

THE STARK TRUTH

Because democracy doesn't run itself, and neither does the truth.

WEEK OF APRIL 30, 2026 · VOL. 2026 · ISSUE 5 · STARK COUNTY, OHIO

Stay loud, stay kind, stay indivisible. Stay engaged.

FROM YOUR ADMINS · STATE OF THE RESISTANCE

Good morning, Stark County. Today is May Day. The rally starts at 4:30. That alone makes this worth your time. But there is more this week. The Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act. The Iran war is in its tenth week with no deal in sight. Ohio's primary is five days away. And Stark Indivisible is making changes that we believe make us stronger and more focused.

Read the steering committee section before you close this email. It matters.

Your Stark Indivisible Steering Committee

THIS WEEK'S ASKS: DO THESE THINGS

► **MAY DAY RALLY: TODAY, Friday May 1, 4:30 PM**

Central Plaza North, Canton. No Work. No School. No Shopping. Be there.

► **VOTE: MAY 5 PRIMARY, EARLY VOTING IS OPEN NOW**

Stark County Board of Elections · 3525 Regent Ave NE, Canton

Sat. May 2: 8 a.m.–4 p.m. · Sun. May 3: 1–5 p.m. · Election Day May 5: 6:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m.

► **AMY ACTON IN CANTON: Friday, May 22, 6:05 PM**

Canton Civic Center · 1101 Market Ave. N. · Free and open to the public. Details below.

► **JOIN THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

Stark Indivisible is restructuring. We are looking for dedicated people. Apply:

forms.gle/WcqVoz3zan2Frmsz7

► **DONATE TO STARK INDIVISIBLE**

secure.actblue.com/donate/indivisibleesc1374328387

Iran: week ten, a stalemate, and prices still climbing

The U.S.-Iran war enters its tenth week. A ceasefire is technically in place, but the Strait of Hormuz remains effectively closed and no deal is close. Iran offered last week to reopen the strait if the U.S. lifts its naval blockade and agrees to end the war, with nuclear talks deferred to a later stage. Secretary Rubio rejected the offer publicly. Trump canceled a planned meeting in Pakistan, then said Iran had sent a "much better" offer without saying what was in it. All talks run through Pakistani mediators. No direct negotiations have occurred.

An Iranian parliamentary official declared this week that Iran "will never relinquish its control over the Strait of Hormuz." U.S. costs for the war now exceed \$25 billion. The European Commission estimates the shipping blockade costs the EU roughly \$600 million per day. Gas prices in Ohio are up more than one-third since the war began. Fertilizer costs are up as much as 50% nationally, in the middle of planting season.

Why it should matter to you: The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland reported this week that Ohio businesses name the Iran war and tariffs as their top economic headwinds. The Strait of Hormuz is 6,500 miles away. Its effects are at your pump, your pharmacy, and your grocery checkout. This is a war started without a congressional vote and prosecuted without an exit plan. The 60-day War Powers clock is running. Call your members of Congress and tell them to vote on it.

The Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act

In a 6-3 ruling Wednesday, the Supreme Court dismantled Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, the provision that protected minority voting rights for over 40 years. The case was *Callais v. Louisiana*. Justice Alito wrote for the majority that Section 2 now requires proof of intentional racial discrimination. That standard is nearly impossible to meet in court. Congress had specifically written the law to prohibit maps with discriminatory effects regardless of intent, after the Court imposed an intent standard in 1980, and Congress overrode that ruling at the time. The Court has now reinstated it anyway.

In dissent, Justice Kagan said the decision "eviscerate[s] the law." Harvard Law professor Nicholas Stephanopoulos, who filed a brief defending the VRA, said it means "states can freely dismantle minority-opportunity districts as long as they make clear they're doing so for partisan or other political reasons." Ohio is among the states where Republicans are expected to pursue redistricting to eliminate majority-minority districts.

