

association management - government relations - strategic planning

Emergency Management Association of Ohio Legislative Update

Prepared by: Michelle Fitzgibbon
Phone: (614) 378-2156
E-mail: michelle@fitzgibbongroup.com
Report created on October 17, 2025

HB23 CREATE ESCAPED CONVICT ALERT PROGRAM (ROEMER B, WILLIAMS J) To

create the escaped convict alert program.

Current Status: 10/22/2025 - Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and

Public Safety, (Fourth Hearing)

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-23

HB26 REQUIRE STATE, LOCAL IMMIGRATION COOPERATION (WILLIAMS J,

FISCHER T) To require state and local authorities to cooperate with the federal government in the enforcement of immigration laws, to prescribe funding reductions for noncompliance, to name this act the Protecting Ohio Communities Act, and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 4/29/2025 - House Public Safety, (First Hearing)

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-26

HB96 OPERATING BUDGET (STEWART B) To make operating appropriations for the

biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027, to levy taxes, and to

provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.

Current Status: 10/1/2025 - Consideration of Governor's Veto; Senate

Overrides Veto on Item 66, Vote 21-11

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-96

HB309 LAW CHANGES-COUNTY BUDGET COMMISSIONS (THOMAS D) To modify the

law governing county budget commissions and property taxation.

Current Status: 10/22/2025 - Senate Local Government, (First Hearing) **State Bill Page:** https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-309

HB317 UAS PURCHASE LIMITS-FOREIGN ENTITIES (MATHEWS T) To prohibit the

purchase of small unmanned aircraft systems manufactured or assembled by a

covered foreign entity.

Current Status: 9/30/2025 - House Technology and Innovation, (First

Hearing)

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-317

HB335 LIMIT INSIDE MILLAGE REVENUE INCREASES (THOMAS D) To limit revenue

increases from inside millage levies occurring due to a reappraisal or update.



association management - government relations - strategic planning

Current Status: 10/21/2025 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing) **State Bill Page:** https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-335

HB365 PROVIDE PROPERTY TAX REFUNDS (BRENNAN S, HALL D) To authorize a

refundable income tax credit or rebate for homeowners and renters whose property taxes or a portion of their rent exceed five per cent of their income and to name this

act the Property Tax Refund Act.

Current Status: 6/18/2025 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-365

HB413 CREATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE DATABASE (YOUNG T,

PETERSON B) To create the Ohio Local Government Expenditure Database and require political subdivision participation, to require the state retirement systems to participate in the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database, and to make an

appropriation.

Current Status: 10/7/2025 - House Technology and Innovation, (First

Hearing)

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-413

HB420 ELIMINATE PROPERTY TAXES BY 2030 (CLICK G, WILLIS B) To disallow and,

by 2030, eliminate property taxes levied for a continuing period of time and to name this act The Taxpayers Freedom Trilogy – Act One: Discontinuing the Continuum.

Current Status: 9/15/2025 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means **State Bill Page:** https://www.leqislature.ohio.gov/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-420

HB421 ALLOW PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION BY INITIATIVE (CLICK G, THOMAS

D) To reduce unvoted property taxes by initiative and to name this act the

Taxpayers Freedom Trilogy – Act Two: Arresting Inside Millage.

Current Status: 9/15/2025 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means **State Bill Page:** https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-421

HB422 INCREASE PROPERTY TAX PASSAGE THRESHOLDS (CLICK G, NEWMAN J) To

increase the approval threshold required for passage of certain property taxes and to name this act the Taxpayers Freedom Trilogy – Act Three: The Triumph of the

Taxpayer.

Current Status: 9/15/2025 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means

State Bill Page: https://www.leqislature.ohio.gov/leqislation/leqislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-422

HB425 PROHIBIT TRESPASS, UNAUTHORIZED RECORDING-DRONES (HOOPS J) To



association management - government relations - strategic planning

prohibit trespass and types of unauthorized recording with an unmanned aerial vehicle system.

Current Status: 9/15/2025 - Referred to Committee House Transportation **State Bill Page:** https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-425

HB466 LEVY REQUIREMENT-PROPERTY TAX APPROVAL (LEAR B, RITTER K) To

require certain subdivisions to obtain the approval of the body that created the

subdivision before levying a property tax.

