To:	*Interested Parties*
From:	*Hart Research*
Date:	*October 24, 2025*
Re:	*Survey on Ohio 2026 Governor's Race*

On behalf of the Ohio Federation of Teachers, Hart Research has conducted a survey of 800 likely 2026 Ohio voters about next year's gubernatorial election. This memo reviews the survey's key findings on a hypothetical matchup between Republican Vivek Ramaswamy and Democrat Amy Acton.

1. Dr. Amy Acton is viewed more favorably by Ohio voters than presumptive GOP nominee Vivek Ramaswamy, and she currently runs even with him as voters' choice for governor.

Dr. Amy Acton currently enjoys a +14 net positive favorability rating among Ohio likely voters (31% favorable, 18% unfavorable), including a +51 point margin among Democrats and +21 with independents. Voters view her much more favorably than likely GOP nominee Vivek Ramaswamy, who registers at just +1 point overall (33% favorable, 32% unfavorable) and -14 with independents.

When voters are asked their preference in a potential gubernatorial election between Acton and Ramaswamy, Acton leads by 1 point with 46% to Ramswamy's 45%. Acton has impressive leads among independents (+21), suburban voters (+13), and women (+14).

Preference in Election for Governor

	Acton	Ramaswamy			Acton	Ramaswamy
Democrats	92	1		Urban	56	30
Independents	52	31		Suburban	53	40
Republicans	8	89		Rural	31	62
Harris voters	92	1		Men	38	53
Trump voters	8	86		Women	53	39
Cleveland MM	50	41		18-34	51	40
Columbus MM	53	39		35-49	54	36
Cincinnati/Dayton	43	50		50-64	41	50
Northern counties	37	53		65+	44	49

2. Dr. Amy Acton has a compelling story to tell voters, and her role in leading Ohio's pandemic response is not the Achilles' heel her opponents may imagine.

Survey respondents heard a short biography for Dr. Acton taken from her campaign website (text below). Voters respond very favorably to the information, with 57% saying that Acton appeals to them a lot or a fair amount and just 40% saying she does not appeal to them. The large gap between Acton's current 31% favorable rating and the 57% feeling more favorable here suggests that she has considerable potential for growth in support.

An important finding in the survey is that Dr. Acton's experience leading Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is not a weakness – as some political commentators have suggested – and may prove an advantage for her campaign. When reminded (or informed) that "as Ohio's Director of Public Health, Dr. Acton led the state's response to the COVID pandemic," only 32% say this fact makes them feel less favorable toward her while 47% feel more favorable, a net positive response of +15 points. Independent voters respond even more favorably than voters overall at +27 points (53% more favorable, 26% less).

Indeed, even reminding voters of Acton's pandemic-era decisions that Republicans strongly criticize – "Dr. Acton made decisions to mandate mask-wearing and social distancing, temporarily close businesses, and temporarily close schools" – elicits a slightly *positive* reaction from voters (43% more favorable, 40% less), rather than the backlash Republicans hope for.

Moreover, voters respond very positively when they learn about other key elements in Acton's record. A majority say that each of the following facts give them a more favorable view of Acton.

➢ Dr. Acton served in Governor Mike DeWine's administration and says she believes in working with both parties (64% more favorable).

➢ Dr. Acton favors fulfilling Ohio's constitutional obligation to fully fund public education (57% more favorable).

➢ Dr. Acton supports labor unions and says she will protect the rights of public and private sector workers (55% more favorable).

3. Vivek Ramaswamy is in a weak political position for a presumptive Republican nominee in Ohio.

Vivek Ramaswamy's failure to establish a lead over Acton at this stage, despite having significantly higher name identification and benefitting from an 8-point advantage in party identification, suggests an underlying weakness in his candidacy. In addition to trailing with the critical independent voters, Ramaswamy enjoys a smaller margin from Republicans (+81) than Acton receives from Democrats (+90).

Survey respondents heard a short biography for Ramaswamy taken from his campaign website (text below). Unlike Acton's biography, Ramaswamy's does not appear to expand his appeal.

While 48% say that Ramaswamy appeals to them a lot or fair amount, an equal proportion (48%) say he does not appeal to them (compared to 57%-40% for Acton).

> ➤ Voters are also not impressed when they learn that President Donald Trump, who easily carried Ohio, has endorsed Ramaswamy (37% more favorable to Ramaswamy, 47% less favorable).

Moreover, voters respond very negatively when they later learn key elements of Ramaswamy's record. A majority say that each of the following facts about Ramaswamy give them a less favorable view of him, while far fewer respond positively.

> ➤ Ramaswamy's company, Roivant Sciences, has been accused of fraud related to the company's stock price and failed clinical trials of Alzheimer drugs during his time as CEO (60% less favorable, 8% more).

> ➤ Ramaswamy wants to eliminate unions for school teachers and other public employees (55% less favorable, 30% more).

> ➤ Ramaswamy supported Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill that gave a tax cut to the wealthy and cut funding for public education, healthcare, nutrition, and rural hospitals (55% less favorable, 26% more).

Survey Methodology

A total of 800 likely Ohio voters were interviewed from September 19 to 22, 2025, using a mix of live telephone interviews (408) and text-to-web online interviews (392). All respondents said they are certain or likely to vote in the 2026 general election, and large proportions voted in the 2022 (78%) and 2024 (95%) general elections. The margin of error for full-sample questions is +/-3.5 percentage points.

- Partisan identification: 49% Republican, 10% independent, 41% Democratic.
- Ideology: 43% conservative, 28% middle of the road, 27% liberal.

These are the candidate biographies read to survey respondents:

Vivek Ramaswamy is an American business leader and author. Born and raised in Cincinnati, he was the valedictorian of his high school, St. Xavier, and graduated from Harvard College and Yale Law School. He then started a biotech company, Roivant Sciences, where he oversaw the development of five FDA-approved drugs. He has been called an "intellectual godfather of the anti-woke movement" and "the C.E.O. of Anti-Woke." He lives in Columbus, Ohio with his wife Apoorva, a throat surgeon, and their two sons.

Dr. Amy Acton grew up in Youngstown, where she faced a difficult childhood including homelessness. She worked her way out of poverty and put herself through college and medical school to become a doctor. After working at Children's Hospital and Ohio State University, Dr. Acton served as Ohio's Director of Public Health under Governor DeWine. She led the state's response to the COVID pandemic and was named Woman of the Year for Ohio by USA Today in 2022. She lives in Bexley with her husband Eric, a teacher, and they have six children.