Why it should matter to you: Ohio is named in legal analysis as a state where redistricting will now be pursued. Ohio Supreme Court races are on the May 5 ballot. Republicans hold a 4-3 majority on that court. Those justices decide whether Ohio challenges to voting maps, abortion restrictions, and gerrymandering survive in state courts. Tuesday's vote is directly connected to Wednesday's ruling.

Tariffs: Ohio families paid \$1,336 last year. The next round just started.

One year after "Liberation Day," the bill is in. Sherrod Brown, running for U.S. Senate this fall, estimates the Trump tariffs cost Ohio \$6.5 billion and that the average Ohio family paid \$1,336 over the past year. On April 2, Trump announced a new round of tariffs up to 100% on name-brand pharmaceuticals. The 10% universal baseline tariff remains through at least July 2026, with threats to raise it to 15%. Major banks are now projecting elevated recession risk. Members of the Trump administration have reportedly acknowledged parts of the economy are already in contraction.

Why it should matter to you: This is not a number on a policy paper. It is your prescription copay, your grocery bill, and the price on the shelf at every store you walk into. Stark County families are absorbing this every week. The May 5 Senate primary sets who will be on the November ballot fighting to change it.

 OHIO STATE WATCH

Five days to the primary: here is what is on your ballot

Ohio's May 5 primary is one of the most consequential in years. Between term limits and a Senate vacancy, Ohioans will choose nominees for governor, U.S. Senate, attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer, and two Ohio Supreme Court seats.


Governor: Democrat Amy Acton and running mate David Pepper are running unopposed and will be on the November ballot regardless of Tuesday's result. Acton is the former Ohio Director of Health who guided the state through the early months of COVID-19. She is coming to Canton on May 22. More on that below.

U.S. Senate: Former Senator Sherrod Brown faces Ron Kincaid in the Democratic primary. Incumbent Jon Husted is the Republican. Brown vs. Husted in November gives Democrats a real shot at flipping a Senate seat in a state that has been trending red.

Secretary of State: This office oversees Ohio elections. State Rep. Allison Russo, former minority leader of the Ohio House, faces Cincinnati physician Dr. Bryan Hambley in the Democratic primary. One of them will be on the November ballot as the guardrail against partisan control of election administration.

Ohio Supreme Court: Two seats are on the ballot. Republicans hold a 4-3 majority. Those justices decide the fate of challenges to voter ID laws, abortion restrictions, gerrymandering, and HB 249. After Wednesday's federal VRA ruling, the Ohio Supreme Court may be the strongest check remaining in this state. These seats matter.

Why it should matter to you: This primary sets the November ballot. November sets the next decade. The people who vote in May primaries tend to be the most motivated in either direction. Show up and make sure your voice is in that room.

 VOTE MAY 5: EARLY VOTING IS OPEN NOW

HB 249: still in the Senate, still not voted on

The Ohio House passed House Bill 249 in March, 63-32. It redefines "private parts" to include breasts and removes the requirement that actual exposure occur for a criminal charge. Equality Ohio warns it is broad enough to criminalize a sports bra. The Ohio ACLU calls it unconstitutional. The bill has not yet been voted on in the Senate.

Why it should matter to you: This bill does not just affect LGBTQ Ohioans. Its language is vague enough to put any woman in a tank top at risk of prosecution depending on how an officer interprets it. Contact your state senator before it comes to a vote: ohiosenate.gov/senators/find-my-senator

STARK COUNTY LOCAL

Perry Township data center: the petition clock is running

The statewide constitutional amendment to ban data centers over 25 megawatts in Ohio needs 413,488 valid signatures by July 1. Stark County Residents Against Data Centers is collecting them locally. The Panattoni/Amazon project at Faircrest Street SW and Kropf Avenue in Perry Township is 240 megawatts across more than 100 acres, one of the largest proposed facilities in the state. To sign or help collect signatures in Stark County, email starkindivisible@gmail.com.

Why it should matter to you: The decisions being made right now about where this facility goes, who pays for the power it uses, and what environmental protections apply will affect Perry Township for decades. The petition window closes July 1. That is 62 days away.

