

# The Citizen

The Newsletter of The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland

Volume No. I

Issue No. 1

July 2010

## Mission

The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland seeks to achieve integrity, efficiency, and transparency in local and county government by promoting citizen education and involvement.

## Executive Committee

Jim Dixon      Chair  
Jay Carson      Vice Chair  
Angie Kazi      Treasurer  
Ed Blakemore   Secretary  
Andrew Cox

**The Citizens League of  
Greater Cleveland  
P.O. Box 14702  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114  
216-533-8447  
[tclogc@gmail.com](mailto:tclogc@gmail.com)**



## The Rebirth of The Citizens League

With a goal to promote greater efficiency, transparency, and integrity in county government through public education initiatives and candidate evaluations and endorsements, new leadership has stepped forward to reboot The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland.

Jay Carson explained: “The fact that the citizens of Cuyahoga County overwhelming demanded change last November and that hundreds of citizens have since then committed their time to assisting with the transition is a testament to the frustration with how county government has operated and the desire to have a government that works efficiently, honestly, and openly. The time is right to bring The Citizens League back.”

The original Citizens League, founded in 1886, was a non-partisan organization composed of concerned citizens. At the time of its founding, machine politics flourished and the culture was one of corruption, patronage, and bitter partisanship. The Citizens League reviewed and endorsed candidates and served as a clearinghouse for information on public policy issues until it disbanded several years ago.

“For nearly a century, The Citizens League served as both the civic conscience of the region and a source of new ideas on how to make government more efficient and accountable to its citizens,” Carson said. “We chose to revive the old organization because we wanted to honor that legacy.”

The Citizens League’s first priority is to create a non-partisan system for evaluating candidates for the new county offices, similar to the Judge4Yourself program created by the Cleveland Municipal Bar Association and other bar and civic organizations. “Judge4Yourself has done a great community service in improving the integrity of judicial races by helping to replace the political ‘name-game’ with objective evaluations of competence,” Carson said. “We want to do the same thing for other county races.” (Continued on next page.)

## Rebirth (cont'd)

---

Future initiatives will involve creating proposals to make county public records easily available online, providing ethics training for elected and appointed officials, and reviewing how the new county government can achieve cost savings by eliminating redundancies and promoting regional cooperation.

Membership in The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland is open to anyone of voting age who supports the group's non-partisan mission. A membership form is attached as the last page of this newsletter.

"Our goal is to take the energy we've seen from across the political spectrum and from all demographic groups, and to focus it on ensuring that our new county government is open, efficient, and honest, and that the best ideas for county government are heard," Carson said. "We'd like people who share that goal to get involved."

## Call to Action: Join The Citizens League

---

"I no longer felt that I could sit on the sidelines," said Jim Dixon, Chair of The Citizens League's Executive Committee. "Sheriff McFaul's practices came to light," he continued, "because those around him had finally had enough." Dixon reports that there came a time when he, too, had enough with the corruption, so he began to talk to some friends about how to take action. "The more we discussed how to channel our frustration, the more we realized that a brilliantly conceived model for citizen participation was already in place. It just needed new life."

Motivated further by the ongoing revelations of corruption, by the overwhelming vote to

change the structure of county government, and by the volunteer spirit evidenced by citizens who have stepped forward to assist with the transition, The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland is issuing a call to action to others who want to make a difference. Those who join will not only provide financial support to the Candidates Program and other programs that will launch this year, they will have the ability to commit their energy and enthusiasm to the improvement of the civic life of the Greater Cleveland community. A membership form is attached. Those interested may telephone or e-mail The Citizens League to find out how they can help.

"Volunteers can help with everything from the nuts and bolts issues relating to operating a member-driven 501(C)(4)," Dixon continued, "to leadership positions on programming committees and the Executive Committee. We purposefully left several Executive Committee seats open so we could solicit leadership and input from across the community's demographics." Membership is open to anyone of voting age who pledges to support The Citizens League's non-partisan mission.

