

# University of Akron Poll Report: Party Control in the 2022 Election

## Executive Summary

Based on the 2022 University of Akron Poll, this report covers Ohioan's views on party control of the federal and state government. Key findings include:

- A majority of Ohioans favor Republicans taking control of the federal government from the Democrats.
- A majority of Ohioans favor Republicans continuing to control Ohio state government over the Democrats.
- The Republican advantages in party control of governments are consistent with the “mid-term slump,” when the party that controls the White House loses contests in the mid-term election.
- Large majorities of Ohioans say the country and the state of Ohio are on the “wrong track.” These perceptions could alter voters’ view of party control in the 2022 mid-term election.
- A large majority of Ohioans who favor continued Democratic control of the federal government say it is because the Democrats have “better ideas and policies” than the Republicans.
- Nearly a majority of Ohioans who favor Republicans taking control of the federal government say it is because the Democrats have “done a poor job and deserve to be replaced.”
- A majority of Ohioans who favor continued Republican control of Ohio state government say it is because Republicans have “better ideas and policies” than the Democrats.
- A majority of Ohioans who favor Democrats taking control of Ohio state government say it is because Democrats have “better ideas and policies” than the Republicans.
- In the contest for the **Republican nominee for U.S. Senate**, Josh Mandel and Mike Gibbons are tied for the lead, each with about one-fifth of likely Republican primary voters; one-third are undecided.
- In the contest for the **Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate**, Tim Ryan leads the field with two-fifths of likely Democratic primary voters; one-third are undecided.
- In the contest for the **Republican nominee for Ohio Governor**, Mike DeWine leads the field with one-half of likely Republican primary voters; one-sixth are undecided.

- In the contest for the **Democratic nominee for Ohio Governor**, Nan Whaley narrowly leads John Cranley, each with about one-fifth of likely Democratic voters; more than one-half are undecided.

**The Survey:** The 2022 University of Akron Poll was conducted by the Center for Marketing and Opinion Research for the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at The University of Akron. It was a random sample of 1,550 Ohio eligible voters conducted online between February 17 and March 15, 2022, with a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

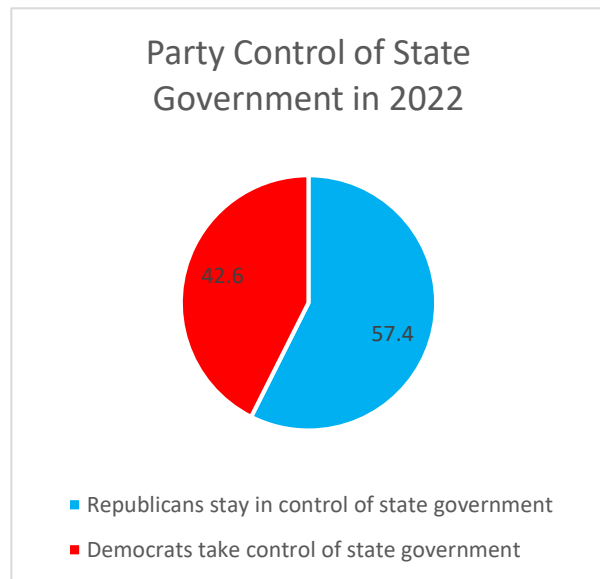
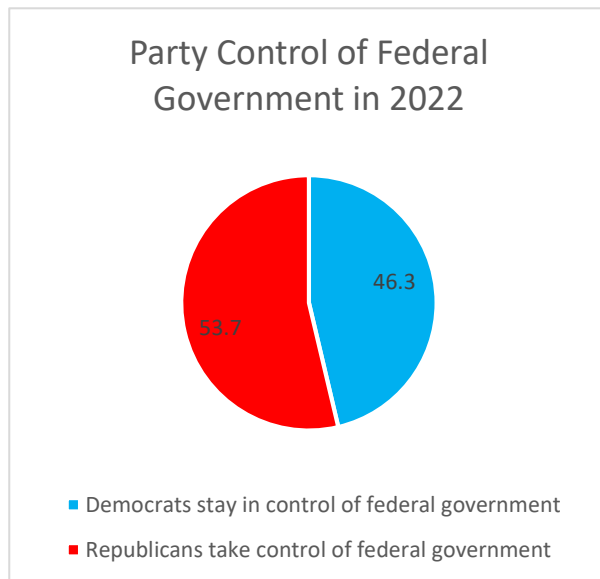
### Party Control of Federal and State Government