Current Status: 10/1/2025 - Referred to Committee House Local

Government

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-466

PROHIBIT PUBLIC EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION PAYMENTS (THOMAS D) To

prohibit a public employer from paying employee contributions to a state retirement

system.

Current Status: 10/22/2025 - House Public Insurance and Pensions,

(Second Hearing)

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-473

HB499 LAW CHANGES-COUNTY BUDGET COMMISSIONS (BARHORST T, KING A) To

modify the law governing county budget commissions and property taxation.

Current Status: 10/8/2025 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means **State Bill Page:** https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-499

HB520 ESTABLISH COUNTY BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEES (MATHEWS T, THOMAS

D) To establish and convene a Blue Ribbon Committee in each county to review and assess each taxing unit within the county and each county program or department to identify duplication of services and generally to streamline and improve county efficiency and effectiveness.

Current Status: 10/15/2025 - Introduced

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-HB-520

SB69 INTENTION TO REFORM-STATE PUBLIC RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

(ROMANCHUK M) To declare the General Assembly's intent to enact legislation to

reform the law governing the state's public retirement systems.

Current Status: 2/12/2025 - Referred to Committee Senate Financial

Institutions, Insurance and Technology

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-SB-69



association management - government relations - strategic planning

SB275 ELIGIBLE HOMEOWNERS-DEFER PROPERTY TAX PAYMENT (CRAIG H,

REYNOLDS M) To allow eligible homeowners to defer the payment of a portion of

their property taxes.

Current Status: 10/1/2025 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and

Means

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-

summary?id=GA136-SB-275

ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

RecoveryOhio embraced the goal to "end addiction stigma" at the year's final advisory council meeting, including stereotypes, prejudice and active discrimination against those with "substance use disorder" (SUD). The initiative of Gov. Mike DeWine, dating to his first moments in office, held its fourth-quarter advisory council meeting last week at the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS).

In addition to renaming the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) as the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) effective earlier this month on Oct. 1, operating budget HB96 (Stewart) calls on DBH to study over the biennium both effects and treatments of multiple different drugs. DBH received \$300,000 in each fiscal year in HB96 to conduct a "High-THC Cannabis Impact Research Study" in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Commerce and with a public university, public safety agency or research consortium to assess regulation and the health risks and benefits of cannabis use.

AGING

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) announced the launch of the Ohio Residents' Rights Council in recognition of Residents' Rights Month. The new statewide group will bring together presidents of nursing home resident councils across Ohio and will facilitate discussion and collaboration, allowing them to share their experience living in nursing homes, exchange effective practices for resident councils and discuss current issues affecting residents.

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Cleveland Browns and the city of Cleveland will work together to move the team to a new domed stadium in Brook Park, Haslam Sports Group (HSG) and Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb have announced. As part of the agreement, HSG will pay the city of Cleveland \$100 million to "accelerate the lakefront transformation and prepare the current lakefront stadium site for redevelopment," HSG and the city said in a news



association management - government relations - strategic planning

release. The city of Cleveland has agreed to support the Browns' new dome in the suburb of Brook Park.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Ohio Attorney General's Office expanded to 37 the number of counties receiving opioid jail grants Friday through its first three rounds of funding, targeted to hit \$60 million over the next several years. The Opioid Remediation Grant Program awards county jails up to \$200,000 annually to hire a full-time addiction-services coordinator or contract with outside services for opioids and other addictive drugs. A separate, \$50,000 grant funds opioid withdrawal medications.

BUSINESS/CORPORATE

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors elected 17 new board members at meetings held on May 28 and Sept. 10, the organization said.

U.S. Sen. Jon Husted (R-OH), U.S. Rep. Mike Carey (R-Columbus) and House Speaker Matt Huffman (R-Lima) were among speakers at an Ohio Chamber of Commerce event Tuesday, discussing various issues related to economic development, among other topics.

