



# VOTER REPORT

## Candidates Respond to Questions Impacting Local Businesses

**May 5, 2026: Primary Election | Early Voting begins April 7th**

A complete list (and ballot text) can be found at [HancockBoardofElections.com](http://HancockBoardofElections.com).

The Findlay-Hancock County Chamber of Commerce advisory board invited the following candidates running for **STATE SENATOR (1st District)** to respond to a questionnaire in order for you, the business community, to vote pro-business. Learn why the candidates chose to run and their top priorities should they be elected. These candidates were asked to respond, up to 175 words, to each question below.

### State Senator (1<sup>st</sup> District)

**Q. What motivated you to seek a seat in the State Senate, and what perspectives would you bring to state-level policy discussions?**



**James M. Hoops:** I have had the opportunity and honor to serve in the Ohio House for the 81st House District. It has been my goal to take the values from Northwest Ohio down to Columbus and to be available to help my constituents if issues come up. I want to continue that service. I want to continue to create an atmosphere in Ohio that makes the state a business friendly state and a place where individuals will want to stay or migrate to Ohio because it is a great place to raise a family.



**Craig S. Riedel:** I am running for State Senate to build on the strong conservative leadership of our current senator, President Rob McColley. My background is primarily in the private sector, having spent more than 25 years in the steel industry. I previously served as a member of the Ohio House of Representatives, where I fought for pro-business policies including tax cuts and regulatory reform, along with education policies focused on career readiness. I stood up to House leadership when they advanced policies that I knew would hurt Northwest Ohio, including the proposed elimination of the small business income deduction, a gas tax increase, and the corrupt House Bill 6, which increased energy costs on millions of Ohioans. As our next

Senator, I will push to eliminate Ohio's income tax, fix our broken property tax system, and ensure that Ohio is among the best states in the nation in which to do business.

**Q. Which statewide issues do you consider most important, and how would you advocate for solutions that benefit our region?**



**James M. Hoops:** **Reforming property taxes** is the top priority for Ohio. The legislature passed 5 bills, so far, to eliminate large spikes in property taxes that have occurred in the past 5 years. I was involved with working on those bills. However, we are not done yet. We do not want anyone to lose their home due to property taxes. And, as we continue to reform, we need to look at the spending side at every level of government asking the question “Is there a more efficient way to do things?” **Housing** Continue to find ways to make building and buying homes more affordable. **Energy** Ohio needs more baseload power. We passed HB 15 as a start. We need to utilize the resource we have under our state (natural gas) when it comes to generating more energy. **Education** Supporting public education and school choice are two concepts that are very important if we want Ohio to continue growing our workforce. I support competition but there must be a level playing field.



**Craig S. Riedel:** Affordability is a major issue confronting families and it’s something I plan to prioritize as a senator. Ensuring people can keep more of their hard-earned money is critical, which is why I support eliminating Ohio’s income tax. Furthermore, our current property tax system is making it unaffordable for those on fixed incomes to stay in their home. Another major challenge is energy costs. I will work to unleash Ohio’s energy potential by supporting initiatives to expand natural gas production. When it comes to issues such as data centers, I believe we need to hold them accountable and ensure that they are shouldering the costs of increased energy and utility needs, instead of passing those costs on to residents.

**Q. How will you collaborate with local governments and business leaders to ensure the needs of our community are represented at the state level?**



**James M. Hoops:** I will take the time to meet with local officials and businesses. I have already met with every township in Hancock County and most of the villages. I have also sat down with many of the city officials and asked them about issues that I need to be aware of. I also became a member of the Chamber and have tried to attend many of the events sponsored by the Chamber. One event I enjoy is “Fresh Brew” which gives me an opportunity to find out what groups are talking about in a very concise process. I have been attending the monthly Ag breakfast, sponsored by the Hancock County Extension Office, which gives me an opportunity to find out more about the Ag industry in Hancock County. If elected, I will continue to attend and reach out to local governments, businesses, and organizations to listen and learn.