A majority (53.7 percent) of Ohioans favored Republicans taking control of the federal government, when asked:

*The Democrats control the federal government. This year, would you like to see the Democrats continue to control the federal government or would you like to see the Republicans take control of the federal government for a change?*

At the same time, a larger majority (57.4 percent) of Ohioans favored continued Republican control of the state government, when asked:

*The Republicans control Ohio state government. This year, would you like to see the Republicans continue to control Ohio state government or would you like to see the Democrats take control of Ohio state government for a change?*



These patterns are consistent with a “mid-term slump,” where the party that controls the White House lose contests in the following mid-term election. Thus, because Democrat Joe Biden was elected president in 2020, these figures confirm the likelihood that 2022 may be a good year for Republican candidates in Ohio.

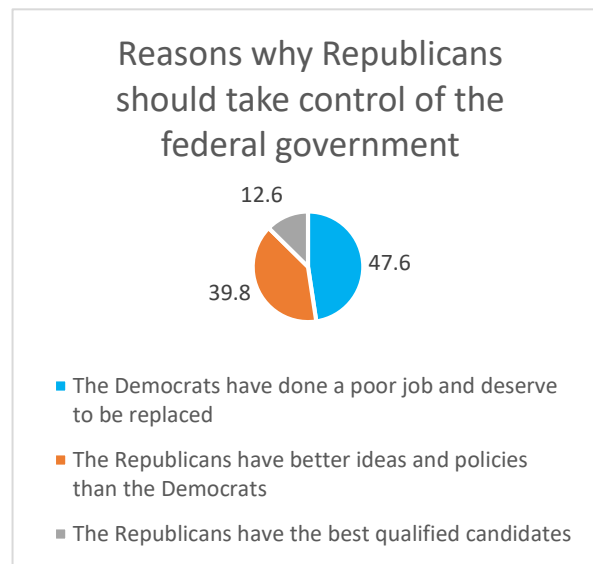
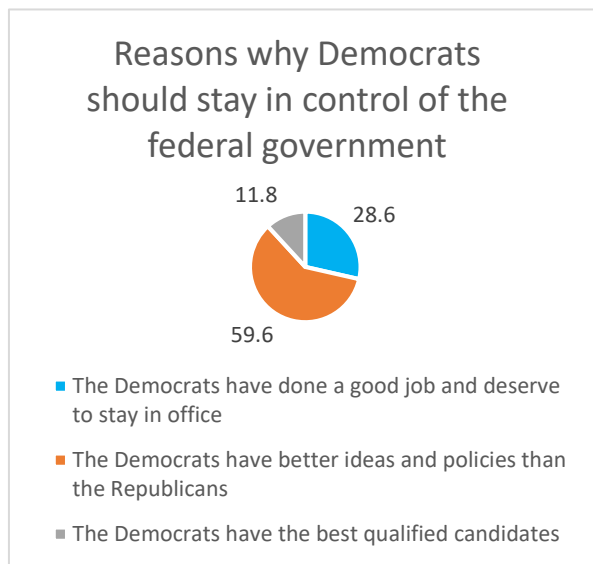
Just how good a Republican year 2022 might be is still to be determined and public views on whether the country or the state are on the “right track” or “wrong track” could be a factor. Overall, 31 percent of Ohioans say the United States is on the “right track” and 69 percent said it is on the “wrong track.” Meanwhile, 52 percent of Ohioans say Ohio is on the “right track” and 47 percent said it is on the “wrong track.”

However, 43 percent of Ohioans who favor continued Republican control of state government say Ohio is on the “wrong track” and 12 percent of Ohioans who favor Republican control of the federal government say the United States is on the “right track.” These figures are sufficient to improve Democratic fortunes in close state-wide contests in Ohio.

