

CINCY*WFP NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 5
JUNE 2026



Ohio House Candidates Vanessa Enoch, Karen Brownlee, and Jayson Amer Rasheed at the 1st Cincy WFP Fundraiser

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Who are we?

We are the Cincinnati Working Families Party Wolf Pack! A Wolf Pack is an intimate group of hardworking volunteers under the WFP name that is dedicated to transforming local politics, much like a party chapter. Our Wolf Pack was founded July 2025. We're new in town, but we've accomplished so much already! Keep an eye out for this newsletter and follow us on our social media accounts for regular updates!

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What is WFP?

WFP is working people coming together to build a better country, state, and community. We believe that the interests of the people should come before those of the rich and influential that have bought their way into politics.

While our government strips us of our working rights, defunds our schools, and arrests our neighbors without due process, we know the root of the problem: politicians have been bought by billionaires and super PACs. They have chosen to serve corporate profits over their communities' needs. We know that strength in our community will win.

Working Families Party is a national third party established in over 20 states. We have two main goals: to get progressives to win primary elections (we never spoil the general), and to connect local progressive coalitions together under one roof. [Learn more...](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

JUN

27

**Cincinnati Pride
Parade & Festival**

Time: 12:00-8:00 PM EST

Location/Info: [Click Here!](#)

JUL

09

**M. L. 30+ Sapphic
Singles Night**

Time: 7:00-10:00 PM EST

Tickets/Info: [Click Here!](#)

JUL

10

**M. L. 40+ Queer
Speed Friending**

Time: 6:00-9:00 PM EST

Sign Up/Info: [Click Here!](#)

JUL

26

Candidate Canvass

Time/Location: TBD

RSVP: [Click Here!](#)

AUG

09

**Cincy WFP
Welcome Gathering**

Time: 1:00-3:00 PM EST

RSVP: [Click Here!](#)

Wolf Pack meeting times*: Electoral Committee: Thursdays 6-7 | Social Committee: Mondays 5-6
Communications Committee: Sundays 6-7 | *See "Welcome Gathering" on pg. 4 for more details

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5	6
JUNE	7 Comms Committee	8 Social Committee	9	10	11 Electoral Committee	12	13
	14 Comms Committee	15 Social Committee	16	17	18 Electoral Committee	19 Juneteenth	20 Cincy WFP Fundraiser
	21 Comms Committee	22 Social Committee	23	24	25 Electoral Committee	26	27 Cincinnati Pride
	28 Comms Committee	29 Social Committee	30	1	2 Electoral Committee	3 Northside Rock & Roll Carnival	4 Independence Day Northside Rock & Roll Carnival
	5 Comms Committee	6	7	8	9 M.L. 30+ Sapphic Singles Nite	10 M.L. 40+ Queer Speed Friending	11


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UPCOMING EVENTS

Cincinnati Pride | June 27th

You know what it is! Show your true colors at the Cincinnati Pride Parade & Festival! Our WFP Wolf Pack will be walking around the event handing out flyers. Keep an eye out for us, and feel free to say hi! The event goes from noon to 8. More info: [Click Here!](#)



Sapphic Singles Night: Late Bloomer Edition - for Sapphics 30+ | July 9th

Calling all single sapphics, 30 and older, in Cincinnati! Midwestern Lesbian is taking over Afterlife Bar for an evening of flirtation, drinks, games and community. Join them on July 9th from 7pm to 10pm for a Sapphic Singles Night: Late Bloomer Edition.

This event is designed to help anyone, 30 and older, in the single sapphic community find their next romance, friendship, business connection, or just a little fun. More info and ticket purchase: [Click Here!](#)



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Elder Queer Speed Friending: For Queer Adults 40 & Older | July 10th

Join Midwestern Lesbian for Elder Queer Speed Friending, an event designed for queer people 40 and older. An authentic, relaxed, and welcoming space where you can meet new people, have engaging conversations, and make new connections.

To sign up and for more info: [Click Here!](#)

Candidate Canvass | July 26th

Our Wolf Pack is about to release our endorsed candidates for the general election this November! As soon as the list drops, we're hitting the ground running to support our candidates' campaigns. As such, we'll be holding a candidate canvass on July 26th! Come join us to knock on doors and get the word out about our wonderful progressive candidates. No previous experience required, we'll hold a brief training before the canvass starts. Location and time TBD, but it will most likely take place in the afternoon. Mark your calendars! Sign up [here](#), and we'll send you a follow-up email with the event details once we have them nailed down. See you there!

