

ELECTION 2006 THE CHOICE



By Jon Craig / Enquirer Columbus Bureau

THE OFFICE: Governor

The issue: State employee benefits. Ohio does not offer health benefits to "significant others," including unmarried partners of state employees. In fact, Issue 1 – the constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage approved in 2004 – prohibits such benefits. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia offer domestic partner benefits.

The question: Should live-in partners of state employees receive the same health and pension benefits as married state employees?

**Secretary of State
Ken Blackwell,
Republican:**



"No. Government has no obligation to provide benefits established for married couples to 'live-in' couples. I believe those seeking the benefits of marriage should get married."

**Bob Fitrakis,
Green Party:**



"Yes. I believe in universal health care for all Americans. Every other democracy in the world provides universal health care. I believe the state of Ohio should take the lead and extend benefits not only to live-in partners, but all live-in relatives."

**Bill Peirce,
Libertarian running as
an independent:**



"Yes. Those benefits should be zero for both groups of people. The fundamental principle is that a person's pay should be based on the work that a person does, not on family status."

**U.S. Rep. Ted
Strickland, Democrat:**



"No. My understanding is that the state's newest constitutional amendment would prevent the state from taking such action."

This series

We will be asking candidates in various races to say where they stand on issues that matter to readers. If you have a question, we want to hear from you. Send your suggestions to cweiser@enquirer.com or to Government/Public Affairs Editor Carl Weiser at 312 Elm St., Cincinnati, OH, 45202.