October 1, Cincinnati Enquirer article--Economy, threats to democracy top concerns for Ohio voters, poll finds—should be a substantive concern for public education advocates.

The author of the article quotes a poll indicating that nearly one-quarter of those polled believe that threats to democracy are the top issue and a close second is the economy.

Democracy and public education have a symbiotic relationship. America's forefathers understood the interdependent connection between a high-quality education for all citizens and democracy. Hence over time they developed a public common school system that served all the children of all the people but allowed parents to opt out of the public system if they chose to pay for private alternates that met some basic comparable standards.

Since 1851 the Ohio Constitution has required the General Assembly to secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools.

In recent years the legislature has undermined the Constitutional provision by unregulated homeschooling, deregulated charter schooling, and vouchering that is neither accountable nor transparent to the taxpayers.

Citizens of Ohio must vigorously confront their Ohio Senators and House members by challenging them to serve their constituents as opposed to their party leadership.

Economy, threats to democracy top concerns for Ohio voters, poll finds

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When Ohioans cast ballots this fall, they are worried about two issues: the economy and whether American democracy is in danger.

A new Suffolk University/USA TODAY Ohio poll asked 500 likely Ohio voters to name their top concerns. Nearly one in four − 24.8% −ranked threats to democracy as their top issue. And as the price of groceries, gasoline and utilities climb, the economy and inflation came in as the number one worry for 23.6% of the poll respondents.

Lewis Pittman, 78, a longtime Democrat and resident of Covedale, west of Cincinnati, said his biggest issues this year are the economy and good governance.

"On the economy, this president has just absolutely taken us down the tube with the war and all these other issues that he has," Pittman said. "And I'm a good government type person. I really want our government to be run properly. Good government is not happening."

Sara Davis, 46, of Liberty Center, is a parochial school teacher who says she's most concerned about threats to democracy. She applies a broad definition to what is threatening, including the high cost of groceries and gas, which she pins on the war in Iran started by President Trump.

Thirty-seven percent of Democrats and 39% of respondents over age 65 named threats to democracy as their number one concern. Nearly one-third of voters in the 18 to 34 age bracket named the economy and inflation as their top issue. Twenty percent of Republicans named immigration as their top issue.

The margin of error for the poll is plus or minus 4.4 percentage points. That error climbs higher when looking at answers from subgroups. The poll surveyed 500 likely Ohio voters on cell phones and landlines between Sept. 23 and Sept. 27.

Poll: 3 out of 4 say Ohio economy fair or poor

Only 21% of likely voters rank Ohio's economy as excellent or good, according to the poll. Three in four say the economic conditions are fair or poor.

Rosemary Lassiter, 79, of Cleveland, said rising gas and grocery prices make it difficult to call the economy strong, though she said she can personally absorb the increases.

“The economy is OK for me because I am willing to make the sacrifice,” Lassiter said. “If I have to cut back on something, I’m willing to do it because I put family, faith and country in that order.”

Nearly 54% said that Ohio is on the wrong track, compared with 25.4% who think it's on the right track and 21% who are undecided. Sixty-one percent said the United States is on the wrong track, compared with 31% who think the country is on the right track and 8% undecided.

But Trent Fagrell, 34, an automotive engineer who lives in Delaware, said he is optimistic about Ohio and its economy. He plans to vote for Republicans Vivek Ramaswamy for governor and Jon Husted for U.S. Senate.

"I think we're on the right track. I think right now we're a pretty business friendly state," he said, pointing to the Intel and Anduril Industries projects being built in Ohio.

Davis said the country and Ohio are on the wrong track "but I hope that can change." That'll take people to do their homework and apply critical thinking skills to become more informed citizens, she said.

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