Welcome Gathering | August 9th

Not a member of the Working Families Party yet? Have friends or family who might be interested in joining? Come and meet us at our Welcome Gathering! Here, you'll learn all about what we do with likeminded progressive individuals. We'll show you how you can help get progressives elected in Cincinnati, as well as what roles we offer in our Wolf Pack.

Want to conduct political research and work with candidates? Join our electoral committee. Want to table at events and connect with other progressive organizations in the city? Check out our social committee. Want to design political artwork, tackle social media, or develop lit like this newsletter? Then the communications committee is a good fit for you. Don't feel like joining a committee? There are other ways to volunteer!

Come and learn how to volunteer with us! [RSVP](#). Want to join the Pack right now? Click [here!](#)



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RECAP

2026 Hear America Listening Canvasses

So far in 2026, we've conducted several listening canvasses directed at targeted audiences. We're not door knocking to ask people if they'll do something for us or to give a pitch. Instead, we're asking everyday voters what's going on in their lives: what they're struggling with and what they want to see changed. We also held two canvasses to campaign for Bryan Hambley for the Ohio Secretary of State primary election.

Unfortunately, Bryan lost his election, but several other WFP-endorsed candidates won their elections in Ohio this year, such as Davida Russell, Charity Martin King, and Brian Poindexter. Here's what we've found out from our listening canvasses so far:

- Both the traditional Democratic core and disaffected liberal voters are looking for a new, progressive direction for America. Overall, they desire:
 - Universal healthcare
 - Fully funded public schools
 - Access to affordable housing
 - An end to foreign wars
 - Better public infrastructure and transportation in the US
- Unaffiliated and apathetic voters are scared and tired of division, and they are afraid of what's going on in the country. Many are desiring of more connection and community, and many feel that social media has divided and isolated the people. Those who didn't know much about politics were asked their position issue-by-issue, and the majority agreed overall with progressive solutions.
- Ultimately, when asked the question, "If you could change one thing about the city of Cincinnati that would make your life better what would it be?", the overwhelming majority of answers boiled down to "better access to public transportation." Other answers included free child care, more queer spaces, free parking, more affordable housing, and better rental conditions from landlords. Stay tuned for more opportunities to canvass with us in the future!



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RECAP

Our First Cincy WFP Fundraiser

As a grassroots political organization, we get our work done with the hard work of volunteers. But even volunteers can't get the work done without the right tools. In order to continue funding our efforts, we hosted our first pack-wide fundraiser at the home of one of our volunteers on June 20th, and it was a complete success! With a goal of \$3,000, we raised \$3,365 by our last measure, and that number is still going up! The event had food, drinks, games, music, and a raffle, and it even featured speeches from the following 2026 candidates:

- Caleb Price | Ohio House of Representatives District 30
- Karen Brownlee | Ohio House of Representatives District 28
- Laalitya Acharya | Ohio House of Representatives District 56
- Jayson Ameer Rasheed | Ohio House of Representatives District 45
- Tom Herner | Ohio House of Representatives District 37
- Katie Koehler Wagner | Ohio House of Representatives District 80
- Vanessa Enoch | Ohio House of Representatives District 8
- Jen Mazzuckelli | Ohio House of Representatives District 2



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RECAP

Our First Cincy WFP Fundraiser (cont'd.)



[Click here for the full photo album!](#)



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OP-ED

The Privatization of Your Children's Future

By Ali Pollard

If you've stumbled upon any political or social commentary online recently, you've probably read or heard the phrase "no war but class war," an anti-capitalist motto pointing out the disadvantages of our current economic system for the working class. This is also a response to white supremacists and their insistence that a race war is coming soon to your neighborhood. But we can't favor one over the other, as both are threats to working families. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the push to privatize education.

Privatizing public services is nothing new. In fact, it's been happening since ancient times. Whenever an individual has had the opportunity to profit from gatekeeping their goods or services while there's sufficient demand, humans have established some form of privatization, usually in conjunction with public goods and services. Fast forwarding to 1955, conservative economist Milton Friedman wrote his essay "[The Role of Government in Education](#)" where he advocated for 'school choice.' Friedman was passionate about the free market and limiting government to an enforcement entity that provides no services ([The Forge](#)). It will come as no shock, then, that racists in the South rallied behind the school choice idea when the Brown v. Board of Education ruling came down in 1954. Segregationists saw this as an opportunity to maintain segregation of educational institutions without breaking the law. Friedman himself acknowledged that "this possible use of [school choice/voucher programs] was a count against it" in a small footnote of his essay. It wasn't long until we saw voucher programs popping up in school districts around the country.