Automaker Stellantis is investing nearly \$400 million in its Toledo Assembly Complex to build a new midsize truck, the company has announced. Production of the new truck is expected to create more than 900 jobs, Stellantis said in a news release. The plant is expected to begin building the vehicle in 2028.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The work of change that needs to happen for the LGBTQ+ community is not a solo act, said Phyllis "Seven" Harris, executive director of the LGBTQ+ Community Center of Greater Cleveland (CCGC) who spoke to the City Club of Cleveland Friday on pride, progress and purpose in the Ohio LGBTQ+ community.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Former Ohio Republican Party Chairman and lobbyist Matt Borges could be headed home sooner than expected after his early release from the Federal Prison Camp (FPC) in Morgantown, WV Wednesday and transfer to a Cincinnati halfway house. Borges, who pleaded not guilty and was convicted along with former Ohio House Speaker Larry Householder in a scheme to funnel more than \$1 billion in ratepayer subsidies to FirstEnergy, suggests in a recent email to his wife that his stay in Cincinnati could be a



association management - government relations - strategic planning

short one prior to home confinement in capital-area Bexley. Either or both must run a full year before he is eligible for supervised release.

The DeWine administration and federal and local law enforcement have executed their latest operation as part of the Cleveland Violent Crime Reduction Initiative as the Trump administration pursues crime mitigation in major U.S. cities. Agencies including the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), Cleveland Division of Police, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and others arrested eight people on major felony charges including an as-yet unidentified 17-year-old minor wanted in the Cleveland Flats mass shooting where crowds had gathered on Sept. 7, 2024 for the NFL Browns' opener.

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) school Superintendent Jennifer Sanders is retiring after six and a half years with the Ohio Central School System (OCSS) and three decades with DRC and the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS), where she also served as superintendent. Sanders announced on Oct. 9 that she would leave DRC later this month, having founded EdCorr & Workforce Solutions one month ago.

A Zanesville man faces felony charges for alleged death threats against Noble County Sheriff Jason Mackie. Tyler Eschman, 30, was arrested last week following an investigation by the Ohio Attorney General's Office/Bureau of Criminal Investigation's (BCI) Special Investigations Unit and arraigned Friday. He is being held on cash bond of \$100,000.

The DeWine administration's crime reduction initiative is continuing in Cincinnati this week as Police Chief Teresa Theetge reportedly negotiates her resignation over safety concerns. Law enforcement partners including the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) and Hamilton County Sheriff's Office supported an operation yielding arrests for assaulting a police officer, strangulation and illegally possessing a firearm, among other offenses.

DEATH PENALTY

Gov. Mike DeWine announced the delay of two executions because of continuing issues with getting drugs for lethal injunctions. The following individuals received reprieves from the governor:

- Antonio Franklin, who was scheduled to be executed on Feb. 11, 2026. The new date of execution is Feb. 15, 2029.
- James Trimble, who was scheduled to be executed on March 12, 2026. The new date of execution is March 14, 2029.



association management - government relations - strategic planning

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/URBAN REVITALIZATION

The Ohio Department of Development (DOD) is now accepting applications on a year-round rolling basis for the state's Motion Picture Tax Credit, which provides a 30 percent refundable tax credit on cast and crew wages plus other eligible in-state spending.

EDUCATION

A recent cost-benefit analysis by Scioto Analysis of a universal school meal program in Ohio estimates that for one school year, the cost of providing the option of free school breakfasts and lunches to all students in Ohio to be approximately \$350 million between direct costs and "tax inefficiencies." However, according to the analysis, the return on such an investment could grow as high as \$876 million, taking into account such benefits as direct savings for families, cafeteria staff and food suppliers; the economic value of time saved by parents who no longer would have to plan student meals at home; reduced health care costs due to reduced obesity; and students' increased lifetime earning as predicted by improved test scores induced by improved nutrition.

The regular meeting of the State Board of Education (SBOE) on Tuesday dove into potential new frameworks for the state's teachers to operate in the classroom and also to develop as educators. SBOE Director of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness Yenetta Harper presented a potential update to the Ohio Standards for Professional Learning. Harper said the standards were created in 2015 and updated in 2022, and the proposed changes are informed by national nonprofit Learning Forward.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) is likely to hold an emergency referendum vote on a bylaw that would allow high school student-athletes to be compensated for their name, image and likeness (NIL) because of a lawsuit filed in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, OHSAA has announced. The lawsuit was filed by Jasmine Brown, the mother of Wayne High School wide receiver Jamier Brown, a five-star recruit who has verbally committed to attend Ohio State University.