Frank Tyson family files \$13 million lawsuit against Canton

The family of Frank Tyson, who died while in Canton police custody, filed a \$13 million civil rights lawsuit this week against the City of Canton and the officers involved. We will follow this case as it moves through the courts.

Why it should matter to you: Police accountability is a local issue. The officers involved work for this city. The outcome of this lawsuit will shape how Canton handles use-of-force policy going forward. Pay attention to it.

Commissioner Bill Smith and transportation funding

The Stark County Transportation Improvement District's ODOT economic development grant cycle will reopen. Grants go up to \$500,000 for projects that create jobs and support

community development. Commissioner Bill Smith oversees much of the county's infrastructure work. If your community has a transportation or development need, get it in the pipeline. Office: (330) 451-7359.

Why it should matter to you: Federal funding to Ohio communities is being cut in real time. State grant cycles like this one are increasingly the only path for local infrastructure investment. If you have a project in mind, now is the time to make the call.

 MAY DAY: WORKERS OVER BILLIONAIRES

TODAY · FRIDAY, MAY 1 · 4:30 PM

Central Plaza North · Canton

No Work. No School. No Shopping. Today is the day working people in Stark County show the billionaire class who actually runs things. We spend the money. We do the work. We fill the schools and stock the shelves. When we pull back, even briefly and symbolically, we flex a muscle no executive order can touch.

Look at Hungary. Sixteen years of Orbán. Controlled media. Tilted election rules. And the people still won because they organized, unified, and showed up. May Day is signal. November is finish line.

Consider boycotting today: Amazon · Walmart · Target · McDonald's · Starbucks · Home Depot · ExxonMobil · Shell · Dollar General · Meta · Google Shopping · Tesla dealerships. Choose local. Cook at home. Let the numbers speak.

REGISTER FOR THE RALLY

 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

An Evening with Amy Acton, May 22 in Canton

The Canton Professional Educators' Association is hosting a moderated town hall with Democratic gubernatorial candidate Dr. Amy Acton on **Friday, May 22 at 6:05 PM** at the **Canton Civic Center, 1101 Market Ave. N., Canton**. The event is free and open to the public.

Acton served as Ohio's Director of Health and led the state's early COVID-19 response. She is running with David Pepper as lieutenant governor. She will be on the November ballot regardless of Tuesday's primary result and has raised record funds for a non-incumbent Democratic governor candidate in Ohio.

To RSVP or for questions, contact CPEA at (330) 455-2158 or cpeaoffice@cpea.us.


Why it should matter to you: Ohio has never elected a woman governor.

Acton is running on public education funding, healthcare access, and economic fairness. This is a chance to hear that case made directly, in our own community, three weeks before the November campaign kicks into high gear.

 LOCAL OFFICIAL SPOTLIGHT

Ohio State Sen. Kirk Schuring (R-29th District, Canton) represents the core of Stark County in Columbus. He has direct influence over whether HB 249 and data center legislation reach a Senate vote. We spotlighted him last week. He has still not taken a public position on either bill. Columbus office: (614) 466-9435. Canton district office: (330) 489-9407. He works for you. Call him.

Why it should matter to you: Silence from elected officials on legislation that affects your rights is a choice. Senator Schuring is not being asked to take a controversial stand on a national debate. He is being asked to do his job in Columbus on bills that affect Stark County residents directly. Constituent calls move senators. Make one.

 A WORD FROM YOUR STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Stark Indivisible is restructuring. Here is what happened and what comes next.

As of today, three of our admins, Sam, Addy, and Lauren, have stepped back from their roles to pursue other work. We are grateful for everything they contributed. They were here when it mattered, and what they helped build does not disappear because they have moved on.

We could simply try to replace three people and keep operating the same way we always have. We decided not to do that, because the same way we have always operated no longer fits where we are.

Stark Indivisible started as a Facebook page. It is no longer just that. With our new website live at starkindivisible.org, a growing membership, events, a weekly newsletter, and a presence in the community that has expanded every year, it is time to rethink how we operate. A loose group of admins each carrying different loads without a defined structure served us well at the beginning. It is not the right model for what we have become.