The use of the school choice movements and voucher programs is nothing new to Ohio; they've been here since at least 1995 with the creation of the Cleveland Pilot Project Scholarship Program which was championed by then-Republican Governor George Voinovich. Voinovich saw a decrease in school enrollments and proposed the program to help struggling school districts and students. At least, that's what he said. Voinovich—a devout Catholic—with Ohio's Catholic bishops "embarked on an effort to start up a voucher program in which state money would flow to Catholic schools in the form of vouchers." ([The Ohio Newsroom](#)) The constitutionality was questionable, but the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, ruled that Ohio's voucher program did not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment as long as parents using the program were allowed to choose among a range of secular and religious schools. Conservative and moderate justices comprised the majority opinion.

I spoke with Michelle Dunn, a parent to a public school student and a member of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT) about the school choice movements and voucher programs and whether they benefit Ohio school children. She had a very simple answer: whenever the idea of implementing a voucher program was put before voters, they have been rejected. [According to Ballotpedia](#), since 1970, 22 state-wide ballot measures have been put before voters, with 20 of them failing to be approved. These school choice policies include not only vouchers, but also tax credits, education savings accounts (ESAs), and charter schools. The two ballot measures that did pass were in regards to charter schools.



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OP-ED

The Privatization of Your Children's Future continued...

While supporters of school choice and voucher programs like to crow about the popularity and high demand for them, there's very little evidence that these programs actually benefit students. The high demand comes from the near-universal accessibility to the voucher programs as well as fear about the effectiveness of public schools that are frequently demonized by conservative legislators. Of course, parents are going to take advantage of the voucher program when the propaganda says public schools are failing students. This results in fewer students going to public schools which also costs those school districts money. Instead, those tax dollars are diverted to private entities with little to no accountability. As of 2025, over \$1 billion has gone to Ohio's voucher programs while at the same time the Ohio Speaker of the House, Matt Huffman, stated, "Sorry, there's not enough money to [increase the budget]. We're going to have to pull back on public school funding. There's simply not enough money to go around" ([The Ohio Newsroom](#)).

Dunn pointed out that Republicans abandoned the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in 2025—which used an updated funding formula that reflected the current economy better—and instead returned to funding levels from a few years prior. This disproportionately affects urban school districts like Cincinnati. Our public school districts lean a lot on the state to provide funds, and on average, they used to get 35% of their budget from the state. Now, they only receive 25%. The state looks at property values for the current funding formula, which have skyrocketed the last couple years. That sounds good, right? Higher property values means higher property taxes, so more money for schools! Unfortunately, this is not the case, not with all the tax abatements which allow developers to exempt themselves from paying local property taxes and lead to the overvaluation of other properties ([Cincinnati.com/Opinion](#)). With no restrictions on abatements, Cincinnati schools are now receiving less, and this is why we saw many school levies on the May 5th ballots: school districts are desperate to make up for the lack of funding.

So, public school districts are facing budget deficits with many projected to go bankrupt by 2029. But what about kids that use the voucher programs to go to a private or charter school? Results are mixed. In general, researchers have found that short-term academic achievements like math and reading test scores are lower, but these students are more likely to graduate and go to college compared with their public school counterparts. However, students aren't even taking the same tests, and when scores were compared across multiple counties, the results remained mixed. Some did better, and others did worse. This is often a result of each private school setting their own standards and not being held to the same standards as other private schools or the public school system. Who are the students that are benefitting from the voucher programs? The original reason for the Cleveland Pilot Project Scholarship Program was to help "disadvantaged students in this one city where they could leave their struggling public school and get into a Catholic school in Cleveland." ([The Ohio Newsroom](#)). Voucher programs never stay concentrated in one place for one class of people. There's always been a drive to expand them until they reach the near-universal availability that we've had the past two years. Demand goes up exponentially, but surprisingly, enrollments in private schools didn't. It turns out a large portion now goes to affluent families who were already paying for their children to go to private schools. This affects public schools twofold. Firstly, they



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OP-ED

The Privatization of Your Children's Future continued...

lose budget funding to a vouchered student who was never in the public school system in the first place. Secondly, something else changes once vouchers go universal: the demographics of private school enrollees. Voucher programs start out assisting minority students predominantly; however, once they go universal, enrollment in private schools remains largely flat, and most voucher recipients are not low-income and are disproportionately white ([neaToday](#), [The Ohio Newsroom](#)).

