

Election for Cleveland mayor is Tuesday, incumbent Frank Jackson and Ken Lanci to square off , closely

Written by Kathy

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Pictured are Incumbent Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson (left) and millionaire businessman and mayoral candidate Ken Lanci. They will square off for a nonpartisan general election runoff on Tuesday, Nov. 5

From the Metro Desk of Cleveland Urban News.Com and The Kathy Wray Coleman Online News Blog.Com, Ohio's No 1 and No 2 online Black news venues (www.clevelandurbannews.com) Reach Cleveland Urban News.Com by email at editor@clevelandurbannews.com and by phone at 216-659-0473

CLEVELAND, Ohio- The nonpartisan election for Cleveland mayor is down to the wire with voters set to make a choice at the ballot box on Tuesday, Nov. 5 on whether to retain two term incumbent Mayor Frank Jackson, 67, or to replace him with millionaire businessman Ken Lanci, 63.

Also up for grabs are 17 Cleveland City Council seats, each for four-year terms and an annual salary of \$74,000.

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The polls open at 6:30 am and close promptly at 7:30 pm, Cuyahoga County Board of Elections officials said earlier today. Cleveland, which is about 58 percent Black, is one of many municipalities in Cuyahoga County with elections on Tuesday, and is probably the most watched because of its high profile mayoral race, and the city council races.

"We are going to keep moving the city forward," said Jackson at a get-out-the-vote campaign rally outside of the the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections Saturday afternoon in downtown Cleveland.

A former city council president who ousted one-term Democratic mayor Jane Campbell in 2005 to gain the powerful mayoral seat, Jackson is paid roughly \$137,000 annually, the fourth highest paid mayor in Ohio next to Michael Coleman in Columbus, Donald Plusquellic in Akron, and Dennis Clough of Westlake.

Clough is a Republican and Coleman, Plusquellic and Jackson are all Democrats, though wannabe mayor Ken Lanci is an Independent turned Democrat who lost a race for Cuyahoga County executive in 2010, a campaign he funded primarily with a million dollars he put up himself.

A boy poor who grew up in the ghetto on Cleveland's east side just as Jackson did Lanci, who owns and operates a prosperous printing and graphics corporation on the city's east side, says the city is losing ground under Jackson.

"The city is moving backwards," Lanci said as a special guest hosting the 2-hour-long Art McKoy University Show of Common Sense Show Sunday night, a weekly radio talk radio program on Cleveland radio WERE 1490 produced by community activist and Black on Black Crime founder Art McKoy, a Lanci supporter.

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Jackson, who is Black and part of the old Black Guard of political power brokers, has the support of Black clergy and seasoned greater Cleveland Black leaders like political strategist Arnold Pinkney, who is among those nearly 80 year-old or better who are still around from electing Carl Stokes the first Black mayor of the largely Black major metropolitan city in 1967. Among others, he also enjoys support from Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge, the Call and Post and Plain Dealer newspapers, and city council, which will next year shrink from 19 members to 17 members after Tuesday's election outcome per a voter adopted charter amendment.

Jackson paints Lanci as a carpetbagger who left Cleveland years ago and moved back to the city just this year to run for mayor.

Lanci has community activists staunchly in his corner, and those tired of Jackson and drained by his laid back style of leadership. And he is endorsed by the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association, the union that represents the rank and file of Cleveland police that can't get along with Jackson and the city lawyers that union leaders say have no respect for the collective bargaining agreement .

The enthusiasm around the mayoral race is noticeable, Black elected officials said.

"You're going to have an exciting race with an incumbent mayor and a millionaire," said Cleveland Ward 6 Councilwoman Mamie Mitchell at a rally for the mayor Saturday.

A former assistant county prosecutor, Mitchell faces precinct committeemen and social worker John Boyd on Tuesday, though the closely watched Cleveland City Council races on the city's east side of town are incumbent Ward 7 Councilman TJ Dow and Basheer Jones, and the showdown between Councilmen Jeff Johnson and Eugene Miller on who will lead the new Ward 10, a ward carved by Council President Martin Sweeney from a controversial redistricting plan

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that reduced city council by two seats and pits Jeff Johnson and Miller against each other.

Ward 14 Councilman Brian Cummins, a member of the Green Party, is probably the only one of the majority White west side city council incumbents that has anything to worry about, and he will likely win, political pundits have said. He faces Brian Kazy.

Harriet Applegate executive director of the North Shore AFL-CIO Federation of Labor Federation told Cleveland Urban News.Com, Ohio's most read online Black newspaper, that Jackson has been a good mayor who will lift the city out of poverty and that Lanci is a "union buster."

Lanci said that unemployment has increased under Jackson and that the city's public schools that he leads per state law are worse now than when he won his first term for mayor nearly eight years ago.

Not everyone agrees that Jackson should lose his job, and whether they do or not, Lanci is loved by local community activists wanting a change who usually back the underdog for Cleveland mayor, and he is the preferred candidate of some voters that favor term limits, something not applicable to either the mayor or city council offices because the Cleveland city charter has no term limits.

"We are pleased that the establishment knows that we have supported a candidate with credibility who is waging an effective campaign against the establishment," said Black on Black Crime Vice President Al Porter, who is among a host of greater Cleveland community activists waging a grassroots campaign against Jackson and his campaign manager Blaine Griffin.

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Griffin is on leave from his \$87,000-a-year job as director of the city's Community Relations Board to lead the mayor's well-funded campaign for reelection.

While Jackson has corporate and big business support, Lanci has his corporate money too.

Both campaigns reported spending in excess of \$500,000 last reporting period, though Jackson got heavy donation from banks, and medical facilities like Medical Mutual of Ohio and Lanci got small donations of less than \$8,000 combined from private donors and has primarily funded his campaign with his own money.

The mayoral election, some say, pits a popular and stable Black incumbent mayor against a charming multimillionaire with fresh ideas for leading the largely Black city of some 400,000 people.

Lanci, who says he prefers to say he is Italian-American rather than White, said Sunday that race is a factor in the election and that some voters are backing Jackson because Jackson is Black and he is White.

He said that if he wins as mayor he will oust all of Jackson's cabinet members, including chief of staff Ken Silliman, and safety director Martin Flask.

"Ken Silliman will be the first to go," Lanci said.

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