

# Can Dennis Kucinich Be Defeated?

## Peter Corrigan's long shot bid for an upset in Ohio.

BY Michael Warren

July 19, 2010 1:40 PM

It may be a big year for the GOP, but even the expected anti-Democratic tide can't unseat an entrenched liberal like Dennis Kucinich -- or can it? Peter J. Corrigan says he's the one to do it, and a recent poll shows the idea may not be too outrageous.

A poll of 400 likely voters in Ohio's 10th district, commissioned by the Corrigan campaign and conducted by Neil Newhouse of Public Opinion Strategies, shows the Republican trailing Kucinich by 14 percentage points. Those aren't great numbers, but another key finding indicates there may be an opportunity to capitalize on Kucinich's vulnerability with the district's independent voters.

Voters are split evenly at 47 percent on the question of reelecting Kucinich or voting for someone new. Independents actually favor (55 percent to 39 percent) electing someone who is not Kucinich. Incumbent fatigue combined with an aversion to Kucinich's high profile, far left views—**he voted for the stimulus package and Obamacare, plus his 90% voting record in favor of illegal immigration—may create the best situation for Republicans to defeat him.**

"It's really not such a liberal district," Corrigan says in a phone interview. "There's an appetite for change."

And voting out Kucinich would be a big change. Elected to the seat in 1996 by a three-point margin, Kucinich has handily won reelection six times, beating Republican challenger Jim Trakas in 2008 with 57 percent of the vote. Fifty-seven percent of the district voted for John Kerry in 2004 and 58 percent for Barack Obama in 2008. The district's Cook Partisan Voting Index is +8 in favor of the Democrats. Corrigan recognizes the significance, then, of giving Kucinich the boot

"If I can take Dennis out of office, there's going to be a huge change in Ohio and in Congress," Corrigan says. A businessman and political novice, Corrigan says jobs and fiscal responsibility are the major issues in his district, issues that play to his strengths. He says his career in business gives him perspective on the staggering fiscal mess the federal government finds itself in.

"I have a lot of turnaround experience," Corrigan says. "This [situation demands] the biggest turnaround in the history of mankind."

After working as an engineer for several years, Corrigan joined Prestolite Electric in 1990, where he served in several executive positions (most recently as its chief operating officer) to transform a company in Chapter 11 bankruptcy back into a profit-making, international corporation. He was working for Prestolite's South American arm in Argentina when that country's government collapsed in 2001. Corrigan saw the rioting and violence that ensued from what was essentially a financial and economic crisis. **"Bad things happen when governments run out of money," Corrigan says.**

And when people don't have jobs. Corrigan points out that the country's current recession has been happening in Cleveland since the 1980s. The city was one of the nation's largest in 1950 but has declined in population as industry, particularly the automotive industry, moved out. Corrigan says Cleveland needs to "treat businesses as invited guests" if it wants to regain a competitive edge for industry.

Kucinich, he says, has not done anything to improve this abysmal situation. "He protests with the unions," Corrigan says. "He's getting on TV and protesting with the unions." When business leaders see this coming from Cleveland, he says, their response is, "We're not going there!"

"Kucinich is a polarizing guy," Corrigan says.

A better role for a congressman than union cheerleader, he says, is advocate for a competitive business environment: "I'm not going to bring jobs, an employer is going to bring jobs.... My job is to set the table."

The race is definitely a long shot for the GOP. Corrigan may be a Cleveland native with deep roots in the 10th, but he'll have a tough time matching the exposure a former vanity presidential candidate with Hollywood friends and money receives. Corrigan is relying on old-fashioned, face-to-face campaigning to connect with those independents put off by Kucinich's big spending politics and fealty to the Democratic leadership in Washington.

"I'm winning votes when I talk to people," Corrigan says.