To summarize, private corporations and affluent, mostly white families benefit the most from the 'school choice' movements. There's those pesky segregationists again! And if you don't think this is by design, I'd like to point out the reactions of southern states after the Supreme Court ruling in *Louisiana v. Callais*. I've learned that almost everything championed by Republican legislators has an undercurrent of racism running through it. And I haven't even mentioned how these voucher programs allow private institutions to use tax payer money to discriminate against students with disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, religion, and academic achievements ([neaToday](#)).

The voucher programs are just one issue facing education today. Even without the various school choice programs, as many social media videos declare (borrowing from *The Offspring*), "The kids are not alright." The No Child Left Behind program and its successor the Every Student Succeeds Act have been incredibly ineffective at fairly funding schools across the U.S. and maintaining math and reading scores. Students are now faced with a lot of standardized testing which affects school funding and teachers' jobs, and the testing ultimately encourages students to learn how to take tests instead of how to think critically. Not to mention, crucial subjects that are not tested by the state are being completely cut from curriculums (bye-bye Social Studies!). Who benefits the most from these policies? Private corporations, of course! Besides cronies of the Bush administration and companies like Pearson for testing, the "Big 3" educational publishers are the ones reaping the benefits: McGraw-Hill Education, Houghton-Mifflin, and Harcourt General. Assessment/data companies like NCS Pearson and PowerSchool are also doing very well for themselves at the expense of students. It's estimated that the testing industry made around \$11.9 billion from 2006-2013 ([EdWeek.org](#)).

Nowadays, every child has a ChromeBook but not necessarily the monitoring software to prevent them from accessing harmful sites. Accessibility has never been higher, and it was largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but all these new tools have introduced new problems that outweigh the benefits they're supposed to provide. Neuroscientist Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath spoke before the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee on January 15, 2026 about the harms that digital technology has brought to kids' cognitive development. Gen Z is the "first generation in modern history to underperform [compared to previous generations] on basically every cognitive measure[, f]rom basic attention, memory, literacy, numeracy, executive function, and general IQ" ([C-SPAN](#)). The reason seems to be the screen usage. Even some Republican lawmakers believe cell phone usage should be limited in schools. And let's not forget the other elephant in the room: AI. The push to use AI tools for tasks such as monitoring and assessing students



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OP-ED

The Privatization of Your Children's Future continued...

is as much a problem as the students using ChatGPT to do their homework for them.

The alarming reliance on AI and other digital tools has taken away a lot of the authority of teachers—the people who have the actual training in education. This is where unions that protect the rights of teachers are so important. CFT's union contract demands that teachers be on an AI committee to address these new issues facing students and staff, one of the first in the nation to do this. We need elected leaders who respect the roles of educators and public schools. Someone like Vivek Ramaswamy as governor of Ohio would ruin public education and send all public funds to private institutions without any guardrails. And while we'll certainly feel the effects, our children will bear the brunt of such decisions.

I truly feel sorry for students these days. They're living during a time of immense technological advancement which has achieved many great things, but we also don't fully understand the consequences of the uninhibited use of such technologies. There isn't a simple fix for these issues, and I'm certainly not the expert, but I believe less funding should be diverted from public schools while total gross funding needs to keep up with inflation. Other countries have faced issues similar to what we're seeing in the U.S., so we should study and adopt their solutions in a way that works for us. We as voters need to recognize the impetus behind privatizing public goods and services, especially when little accountability is stipulated before checks are signed. Corporations care very little about breaking the social contract of any community, and they salivate at the thought of funneling money out of public services into a space that privatizes and profits. This playbook is nothing new, and we've seen it in action against almost every government program or agency, including but not limited to the USPS, the IRS, the VA, the ACA, Medicare, and Social Security (side note: the Republicans are absolutely gutting Social Security next if they win a majority in the midterms this year).

I'll leave you with the following... It feels trite to say "children are the future," and we must take steps to safeguard their future while preparing them to face the challenges ahead, but the sentiment is no less true. We've done a poor job so far, but luckily, there are many young people who recognize the issues facing them and are much more engaged than previous generations, certainly more than I was at their age. I refuse to fall into the tired trap of older generations bemoaning the uselessness of younger generations. I may be naive, but I think the kids will be alright as long as we make the right choices moving forward.



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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

NatiDems

By Chad Thomas and Alex Bauman

NatiDems is a group dedicated to organizing black Democrats in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. Their group was founded by Donald Washington--an entrepreneur and children's case manager, and Raffel Prophett--a retired Cincinnati Fire Department District Fire Chief and retired Army Reserves Lieutenant Colonel. Donald currently serves as coordinator of the organization.

