the top of the ticket that just was less divisive."

John Russo, former co-director of the Center for Working Class Studies at Youngstown State University, cautioned Democrats not to count on all voters being turned off by Trump's vulgar and disparaging language.

Russo, now a visiting scholar at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., cited the example of former U.S. Rep. James Traficant Jr., a Democratic who represented the economically ravaged congressional district of Youngstown's Mahoning Valley for 17 years, from 1985 until 2002.

Traficant's politics and personality resembled Trump's in several ways. Like Trump, he billed himself as an economic populist and defender of the working class and was known for his extreme rhetoric.

Also like Trump, he was charged with crimes. He was expelled from the House after being convicted of 10 felony counts, including taking bribes, filing false tax returns, racketeering and forcing his congressional staff to perform work at his homes.

Russo pointed out that despite those convictions, many of his supporters remained steadfast.

"Jim Traficant represented the politics of resentment," Russo said. "He was very popular and that support continued even after he went to jail."

While serving seven years in federal prison in 2002, Traficant ran as an independent candidate for another term in the House.

He garnered 28,045 votes — 15 percent of the total cast.

Staff writer Carissa Woytach contributed to this report.

Contact David Knox at ctnews@chroniclet.com.

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Abortion destroys life, killing a living, growing human child
(see https://loraincountyrighttolife.org/what-is-abortion/).
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It's Time to Stop the Killing

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NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS OF FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION OF DELINQUENT TAX LIST

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the County Auditor of Lorain County, Ohio as required by Section 5721.03 of the Revised Code of Ohio, the Delinquent Land Tax List will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in Lorain County.

This list will contain the names of owners of all lands upon which the real estate taxes, assessments, recoupment charges, penalties and interest, or either, remain unpaid at the August 2024 tax settlement, and still remain unpaid.

An interest charge will accrue on accounts remaining unpaid after the last day of November 2024 unless the taxpayer enters a written Delinquent Contract to pay such taxes in installments.

Installment payments may be made in accordance with a written Delinquent Contract with the Lorain County Treasurer.

Installment payments WILL NOT prevent the publication of the balance of unpaid taxes, assessments, recoupment charges, penalties and interest.

PREVENTION OF PUBLICATION

Payment of taxes, assessments, recoupment charges, interest and penalties, IN FULL, if made no later than the 25th day of October, 2024 will eliminate those land owners names from publication.

J. CRAIG SNODGRASS