Stark Indivisible is reorganizing around a **Steering Committee** model: a small, focused leadership body with specific roles, regular meetings, and clear shared accountability. Kevin is the founding member of Stark Indivisible and remains at the

helm. Sharon, Tony, and Tim have joined the committee since and are committed to moving this organization forward. We are looking for three to five more people to join them.

We also expect to be making an announcement soon about new leadership for our communications and media. More on that as it develops.

This restructuring comes with a new mission statement that reflects who we are and what we are here to do.

OUR MISSION

Stark Indivisible is a local chapter of the national Indivisible movement. We are neighbors, workers, and citizens committed to defending democracy and protecting the rights of people in Stark County and across Ohio.

Our focus. Defending democracy is the foundation of everything we do. We work on issues that directly affect the people who live and vote here: voting rights and election integrity, reproductive freedom, workers' rights and economic fairness, public education, healthcare access, LGBTQ protections, immigration rights, and holding our local and state elected officials accountable.

Our lane. We are a local action group. Our power comes from showing up where we can make a measurable difference: at the statehouse, at the ballot box, at town halls, and in our own communities. International conflicts, global policy debates, and emerging technology controversies are real issues, but they are not where our work produces results. When those conversations arise, we acknowledge their importance and redirect our energy back to Ohio and saving our democracy.

How we operate. We inform, organize, and mobilize. We partner with groups and leaders who share our goals. We expect honest conversation and mutual respect. Disagreement is part of the process. Personal attacks are not. We are here because local action is where democracy is either won or lost, and right now saving our democracy is the top priority.

To apply to join the Steering Committee, fill out the form here:

forms.gle/WcqVoz3zan2Frmsz7

What we are looking for: people who show up. People who follow through. People who can commit to monthly meetings and specific responsibilities. You do not need experience running an organization. You need to care about this work and show up consistently when it counts.

This is not a collapse. It is a reset. Stark Indivisible still has nearly 900 members. The work is not going away. We are building the structure to sustain it for the long haul.

This newsletter, the rallies, the organizing. All of it runs on people power and community contributions. Every dollar stays local.

Donate via ActBlue: secure.actblue.com/donate/indivisiblec1374328387
Even \$5 keeps the truth coming every Friday.

● FEEL GOOD FRIDAY: IT'S TRUE, IT'S REAL, IT HAPPENED

Five middle schoolers stopped a runaway bus when their driver went down

On a school morning in Mississippi, the driver of a school bus lost consciousness at the wheel while the bus was moving. Five middle school students, none of them old enough to drive, did not freeze. One grabbed the wheel. Others helped bring the bus to a stop. No one was hurt.

School officials and local law enforcement praised the students publicly for their quick thinking and teamwork. The students said they just did what needed doing.

Kids who did not freeze. Kids who helped. Sometimes that is exactly enough.

📖 FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY: SOMETHING TO HOLD ON TO

April 30, 1789: The first oath to the Constitution

On this date 237 years ago, George Washington stood on the balcony of Federal Hall in New York City and took the first presidential oath of office. He placed his hand on a Bible and swore to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." The crowd below erupted. Church bells rang across the city.

Washington did not have to leave after two terms. No law required it. He chose to step down. He understood that the republic they had built, a government of laws and not of men, would only survive if leaders treated it that way. His farewell address warned precisely of the dangers a faction-driven, power-hungry future would bring. He modeled what it looked like to put the republic first.

Two hundred and thirty-seven years later, we are still deciding whether that choice matters. Washington's answer was to demonstrate it. Ours is to defend it. That is what today is about. That is what May 5 is about. That is what all of it is about.

And now you know... the Stark Truth.

STAY LOUD · STAY KIND · STAY INDIVISIBLE · STAY ENGAGED

YOUR STARK INDIVISIBLE STEERING COMMITTEE

starkindivisible@gmail.com · starkindivisible.org

Stark Indivisible · Stark County, Ohio · Affiliated with Indivisible National