### Reasons for Party Control

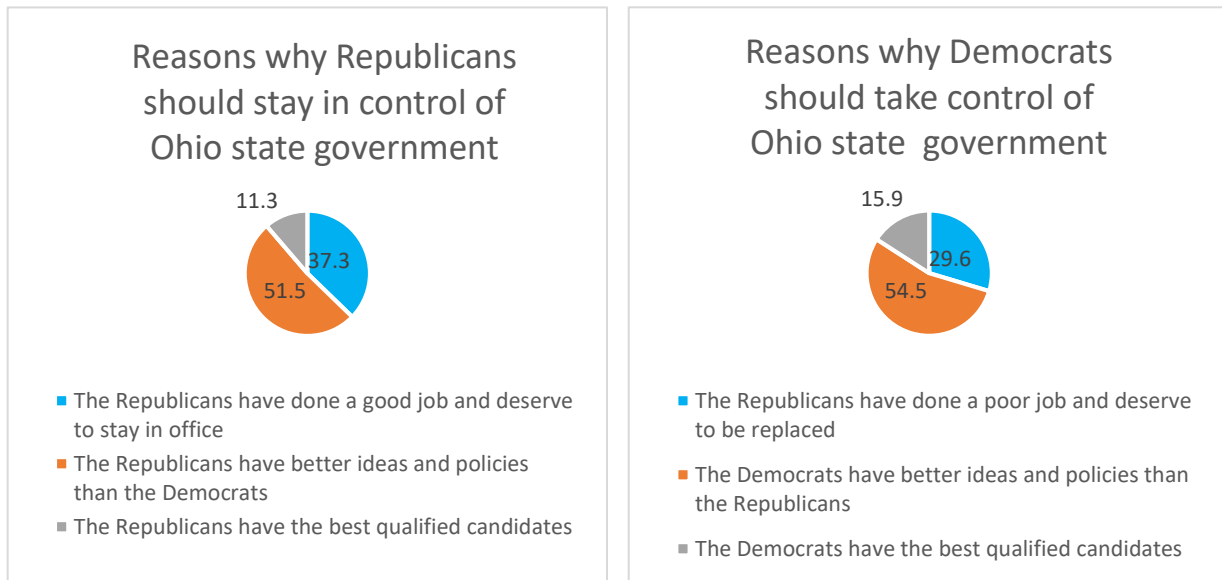
On the one hand, three-fifths (59.6 percent) of Ohioans who favor continued Democratic control of the federal government say it is because Democrats have better “ideas and policies” than Republicans, while more than one-quarter (28.6 percent) say it is because Democrats have done “a good job and deserve to stay in office.” Just one-eighth (11.8 percent) say it is because Democrats have “the best qualified candidates.”

On the other hand, almost one-half (47.6 percent) of Ohioans who favor Republicans taking control of the federal government said it is because the Democrats have “done a poor job and deserved to be replaced,” while two-fifths (39.8 percent) say it is because Republicans have “better ideas and policies” than the Democrats. Just one-eighth (12.8 percent) say it is because the Republicans have “the best qualified candidates.”



Meanwhile, one half (51.5 percent) of Ohioans who favor Republicans staying in control of Ohio state government say it is because Republicans have “better ideas and policies” than the Democrats, while more than one-third (37.3 percent) say that the Republicans have “done a good job and deserve to stay in office.” Just one-eighth (11.3 percent) say it is because the Republicans have “the best qualified candidates.”

At the same time, more than one-half (54.5 percent) of Ohioans who favor the Democrats taking control of Ohio state government say it is because Democrats have “better ideas and policies than the Republicans,” while three-tenths (29.6 percent) say it is because Republicans have done “a poor job and deserve to be replaced.” Just one-sixth (15.9 percent) say it is because Democrats have “the best qualified candidates.”