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) held its regular commission meeting Thursday on location at a school in Columbus that now serves 900 middle and high school students with an emphasis on STEM education. This project is a partnership between OFCC, Metro Schools, Ohio State University (OSU) and Battelle. Metro Schools, a semi-public, non-charter privately funded high school located in Columbus, started an extensive renovation in 2021 of a historic middle school building in the city. According to OSU, OFCC contributed \$15 million to the renovation, Battelle contributed \$13.5 million, and the partnership involved other community donors as well.

ELECTIONS 2026



association management - government relations - strategic planning

The debate over the Republican spending law dubbed the "Big Beautiful Bill" passed by Congress in July fueled much of the spending in congressional races so far in this campaign cycle. According to data provided by national ad tracking and analytics company AdImpact, most of the spending occurred in May and June in U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur's (D-Toledo) Ninth Congressional District and U.S. Rep. Emilia Sykes' (D-Akron) 13th Congressional District -- which also are the two most competitive races in the state going into the 2026 cycle.

Treasurer Robert Sprague's campaign for secretary of state announced Tuesday that it is now accepting Bitcoin, which it said will make it the first campaign for statewide office in Ohio history to welcome cryptocurrency donations.

In the third quarter of this year, former U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) outraised incumbent U.S. Sen. Jon Husted (R-OH), who himself has raised more than other Republican candidates at this point of the campaign. Brown's campaign reported \$5.8 million in contributions, \$1.06 million in expenditures, and \$5.95 million on hand. Brown's campaign said he has raised \$8 million since he entered the race, including \$1 million into affiliated joint fundraising committees. Husted's campaign reported nearly \$2.8 million in contributions, \$382,972 in contributions, and \$5.03 million on hand. His campaign said Wednesday that it had raised \$3.7 million across all entities, including affiliated joint fundraising committees.

Ninth District Court of Appeals Judge Jill Lanzinger joined the crowded Republican primary for Ohio Supreme Court in 2026 as candidates seek to unseat Justice Jennifer Brunner.

The Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) State Executive Committee voted at its meeting last weekend to recognize the African American Caucus as an official caucus of the party. ODP said the caucus will focus on community-based outreach and candidate recruitment ahead of the 2026 election cycle.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The gubernatorial campaign of Democrat Amy Acton announced the endorsement of Ohio Senate Minority Whip Kent Smith (D-Euclid).

ENVIRONMENT

Work has been completed to restore the Ottawa River within Jermain Park in Toledo, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) announced recently. The project included the stabilization of 1,450 linear feet of eroding streambank, enhancement of seven acres of riparian buffer, and the improvement of 2.7 acres of wetlands and in-stream habitat,



association management - government relations - strategic planning

according to a news release from GLC. This work is expected to improve river health by reducing erosion and the amount of sediment entering the river, provide wood and rock habitats to benefit river wildlife, and improve wetlands that can hold and filter water during heavy rain events.

While the H2Ohio initiative is proving effective statewide in reducing the flow of nutrients into the state's rivers and wetlands which contribute to harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie, H2Ohio program managers and other researchers say more time and more rainfall can bring the program to its full potential. The 2024 Annual Report from the H2Ohio Wetland Monitoring Program shows that wetland projects that have been constructed since Gov. Mike DeWine launched the H2Ohio Initiative in 2019 have been effective in reducing the amount of both phosphorous and nitrogen flowing out of wetlands into the state's water supply in nearly every wetland studied.

The Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA) has awarded \$10.9 million in low-interest loans to Ohio communities to make water quality improvements and improve wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. For the month of September, OWDA funded six projects that will provide improvements and replace aging infrastructure. The six awarded projects received an interest rate ranging from 4.27 percent to 4.88 percent.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) has announced round two of the H2Ohio Technology Assessment Program (TAP), which identifies and investigates innovative technologies to address harmful algal blooms (HABs).

FEDERAL

As the federal government shutdown drags on, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks and Ohio Head Start Association expressed concern about its effects on hunger relief and early learning access for families.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Senate President Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) named Sen. Jane Timken (R-Canton) as chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee, effectively trading places with Sen. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson), who has served as chair and who now becomes vice chair of the committee. Roegner also chairs the Senate General Government Committee.

