

# Donald Trump endorses Bernie Moreno in Ohio's U.S. Senate race

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COLUMBUS, Ohio — Donald Trump has endorsed Bernie Moreno in Ohio's U.S. Senate race, a major lift for the former Cleveland car dealer given the sway the ex-president holds among Republican voters.

Trump [announced the endorsement on Tuesday on Truth Social](#), the social media platform he founded. One of a pair of posts referenced Moreno's daughter, Emily, a former Trump campaign official, and her husband, Rep. Max Miller, a former Trump White House aide who is close to the former president and who now is a congressman from Rocky River.

"Bernie is Strong on the Border, Crime, Cutting Taxes, Election Integrity, the Military / Vets, and will always protect our under siege 2nd Amendment. Bernie Moreno will be an outstanding United States Senator, and has my Complete and Total Endorsement—He will never let you down!" Trump said.

Whoever wins the Republican primary election between Moreno, state Sen. Matt Dolan and Secretary of State Frank LaRose on March 19 will go on to face longtime Sen. Sherrod Brown, a Cleveland Democrat, in the November election. The high-stakes race likely will be one of the country's most competitive and expensive elections, given Democrats' narrow control of the U.S. Senate.

"Remember, we need a successful political outsider like Bernie to defeat Liberal career politician, Sherrod Brown, who has so poorly represented Ohio, and pretends that he's all for the Policies of your Favorite President, Donald J. Trump, but then gets to the Senate and votes 100% for the horrendous Policies of Crooked Joe Biden, the worst President in the History of our Country," [Trump said](#).

The development is a major boost for Moreno, who has never before held elected office, although he ran for the U.S. Senate in 2022 before dropping out ahead of the primary election that March. Trump endorsed Vance that year in what turned out to be a decisive boost for Vance, [helping lift him past the heated Republican primary election](#) and into the Senate, after Vance won the general election the following

November. After dropping out, Moreno has worked to build a relationship with Trump while drawing on his family connection to Trump World.

Vance in turn [endorsed Moreno earlier this year](#), saying he wanted to help prevent the 2024 race from becoming as nasty as the 2022 one was. Vance met with Trump last Friday, according to a source familiar with the conversation, helping make the case that he should endorse Moreno. Trump called Moreno that night to say an endorsement would be coming.

Trump's endorsement meanwhile is a huge blow to Secretary of State Frank LaRose, who has vied for Trump's endorsement and whose team at least hoped to keep Trump neutral in the race, although LaRose also has privately downplayed the effects of a Trump-Moreno endorsement, [according to a recording that was released to Politico afterwards](#).

LaRose as recently as Monday [told NBC4](#) in Columbus that he didn't think Trump would endorse anyone.

"President Trump is most likely not going to endorse anybody in this race. That's what he's told me and others as it relates to this," LaRose said.

The third major Republican Senate candidate, state Sen. Matt Dolan, meanwhile has not sought a Trump endorsement while attempting to create distance between himself and Trump, appealing to moderate and traditional Republican voters.

Dolan has mentioned Trump sparingly during his campaign, but he's among the Republicans who have criticized Trump for his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol that led the former president to be criminally charged, one of several criminal prosecutions against him that are ongoing. At least among Republican primary voters though, Trump's legal issues have not been a major political problem for him so far, according to polls that show him with a commanding lead over several GOP opponents. The Ohio Republican Party [recently endorsed Trump](#), making it the first state party to do so in the country, before voting even has begun.

Asked about the prospect of Trump endorsing one of his opponents on Monday, before the endorsement was announced, Dolan said he wasn't worried.

"I think if you pay attention to what I say, I'm actually ironically the one that talks about Trump policies more than my opponents," Dolan said. "... I think as the voter

starts looking at us, if they're motivated by Donald Trump, I think they can see me as someone who can actually get things done, just like Donald Trump did."

In a statement issued after Trump endorsed Moreno, Dolan said: "This is Ohio's Senate seat. I know who I'm fighting for. I know what I'm fighting for. To defeat Sherrod Brown, we must have the strongest nominee possible."

A statement from Ohio Democratic Party spokesperson Reeves Oyster said Trump's endorsement "throws gasoline on the fire" in the GOP primary. But it didn't mention Trump directly.

"Bernie Moreno has made it clear he won't fight for Ohioans and doesn't understand the issues facing their daily lives. As this primary heats up, it's clear this slugfest is only going to get messier, nastier, and more expensive from here," Oyster said.

A televised debate between Dolan, LaRose and Moreno, the first in the race, [is scheduled for January](#).