

Hon. Paula Brooks

Commissioner, Franklin County, Ohio

First elected to the Board of Commissioners in 2004, Paula Brooks has served as Board President in 2006, 2009 and 2012. Her commitment to prudent financial planning has allowed Franklin County to maintain a leading double-AAA bond rating. This allows the county to invest at the lowest available rates and save limited tax dollars on responsible capital improvements, as with our Franklin County Common Pleas Courthouse, the state's first Gold LEED-certified county courthouse, and our very own Huntington Park, voted in 2009 as the "best ballpark in America", and home to the county-owned Columbus Clippers.



Commissioner Brooks has gained a nationally recognized reputation for creating opportunities of job creation and economic growth, investing in early education and healthcare for the county's most vulnerable, and identifying strategic approaches that result in sensible solutions for all of the residents of Franklin County.

As Board President, Commissioner Brooks has led several initiatives to improve the quality of life for all of the residents in Franklin County, the nation's 30th largest county. By substantially turning around the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation (COWIC), Commissioner Brooks, along with Mayor Coleman, championed County and City investments, respectively, to encourage our young people to learn valuable job skills, acquire jobs, and serve their neighborhoods. Collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce, Commissioner Brooks established the Franklin County Veterans Task Force, led by veterans, to support "Hiring Our Heroes" which resulted in hundreds of veterans receiving the job counseling and services needed to convert their military skills to private sector skills. As to healthcare, Commissioner Brooks collaborated with Nationwide Children's Hospital and voted to fund a \$7 million commitment for clinical research and community outreach efforts improving prenatal care and preventing premature births as part of the Ohio Better Birth Outcomes. She also successfully spearheaded the use of the Franklin County Prescription Drug Card saving taxpayers millions of dollars, and brought new prenatal resources to the federally qualified John R. Maloney South Side Health Center.

As a leading advocate for increasing local tourism, Commissioner Brooks began in 2005 championing the development of the robust central Ohio hotel industry which supports thousands of jobs. She realized the power of a \$7.8 billion industry, the jobs and revenues it would create, and sought to work with the hospitality industry, Experience Columbus, and the downtown hotel leadership. In 2012, these efforts culminated in the opening of a full-service 500-room Hilton Hotel complementing the other downtown hotels and providing much needed resources to retain and expand our thriving convention business, which has grown from \$5.2 billion in 2005 to \$7.8 billion in 2012. Through this collaboration, Franklin County families realized a \$2200 savings in taxes annually, according to a 2012 report provided by Experience Columbus.

In 2011, Commissioner Brooks was invited by the U.S. State Department as one of the first local elected officials in the nation to participate in Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's new sub-national engagement initiative. Long active in Columbus Sister Cities working with Germany and China as well as privately traveling to Great Britain, Israel, Greece, and Turkey, Commissioner Brooks brought together diverse interests around an eco-partnership and eco-energy demonstration. These efforts seek international economic development, and most importantly, the creation of jobs here and expansion of exports from central Ohio. Commissioner Brooks also works collaboratively with the Columbus 2020 effort led by the Columbus Partnership to develop our Metropolitan Export Initiative in consultation with the Brookings Institution.



Recognizing her leadership and experience, in 2012, President Rodgers and the National Association of Counties (NACo) elevated Commissioner Brooks to Chair of the International Economic Development Task Force, an exchange of information and resources to help counties compete in the global economy. She also serves as Chair of the Energy/Renewables subcommittee of the Energy, Environment and Land Use Policy Steering Committee and as Vice Chair of the Green Government Advisory Board. At the state level, Commissioner Brooks has been a Director in the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) since 2006 and served as President in 2010.

Commissioner Brooks has long been a champion for the nation's military service members and veterans. In 2000, she was appointed as a 3-star civilian advisor on the federal Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), advising U.S. Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, on troop readiness and military families. In 2012, she was an invited participant in the work of the Clinton Global Initiative - led by former President Bill Clinton - to explore, among several national issues, the efforts to transition veterans into the growing green jobs industry.

And most recently, in 2013, Commissioner Brooks proudly accepted a White House appointment to President Obama's bipartisan Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, where she will join 25 other governors, mayors, county officials, and tribal leaders from throughout the nation to seek out and provide climate change preparedness recommendations to the President.

Commissioner Brooks is also a member of the Columbus chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and has been a member of the Upper Arlington Rotary Club since 1996. She and her husband, Greg Kontras, have raised two children, who are now young adults. They currently reside in Upper Arlington with their dog, Charlie.