



PENN STATE BLUES

MEDINA'S DREW ALLAR AND THE NITTANY LIONS OPENED WITH BIG EXPECTATIONS. NOW ALLAR IS OUT FOR THE SEASON AND HEAD COACH JAMES FRANKLIN IS OUT OF A JOB. **C5**

BROWNS

Buried in the Pitts



STEELERS 23 BROWNS 9

It's been 11 games since the Browns have scored 20 points, and they didn't even get halfway there on Sunday against the hard-hitting Steelers in Pittsburgh, losing 23-9 at Acrisure Stadium to fall to 1-5 overall. Above, receiver Gage Larvadain takes a big hit by Steelers safety Deshon Elliott after a reception in the second half. Below, Steelers tight end Connor Heyward catches a touchdown pass despite the defense of Browns safety Ronnie Hickman Jr. in the third quarter. The Browns will try to turn things around next Sunday at home against the Miami Dolphins. *Photos by Joshua Gunter, cleveland.com*

More inside: Additional Browns and NFL coverage in Sports. **C1**



COMMENTARY

A lifesaving bill to push Bible class? Really?

A late rewrite to Ohio's Narcan-in-schools bill turned it into another vehicle for expanding religious release time.



Leila Atassi
latassi@cleveland.com

What does it say about our lawmakers that a bill meant to put overdose medication in schools morphed into yet another attempt to put reli-

gion there, too?

The last-minute rewrite of House Bill 57 was a move so subtle and cynical it nearly escaped notice, yet it pushes Ohio's public schools even further across the blurred line between church and state.

The bill was supposed to let schools stock and administer overdose medication — a commonsense move that could keep kids alive in a state still struggling under the weight of the opioid crisis. But in the final days before passage, Republican senators slipped in a provision expanding how often students can leave school for religious release time.

So, what began as a bipartisan effort to

combat the scourge of opioids became another stealth victory for those working to enmesh religion deeper into public education. It also was another boost for programs like LifeWise Academy, a rapidly expanding Christian organization that pulls public school students out of class for off-campus Bible instruction under the banner of "character education."

LifeWise Academy may call itself a ministry, but it's also a remarkably lucrative enterprise built on the machinery of public education. And Ohio is among its biggest markets.

SEE COMMENTARY, A2

VOTING IN CLEVELAND

Low turnout: Can Dems' plan bring out voters?

Experts agree that the most effective way to turn out voters is to communicate with them early and often.

Mary Frances McGowan
mmcgowan@cleveland.com

As early voting season begins, Cuyahoga County Democratic Party Chair David Brock is aiming to tackle a chronic challenge: anemically low voter turnout in the city of Cleveland.

In November, Cleveland residents will decide on a slew of general election contests, from Mayor Justin Bibb's reelection bid to city council races. While convincing voters to participate in an off year is never an easy feat, Brock hopes the groundwork he lays now will provide a strong foundation in time for the 2026 midterms.

"I think if someone did have the solution, they would have bottled it, and we'd all be millionaires now. But it does involve an all-hands-on-deck attitude," Brock said.

Turnout in Cleveland has been chronically low for years, lagging both state and national averages. Most recently, only about 8,600 people, or 7.1% of registered voters, cast ballots in the 2025 primaries.

Turning the tides on voter participation anywhere isn't an easy task. Experts say that many of the leading factors that lead to lower participation both in Ohio and nationally are systemic — including lower levels of education, higher poverty levels, and legal barriers that make it difficult to vote. These systemic issues also contribute to residents' disillusionment, making voting seem less relevant to their lives.

But boosting turnout in the overwhelmingly Democratic city isn't just important to make sure residents' interests are represented locally, but at the state-level, which has pitched farther to the right in recent election cycles.

"It is very difficult, basically impossible, to win with the (city) turnouts we're seeing. And they have to be repaired," said former Ohio Democratic Party Chair David Pepper.

THE CHALLENGES

Thomas Sutton, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Baldwin Wallace University, explained that research shows most voters head to the polls for one of two reasons: they are drawn to a particular candidate or identify problems in their communities that need to be addressed.

Sutton pointed to 2020 as an example of a confluence of those factors. Despite facing historic obstacles in participating due to the COVID-19 pandemic, voters saw that change was needed and overcame those barriers. In most states, including Ohio, Sutton says voter turnout was the highest in 100 years.

SEE VOTING IN CLEVELAND, A2

HAMAS-ISRAEL WAR

Hostage release planned

Israel said Sunday that it expected all of the living hostages held in the Gaza Strip to be released today, after which they will return about 2,000 Palestinian detainees. **A4**

GO & DO

A 'Thriller' night

Adult's-only event at the Akron Art Museum on Oct. 31 will feature a "Thriller" flash mob, costume contest and trick-or-treating. **A9**