Two House members gave sponsor testimony Tuesday on legislation that would address the safekeeping and management of unclaimed digital assets in a way that the state currently handles unclaimed funds. Reps. Steve Demetriou (R-Chagrin Falls) and Josh Williams (R-Oregon) spoke to the House Technology and Innovation Committee on their HB426 Tuesday, with Demetriou saying it "represents a necessary modernization of



association management - government relations - strategic planning

Ohio's laws to ensure our state remains ahead of the curve in how we handle and protect digital assets."

The General Assembly should move quickly to clarify that raffles can be operated online after several volunteer fire departments received cease and desist letters from the Ohio Attorney General's Office, according to Reps. Meredith Craig (R-Smithville) and David Thomas (R-Jefferson). "Over the past year, local nonprofits -- including volunteer fire departments -- have received cease-and-desist notices from the Ohio Attorney General's Office for conducting online raffles. Current law only allows for the sale of in-person raffle tickets," Craig told the House Finance Committee during sponsor testimony on HB476 (Craig-D. Thomas) on Tuesday.

Citing the relatively low cost of a home inspection compared to the cost of potential future home repairs that an inspection could save a homeowner, Jason Kunkel of Ohio Realtors urged the General Assembly's continued support on Tuesday for the Ohio Home Inspector Board (OHIB) established in 132-SB255 (McColley). During his occupational licensing review testimony to the House General Government Committee, Kunkel said that upwards of 98-99 percent of real estate transactions that come to his real estate brokerage office include an inspection, with rare exceptions where a seller with multiple offers might waive such an inspection.

Witnesses before the Senate Financial Institutions, Insurance and Technology Committee Tuesday supported requiring some sort of a parental approval for children to download and install apps on their devices. Which approach to take in order to reach that goal is a question that the committee is working through as it hears two separate bills on the issue. SB167 (Reynolds) would require the option to indicate a user is a minor when setting up a phone. If they do, the child's account is then linked to the parents'. From there, parental consent is required each time a minor attempts to download or make an in-app purchase. SB175 (Patton), however, requires both app stores and operating system providers to request the user's age at the time of account creation, and it prohibits app developers from providing minors access to adult content. It further requires app developers to declare which content or features are for adults and which are for minors, and requires them to build easily accessible parental controls into their apps.

Wednesday's House session included passage of HB162 (Click), regarding parental access to children's medical records; HB227 (Robb Blasdel-Johnson), regarding excavation; road naming bills HB275 (McClain) and HB325 (Holmes-Ritter); and SCR2 (Johnson), urging action to secure the electric grid.

Wednesday's Senate session included passage of SB35 (Cirino-Reynolds), regarding supported decision-making for adults with disabilities; SB61 (Gavarone-Manning),



association management - government relations - strategic planning

regarding court rules; SB103 (Wilkin), regarding alternative rate plans for natural gas companies; and SB217 (Landis), a land conveyance bill.

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) announced it will host trick-or-treat and spooky Statehouse tours on Halloween for the first time. The trick-or-treat tours will take place on Friday, Oct. 31, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. and will offer children the opportunity to explore the Statehouse in costume while listening to age-appropriate facts about the building and its different functions. Children will receive a treat at various stops throughout the tour. Those interested are asked to RSVP by Wednesday, Oct. 29 to tours@ohiostatehouse.org.

In other legislative action, House Technology and Innovation Committee reported out HB159 (Santucci-Demetriou), to create the manufacturing technologies assistance grant program; Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee reported out HCR13 (Hoops-Robinson), urging designation of the Buckeye Trail as a National Scenic Trail; Senate Education Committee reported out SB156 (Cutrona), regarding the success sequence curriculum; House Natural Resources Committee reported out SB152 (Brenner), regarding euthanasia at wild animal rehabilitation facilities; and Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee reported out SB223 (Patton), regarding park discounts for veterans and service members.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) data on mosquito-borne diseases updated last week showed there have been 34 human cases of West Nile virus this year through Oct. 9, an increase of two from data released on Oct. 3. ODH also showed 40 cases of La Crosse/California encephalitis virus through Oct. 9, with no increase from the Oct. 3 update. They include 26 males and 14 females, spread among 24 counties.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Kent State University (KSU) recently announced the creation of a new support fund for the KSU School of Theater and Dance after receiving a \$1 million gift from KSU alumna Roe Green and the Roe Green Foundation. The gift will establish the Roe Green Musical Theater and Porthouse Artistic Directorship, according to the university.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) financed more than \$1.3 billion in homebuyer assistance last year and allocated more than \$1.2 billion for the creation or preservation of 8,183 affordable housing units. Those were among the highlights in



