This weeks Congresswoman Fudge's corner

For better or worse, the next occupant of the White House will likely have a profound impact on what happens to the occupants of your house. Will we as a nation end Medicare as we know it? Will the next president support access to health care for 50 million currently uninsured Americans? Will he favor tax breaks counted on by the middle class or take them away and increase the income inequality that is strangling our economy?

The next president will chart a course that is likely to determine whether millions of citizens can afford a college education or something even more basic, the ability to put food on the table. With the stakes so high, it's critical that each and every one of us exercises the right to vote in the November 6th Election.

No excuses. If you believe your vote doesn't matter, remember the number 537. Of the millions of votes cast inFlorida, in the 2000 presidential race, 537 votes was the margin of victory that sent George W. Bush to the White House.Ohiois one of a handful of states that will determine the outcome of this election.

For those of you who have already returned a ballot in the mail or voted early, I congratulate

you.

I've seen the energy in our community and the determination to send a loud and clear message that we will not tolerate discriminatory laws that erect barriers to voting, negatively impacting certain populations in order to shape the outcome of the election.

As of last week, more than 23,000 people had already voted at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. High turn-outs have also been reported inOhio's other large urban counties. This is comparable to the turnout to date in 2008. But what is so amazing about this year's turnout is the fact we have had 8 fewer early voting days than in 2008!

There are fewer days in 2012 because of the hyper-partisan directives of Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted who refused to allow weekend early voting hours in October and on October 8th, Columbus Day.

It took legal challenges all the way to the United States Supreme Court to restore voting on the last three days before the election. If you haven't already cast a ballot, remember that option is again available.

This may be the most important election of our lifetime. If you are eligible to vote, the destiny of our children and our nation is in your hands. Please vote.

VOTING REMINDERS

VOTE BY MAIL Post Office will not deliver Vote by Mail ballots that lack the correct postage. Ballots must be postmarked on or before noon on November 3rd. You or a close relative (not an organization or neighbor), can also take it to the Board of Elections by 7:30 p.m. on Election Day. Postage is 45¢ for a one page ballot, 65¢ for 2 or 3 ballot pages, 85¢ for 4 or more ballot pages.

EARLY VOTING InCuyahogaCounty, early voting takes place at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections,2925 Euclid Avenue,Cleveland,Ohio44115. Early Voting hours vary by day: This Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 2, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 3 – 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 4 – 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Monday, Nov. 5 – 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

VOTING QUESTIONS/CHALLENGES If you have questions before or on Election Day about polling locations, ID requirements, or other election procedures, you can contact the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections Voter Information Hotline, (216) 443-3298. If you believe your right to vote has been improperly challenged, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law maintains a hotline to report concerns or problems **1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)**

RIDES TO THE POLLS If you need a ride to the polls, free transportation is provided at the staging locations listed below. In all cases, the days and hours of operation are Nov 3-6, 9:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 4:30 p.m.