NatiDems was birthed from the movement of the Cincinnati Precinct Project (CPP), a group that formed last year in an effort to organize and recruit progressives to run for Precinct Executive (PE) positions within the Democratic Party. In response to learning of the vast amount of vacancies in PE positions across the county and realizing that the majority of those vacancies are in predominantly black neighborhoods, Donald and Raffel--both members of the CPP--decided to direct their efforts to combat those vacancies and galvanize the representation of the black population in Hamilton County and Cincinnati. Seeing that neighborhoods such as Winton Terrace, Avondale, and Evanston were severely lacking in the leadership they rightly deserved, they set about "giving a voice to the voiceless."

NatiDems, in collaboration with CPP and WFP, was incredibly successful in strengthening that black leadership across the county. In fact, at the recent Hamilton County Democratic Party reorganization meeting, two members of NatiDems were elected to vice chair positions within the executive leadership structure! Raffel Prophett and Theresa Harper Kolodzik now sit on the executive council of the county Dem party, and they're already working to increase voter outreach and reform the party from the inside.

We sat down with Donald Washington--who grew up in OTR and served a tour in Iraq with the US Air Force--and he told us that NatiDems' next goal is to further strengthen their alliances with CPP and WFP in order to win some seats at the upcoming Cincinnati Democratic Committee (CDC) reorganization meeting. The CDC is responsible for endorsing City Council/Board of Education Dem candidates within the city, allocating city party funds, and steering the direction of the party within Cincinnati, so holding seats in this committee would be huge for progressives, working people, and the black community. And once the CDC reorganization meeting is over, NatiDems' next goal after that is to create a black caucus for Hamilton County.

To get involved with NatiDems, you must have aligned views and agendas with the group, and you must be black. Washington says that doesn't mean they don't want to work with non-black allies; it just means that the group is dedicated to give black citizens the responsibility to do something for their community in partnership with other progressives (such as those in CPP and WFP). You can find out more about NatiDems at natidems.org.



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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Midwestern Lesbian

By Alex Bauman

Midwestern Lesbian is a community resource for events, community, and more. They provide events for the queer community and allies every week in the Cincinnati area. They also run a webpage called [Cincy Gay Agenda](#) which features a weekly calendar of all the LGBTQ+ events in the Cincinnati area. Their goal is to help build queer community in the Midwest through event promotion. They've even expanded their presence Northeast with the conception of [Columbus Gay Agenda](#)! They plan to continue expanding throughout the Midwest, as queer people are everywhere and need community.

Midwestern Lesbian was founded by Kelsey Ference (she/they). She was working on the marketing team at Rhinegeist Brewery and realized there was lacking a calendar for all queer events in Cincinnati. As she was already making weekly calendars for her job, she decided to create a community organization out of it. Kelsey helped both Rhinegeist and Hard Rock Casino put on their own drag and queer events, and now, five years later, Kelsey and her partner Caitlin create events every week for the LGBTQ+ community, with an emphasis on the sapphic community.

Kelsey has this to say about the state of queer spaces in Cincinnati and how Midwestern Lesbian fits into that:

"Having grown up in the Cincinnati area my entire life, I see everything in the city constantly changing. In just the last five years, Cincinnati looks and feels different. Queer spaces have closed and we as a community have had to adapt. As a lesbian, I have seen a majority of the lesbian spaces around the country closing and leaving sapphics without without a space to go to. Through Midwestern Lesbian, we've adapted to what our community wants to see. Instead of having a brick and mortar space, we pop up in different places every week. This allows us to continue to provide what our community needs, while also supporting local businesses that love our community and want to see it thrive. I believe that Midwestern Lesbian is successful because we don't have the cost of what it takes to have a queer bar, shop or community space. We can provide community, while also supporting local businesses that have the space to host us."

Kelsey wants readers to know that creating a community resource, group, club, etc. is a lot easier than one might think. If you see a need for something, go out and create it. Work with your friends and meet up at a park, coffee shop, or bar and make it happen! Or maybe it's already out there, and you just need to stumble upon it. Midwestern Lesbian started as a solution to a community need and has since grown larger than Kelsey could have ever imagined. She leaves readers with a final thought: Like they say in the cinematic masterpiece Robots, "See a need, fill a need." :)

You can find all of Midwestern Lesbian's events at the following:

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[Facebook](#)

[Website](#)



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