

# Sherrod Brown, Weighing a 2026 Senate Bid, Starts a Workers' Group

*Mr. Brown, the Ohio Democrat who lost his race for re-election last year, is forming the Dignity of Work Institute, which will highlight workers' struggles.*

**By Reid J. Epstein  
New York Times**

Sherrod Brown is out of the Senate, but he is not done with politics.

Mr. Brown, the Ohio Democrat who [lost his bid](#) for a fourth Senate term last year, announced on Monday that he was forming a nonprofit group called [the Dignity of Work Institute](#). The group, he said in an interview, will aim to illustrate the plight of workers in a country where both major parties have forgotten their concerns.

“Democrats have become seen as the compensate-the-betrayed party,” Mr. Brown said. “You know, you lost your job, we’ll give you some help. And Republicans are the reward-the-winners party. And that’s corporations and the ultrawealthy. Neither party is the make-workers-the-winners party.”

Mr. Brown, 72, fell to defeat last year as [President Trump won an overwhelming victory in Ohio](#), which during the former senator’s 32 years in Congress transformed from a presidential battleground to a Republican stronghold.

Now Mr. Brown, who [considered running for president in 2020](#), is seeking to resuscitate what has long been his signature political issue — the fate of American workers. At the same time, his fellow Democrats are beginning to coalesce around a message of opposition to the billionaires running the federal government.

His new organization will function as a nonpartisan think tank, conducting research about American workers and aiming to illuminate challenges they face in an effort to persuade politicians and the public to pay attention to workers’ needs.

Not that Mr. Brown is necessarily done running for elected office himself.

The [famously frumpy](#) Ohioan said he was weighing running for either Senate or governor in his home state next year. Gov. Mike DeWine, a Republican, is barred from seeking re-election by term limits, and Senator Jon Husted, a Republican whom Mr. DeWine appointed to fill the seat vacated by Vice President JD Vance, will face voters for the chance to serve the remaining two years of Mr. Vance’s term.

Democrats again face a daunting Senate map in 2026. Any hope the party has of taking back the chamber, which Republicans now control 53 to 47, requires winning red states like Ohio.

Dr. Amy Acton, a Democrat who ran the Ohio Department of Health during the coronavirus pandemic, is already running for governor. Several Republicans are also in the race, including [Vivek Ramaswamy](#), the Trump ally who ran for president last year, and Dave Yost, the Ohio attorney general.

Mr. Brown said the possibility that he could seek office again was “not really material” to his new institute.

“I’ll make a decision later about governor or senator,” he said. “I really don’t know if I want to run for office again.”

The first order of business for his group is to amplify the results of a poll it conducted that found a dismal and unstable outlook for American workers.

The poll found that 60 percent of Americans had worked more than one job at a time, and that 20 percent said they had worked three jobs simultaneously. Those surveyed expressed anger at the country’s economic system: Half said it needed to change, and 30 percent called for a complete overhaul.

The reality of Americans’ anger at the system, Mr. Brown said, does not comport with sunny portrayals of the economy from Mr. Trump and President Joseph R. Biden Jr. during their presidencies. Mr. Brown said the polling helped explain why voters in three straight presidential elections had chosen the candidate promising more change.

“Biden and Trump, they both cite the unemployment rate and decreasing rate of inflation, but they’re not really talking to workers and not really understanding workers’ lives that way,” Mr. Brown said. “Voters in 2020 chose Biden because they wanted change. In 2024, they voted for Trump because they wanted change again.”