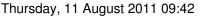
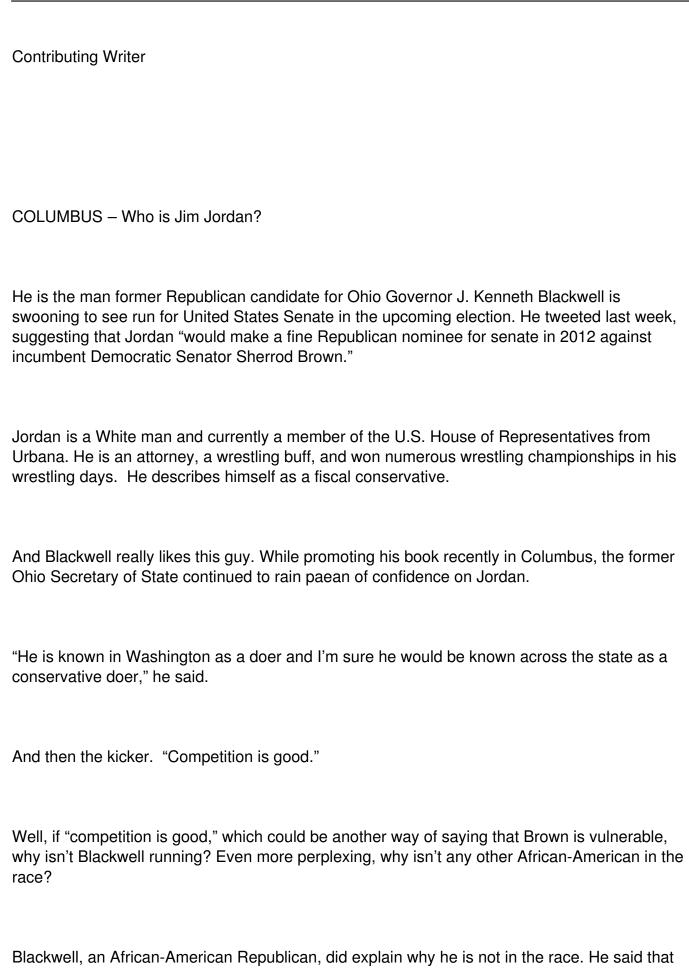


And Blackwell really likes this guy. While promoting his book recently in Columbus, the former Ohio Secretary of State continued to rain paean of confidence on Jordan

By IKE MGBATOGU





he considered running but decided instead to focus on promoting his new book, "Resurgent: How Constitutional Conservatism Can Save America."

It's still unclear if Jordan will actually run. But some Republicans have already jumped into the race, including State Treasurer Josh Mandel and former State Senator Kevin Coughlin. And if as Blackwell noted that "competition is good," perhaps more candidates could still hop into the race.

It is of course highly unlikely and some would say understandably so, why African-American Democrats would not want to challenge Brown, who is not just a ferocious progressive Democrat, but also historically supportive of many issues important to the African-American community.

But still, as the race for Ohio's coveted senate seat heats up, it begs the question of why there's no Black candidate on the scene. Even aside from this particular race, the fact is that African-Americans have historically shied away from running for this and other statewide offices. Why? Is it that an African-American cannot win a statewide race in Ohio, in this case, a U.S. Senate seat?

That's not it, said members of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC). They told the Call & Post that an African-American can win a U.S. Senate seat in Ohio.

"Frankly, I think if the right person had run last year, it could have happened," said State Senator Eric Kearney of Dayton, representing Ohio Senate 9th District. Kearney was referring to the race between former Lt. Governor Lee Fisher and Republican Rob Portman, which easily went Portman's way.

"Ohio is a state where it can happen," said Kearney, though he would not say how soon. "I am not going to put a date or timeline on it." Kearney did however identify some factors that must be in place for that to happen. "The circumstances have to be right. The plants have to be aligned. And we would certainly need to work together," he said.

State Senator Charleta Tavares, who represents Ohio Senate 15th District, agreed, but noted that it would depend "a lot on that African-American ... their credentials, their preparation, and the policies that they have championed." All told, she expressed confidence that it can happen. "I do believe that we have people in the state that could win the U.S. Senate seat," she said.

For State Representative Alicia Reece of Cincinnati's 33rd House District, "anything is possible." She not only believes that an African-American can win, she cited President Barack Obama as an inspiring living proof. "If we can have an African-American president, we certainly can have a U.S. Senator or African-American governor at some point in the state of Ohio."

State Senator Edna Brown took the same view, saying "this is the right time."

"There was a time when there were those who would say that we would not have an African-American president at this time in history, but here we are," said Brown, who represents Ohio Senate 11th District.

State Representatives Tracy Heard, House 26th District; President of the Caucus Sandra Williams, House 11th District; Roland Winburn, House 40th District; Vernon Sykes, House 44th District; all expressed the view that an African-American can win a U.S. Senate seat in Ohio.

But not everyone is staunchly optimistic.

While State Representative W. Carlton Weddington of Columbus' 27th House District expressed the view that it will happen "eventually," he however doesn't think it will happen soon. He argued that, "other than Ken Blackwell," all African-Americans that have run for statewide offices have been appointed and none of them "have maintained their seats or won their seats outright." On top of that, he noted that Blackwell was unable to win his governorship race.

Like Weddington, State Representative Barbara Boyd sees the "possibility" with the "right candidacy," but still holds the view that "it won't happen in the near future." Boyd, who represents the House 9th District, expressed the view that "it will be difficult in Ohio."