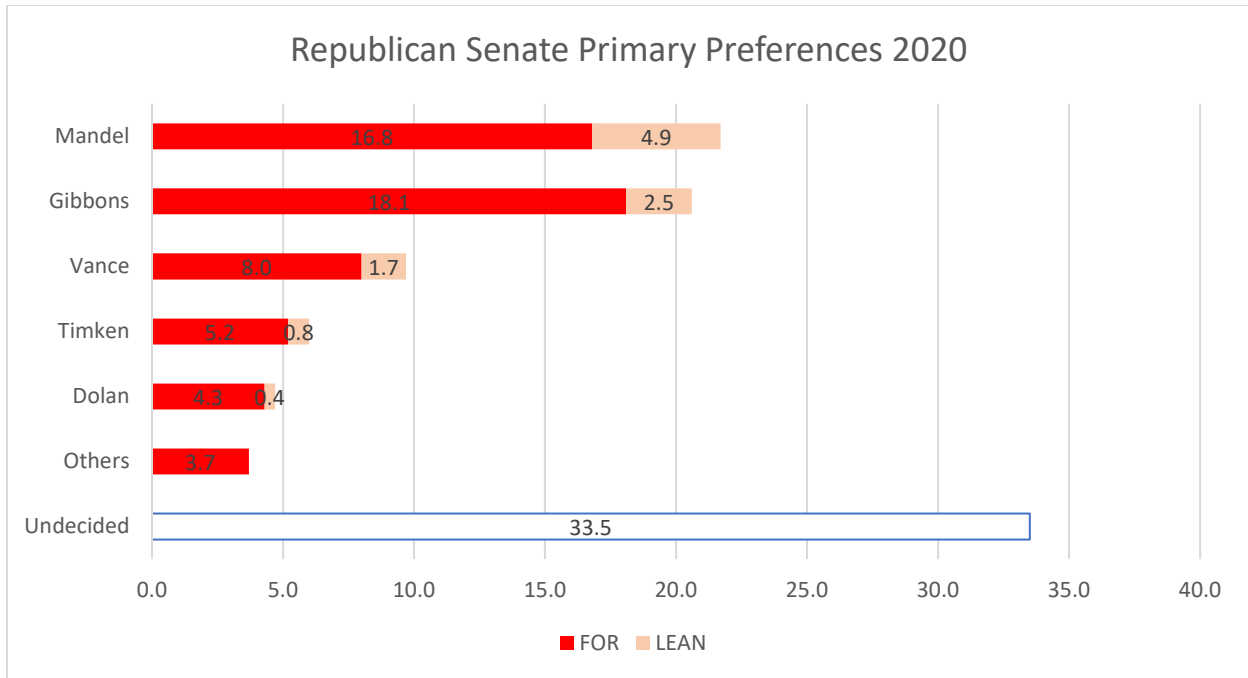
### Primary Preferences

It is not surprising that relatively few Ohioans say the quality of candidates is a factor in party control of governments: the candidates for the 2022 U.S. Senate and Ohio Governor elections have not yet chosen, pending the upcoming primary election, scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

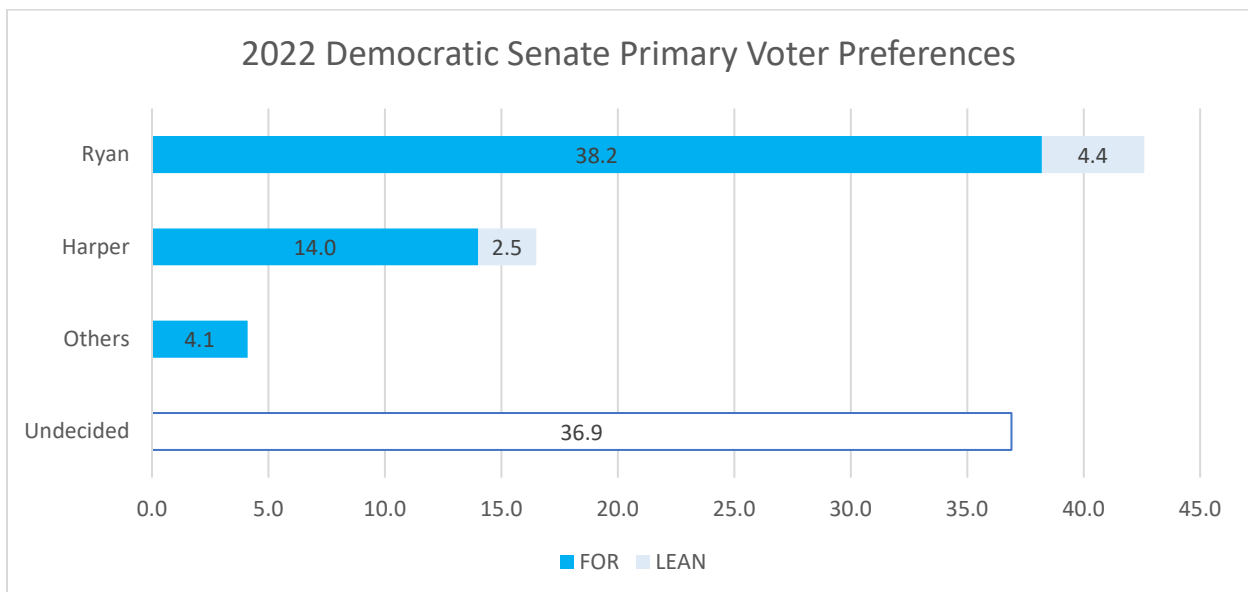
*Nominees for U.S. Senate.* The race for the U.S. Senate seat held by retiring Republican Rob Portman will be crucial for party control of the federal government, and numerous candidates are running for the Republican nomination.

