



## The Gail Betrayal: Ohio's "Blue-22"

In November 2022, after the midterm elections where the Republican Party won historic super-majorities in both houses of the Ohio legislature, the membership of the GOP caucus gathered to select a new Speaker of the House.

State Rep. Bill Dean, the longest serving member of the Republican caucus, presided over the meeting.

Three Republican members, Rep. Phil Plummer, Rep. Derek Merrin and Rep. Jason Stephens, sought the Speaker's gavel.

According to the process, the three candidates mandated a two-round process. After the first round of voting, the third-place finisher would drop out of the race.

Rep. Derek Merrin won on the second ballot. There were no objections from any member of the GOP caucus. Rep. Merrin was designated "Speaker Designee."

As is the custom in Columbus, the entire GOP caucus was invited to celebrate together the selection of the new Speaker. According to reports, many supporters of Rep. Stephens attended the celebration for Rep. Merrin.

Between the day of the selection of Rep. Merrin by the GOP caucus and January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the first day of the new General Assembly session, the supporters of Rep. Stephens, now known as the infamous "Blue-22," including our state representative in Portage County, Gail Pavliga, never expressed any concerns about Rep. Merrin being formally elected Speaker.

If Rep. Gail Pavliga and the other "Blue-22" conspirators chose that route, which they did not, the GOP caucus could have chosen a different Speaker inside the GOP caucus, without the meddling of the Democrat super-minority. Rep. Gail Pavliga and the other "Blue-22" conspirators could have called for another caucus, asked for a "no confidence" vote in Rep. Merrin and replaced him as Speaker Designee – if they had the votes!

They didn't do this because they didn't have the votes. A majority of the super-majority in the House Republican caucus wanted Rep. Merrin to become Speaker. These conservative members of the Ohio House of Representatives selected Rep. Merrin to lead the legislative effort to enact common sense conservative policies supported by a majority of Ohio taxpayers and voters.



Instead of challenging Rep. Merrin transparently and professionally and acting honestly and with integrity, Rep. Gail Pavliga and the other “Blue-22” conspirators secretly conspired with the Democrats in the House to elect Rep. Stephens – the super-minority Democrats’ choice – as Speaker.

The majority of the House GOP caucus – the real conservatives in the body – didn’t see the treachery of Rep. Gail Pavliga and the other “Blue-22” conspirators coming. On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, Rep. Jason Stephens was elected Speaker of the House – with every vote from the Democrat caucus and the votes of Rep. Gail Pavliga and 21 so-called GOP colleagues in the treacherous “Blue-22.”

Three days after Rep. Pavliga’s vote for Rep. Stephens to become Speaker, the Ohio Republican Party voted to censure Pavliga and the other member of the infamous “Blue-22.” That’s right, Rep. Pavliga was censured by the Ohio GOP for her treachery on January 3<sup>rd</sup> – the “Gail betrayal.”

The “Gail betrayal” irreparably divided the Republican super-majority in the Ohio House and Democrat-friendly Speaker Jason Stephens has hindered the passage of countless conservative agenda items.

Rep. Gail Pavliga betrayed every common sense conservative in Portage County when she threw in with the liberal Democrats in the Democrat caucus to elect Rep. Stephens Speaker.

As if that monumental “Gail betrayal” wasn’t enough, recently Rep. Pavliga voted against SB 83, comprehensive reform of Ohio’s higher education system that would eradicate racist and divisive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies at our public colleges and universities.

First Rep. Pavliga voted for the Democrats’ choice for Speaker and now she’s an anti-culture warrior for woke DEI indoctrination? It’s really almost too much to believe.

But still there’s more.

Second Amendment advocates in the Ohio House have advanced HB 51, the Second Amendment Preservation Act. The title of the legislation says it all. Most importantly, the bill would prevent the federal government from coming into Ohio to enforce federal gun-grabbing regulations.



Guess what? Rep. Pavliga – who has lied to gun-rights advocates for years telling them she supports the Second Amendment – will not take a position on HB 51 and privately tells people she opposes “The Second Amendment Preservation Act.”

Yet another “Gail betrayal.”

Portage County can’t afford to be betrayed by Rep. Pavliga anymore. It’s time to fire Gail Pavliga and elect Heidi Workman, a real conservative, as our new state representative.