**Craig S. Riedel:** I believe our local communities are what make Northwest Ohio such a special place. As a state representative, I always worked alongside county, municipal, and township leaders on issues that affected my district. I relied on the perspectives of business owners -- large and small -- as I made tough votes in the Ohio House. I sponsored the law that ensured local governments had a say on large-scale wind and solar projects. As Senator, I will work hard to preserve local control while ensuring strong funding for vital local services. Whenever possible, we must ensure that local communities are empowered and that Columbus is not forcing unwanted decisions on us. Furthermore, fixing our property tax system and ensuring adequate funding for education, law enforcement, and other services is one of the major priorities of the General Assembly.

**Q. What strategies will you use to maintain open communication with constituents and ensure their voices are heard in the legislative process?**



**James M. Hoops:** I will continue to make myself available and I plan to offer quarterly meetings in Hancock County where constituents will be able to attend and let me know what is on their minds. Plus I will always be a phone call away and my Columbus office will always be available to help with constituent issues just like I currently do as a State Representative of the 81st House District.



**Craig S. Riedel:** Anyone who knows me knows how present I am in the communities across the 1st Senate District. I will always be working across the district to make as much outreach as possible. Ohio Senators have two full-time staff members. I plan on ensuring they are well trained to assist residents who need assistance or wish to voice their perspective. Furthermore, I plan to send out regular communications to residents so that they are aware of the work being done on their behalf in Columbus.

**Q. How would you approach key areas such as economic development, energy costs, workforce readiness, and state budget decisions?**



**James M. Hoops:** Do my homework. Study the issue. Ask questions. Listen to people. I am not an expert on everything but I know how to work with people who are experts on certain subjects to solve an issue when it comes up. And when I say listen to people I mean not only listen to people in Columbus but also the constituents who live in Hancock County and the 1st Senate District. I want to know how the decisions made in Columbus affect the people in the 1st Senate District.



**Craig S. Riedel:** I believe Ohio's economy will do best when our state government ensures a competitive tax and regulatory environment. Eliminating wasteful government spending and focusing resources on infrastructure and workforce will attract economic development. Ohio needs to be a national leader in unleashing energy production and eliminating regulations in the energy sector. We cannot allow the left to implement an agenda that inhibits energy production. Ohio's education system needs adequate funding and reform to ensure a continued focus on career readiness. Not every student needs a four year degree to be successful. We must invest in joint vocational schools, certificate programming, and other initiatives that enable kids to be ready for the workforce out of high school. In terms of state budget decisions, I will be a tireless advocate for resources to come back to Ohio's 1st Senate District. Our region is a vital part of our state's economy and is home to diverse industries. I will work to bring local tax dollars back to our district to meet local needs.

## The Chamber Encourages You to Review the Entire Ballot

Please be informed and carefully review all of the issues on the May 5 ballot for Hancock County.

A complete list can be found at [HancockBoardofElections.com](http://HancockBoardofElections.com).

<b>Riverdale LSD</b>	Renewal 1% Income Tax for 3 years for the purpose of current expenses
<b>Bluffton Public Library</b>	Additional 1 Mill for 10 years for the purpose of current expenses
<b>Mt. Blanchard Village</b>	Additional 5 mills, 5 years Current expenses
<b>Allen Township (Unincorporated Area)</b>	Zoning Issue
<b>Amanda Township</b>	Renewal 1.5 mills, 5 years for Fire Protection
<b>Delaware Township</b>	Renewal 2.5 mills, 5 years for Fire Protection
<b>Union Township</b>	Bond Issue 1.0 Mill for 15 years for the purpose of constructing, furnishing and equipping a new Township garage and clearing, improving and equipping its site
<b>Crooked Can – Sales</b>	Local Option Question 1 on-premise sales of beer, wine and mixed beverages, and spirituous liquor, an applicant for a A-1A liquor permit
<b>Crooked Can – Sunday Sales</b>	Local Option Question 2 on-premise Sunday sales of wine and mixed beverages, and spirituous liquor, an applicant for a D-6 liquor permit