Six weeks before the scheduled May 3<sup>rd</sup> primary, former State Treasurer Josh Mandel is tied with businessman Mike Gibbons for the lead, with about one-fifth of the preferences of likely Republican primary voters. If just firm preference “for” the candidates are counted, Gibbons leads Mandel 18.1 to 16.8 percent; if undecided votes who lean toward the candidates are included, Mandel leads Gibbons 21.7 to 20.6 percent.

Venture capitalist and author J. D. Vance is in third place (9.7 percent), followed by former Ohio Republican Party Chair Jane Timken (6.0 percent), and Ohio State Representative Matt Dolan (4.7 percent; all these figures include “for” and “lean” preferences). Other candidates have 3.7 percent, while 33.5 percent of likely Republican primary voters are fully undecided.

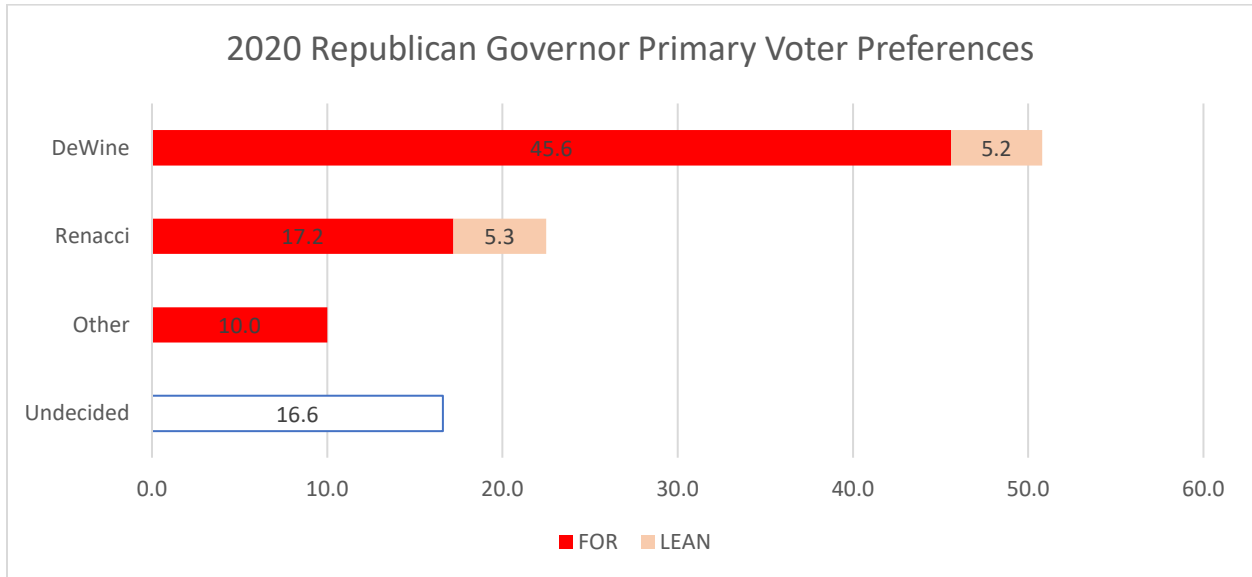


In the race for the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate, U.S. Congressman Tim Ryan leads attorney Morgan Harper, 42.6 to 16.5 percent (including “for” and “lean” preferences). Other candidates have 4.1 percent, while 36.9 percent of likely Democratic primary voters are fully undecided.



*Ohio Governor:* Incumbent Ohio Governor Mike DeWine is seeking a second term in 2020, and the governor’s office is central to the control of Ohio state government.

Six weeks before the schedule primary, DeWine leads former U.S. Congressman Jim Renacci, 50.8 to 22.5 percent (including “for” and “lean” preferences). Other candidates have 10 percent, while 16.6 percent of likely Republican primary voters are fully undecided.



In the race for the Democratic nomination for governor, former Dayton mayor Nan Whaley leads former Cincinnati mayor John Cranley, 22.7 to 18.1 percent (including “for” and “lean” preferences). Other candidates have 5.6 percent, while 53.8 percent of likely Democratic primary voters are fully undecided.