## Get Involved: The Candidates Program

---

The voters of Cuyahoga County will participate in an historic election this November. That election presents members of The Citizens League with an opportunity to shape history by rating candidates for new county-wide offices.

Last fall, while in the midst of a corruption scandal that has involved elected and appointed officials from county, local, and special governments, the voters overwhelmingly approved a new county charter. In a marked transformation from the status quo, that new charter established a County Executive and eleven-member County Council.

June 24, 2010, marked the deadline for partisan candidates for the new elected Cuyahoga County offices to file their paperwork with the Board of Elections. These partisan candidates will participate in a primary scheduled for September 7, 2010. Primary winners will then face one another, and independent candidates, in the general election on November 2, 2010.

The Citizen League is targeting the first week of September to publish evaluations of the candidates for County Executive. Between now and then, The Citizens League will constitute the Candidates Program Committee, establish its procedures, establish evaluative criteria, circulate questionnaires, conduct interviews, and rate the candidates.

The Citizens League will also evaluate the ninety candidates that have stepped forward to run for County Council in the various districts. These evaluations, however, depend entirely upon the response to this call to action. Only if enough volunteers step forward will the Candidates Program have sufficient capacity to rate the council candidates.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact The Citizens League by telephone or e-mail.

**The Citizens League of Greater  
Cleveland  
P.O. Box 14702  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114  
216-533-8447  
[tclogc@gmail.com](mailto:tclogc@gmail.com)  
[www.thecitizensleague.org](http://www.thecitizensleague.org)**

## Understanding Cuyahoga County's New County Charter

---

Beginning in November 2010, a typical Cuyahoga County ballot will display far fewer County-wide non-judicial elections. That is because the new charter, passed through Issue 6 in the November 2009 election, will narrow that list to three: County Executive, County Council, and the Prosecutor. The Executive and Council replace the three-member County Commission.

The County Executive will appoint a number of officers, many of whom replace officials that once appeared on the ballot. Subject to confirmation by County Council, the Executive will appoint a Fiscal Officer, a Medical Examiner, a Clerk of Courts, a Director of Public Works, a Director of Law, a Treasurer, and a Sheriff.

The County Executive will also appoint a Health & Human Services Director, a Development Director, and a Human Resources Commission. A Development Commission and a Budget Commission will also be impaneled in accordance with specified seating. The Executive and Council will appoint a Board of Revision.

The Fiscal Officer (replacing the Auditor and Recorder) will chair an Audit Committee, which will work with a Council-appointed Director of Internal Audit. The Executive will manage the Purchasing Department, while the individuals referenced above will lead the Health & Human Services Department, the Audit Department, the Human Resources Department, and the Development Department.

## **The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland Individual Membership Application**

The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland offers suggested giving levels. We encourage you to join today at any level.

Student	\$10	Civic Leader	\$500 or more
Under 30	\$25	Civic Principal	\$1,250 or more
Member	\$50 or more	Civic Pacesetter	\$2,500 or more
Civic Builder	\$100 or more	Civic Champion	\$10,000 or more

**Membership Benefits:** Membership is open to individuals of voting age who support the mission of The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland. Members may participate in the work of committees and study groups. They may cast a vote for Executive Committee members at the membership meeting. They may also hold a seat on the Executive Committee. They will also receive, if they provide an e-mail address, the periodic e-newsletter.

To join, complete the form below and mail it with your check to: The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland, P.O. Box 14702, Cleveland, Ohio, 44114.

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Membership Amount \_\_\_\_\_  
Referred By \_\_\_\_\_

The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland seeks to achieve integrity, efficiency, and transparency in local and county government by promoting citizen education and involvement. Members agree to support this mission and participate in activities in a non-partisan fashion.

**We respect your privacy:** It is the policy of The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland never to provide your email address or contact information to another organization.

The Citizens League of Greater Cleveland is organized as a 501(C)(4) corporation. As such, membership dues are not tax deductible. Additional information is available at [www.thecitizensleague.org](http://www.thecitizensleague.org).