association management - government relations - strategic planning

OHFA's 2025 annual report, which OHFA Executive Director and former legislator Bill Beagle presented to the House Development Committee on Wednesday.

MARIJUANA/HEMP

Franklin County Court of Common Pleas Judge Carl Aveni on Tuesday granted a temporary restraining order (TRO) blocking Gov. Mike DeWine's executive order banning the sale of intoxicating hemp products in the state. The TRO will be in effect for 14 days, Aveni wrote in his order. A preliminary injunction hearing is set for Tuesday, Oct. 28 at 9 a.m. Last week, DeWine issued an emergency order requiring retailers to remove all intoxicating hemp products from their shelves and refrain from selling the products beginning on Tuesday, Oct. 14. Businesses filed a lawsuit shortly thereafter, arguing the governor doesn't have the authority to unilaterally prohibit the sale of the products.

House Speaker Matt Huffman (R-Lima) told reporters the temporary restraining order blocking Gov. Mike DeWine's executive order to ban the sale of intoxicating hemp products "muddies the water worse than it was before" on that issue but hasn't created more urgency for the Legislature to act. House Minority Leader Dani Isaacsohn (D-Cincinnati) told reporters he is focused on the Legislature's role to ensure communities are safe "by finding common-sense regulations and laws around intoxicating substances."

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Leaders from the administration and General Assembly on Tuesday addressed United Way's affiliates about policies to help Ohioans the community organizations describe as ALICE -- asset-limited, income constrained, employed. The United Way organizations convened their ALICE Policy Summit in the Statehouse Atrium, with a keynote address by Gov. Mike DeWine and remarks from lawmakers and cabinet officials. DeWine focused much of his speech on his priorities related to children.

PARKS/RECREATION

Gov. Mike DeWine's newly named Public Safety in Ohio State Parks Working Group will hold its first public meeting at the Ohio Department of Public Safety, 1970 W. Broad St., Columbus on Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025 at 10 a.m. Announced last week, the working group follows one of DeWine's line-item vetoes from operating budget HB96 (Stewart). It will examine how state and local governments provide emergency services at the state's 76 state parks.

Warmer than average temperatures statewide in October have kept the state's foliage from plunging into peak fall color as of mid-month. But as those temperatures begin to dip, the



association management - government relations - strategic planning

shores of Lake Erie are becoming the first parts of the state to see the leaves change. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR's) Fall Foliage Viewer is beginning to show peak color setting in on a sliver of the state's northeast corner as of Thursday, Oct. 16. A map showing the latest fall color updates can be seen HERE.

PENSIONS

Attorney General Dave Yost won a few procedural victories, one by default, as his case against State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) Board of Trustees Chair Rudy Fichtenbaum and former trustee Wade Steen heads to trial at month's end. Yost sued the two trustees last year, alleging breach of their fiduciary duties, claims that Steen and Fichtenbaum strongly deny. The case is set for trial Monday, Oct. 27.

Changes to the makeup of the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) Board of Trustees will remain on hold after a Franklin County common pleas judge issued a preliminary injunction to take the place of an expiring temporary restraining order. Judge Carl Aveni wrote that lawmakers violated the single-subject and three-readings rules of the Ohio Constitution when they attached the STRS governance reforms to the budget bill, HB96 (Stewart), at the tail end of deliberation on the bill.

The House Public Insurance and Pensions Committee took testimony Wednesday from a host of first responder groups urging enactment of a trio of bills to bolster their retirement options, arguing they are critical for recruitment and retention of officers and public safety in general. The committee took proponent testimony on the following measures:

- HB280 (Abrams-T. Hall), the latest in a series of bills seeking to increase employer contributions to the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (OP&F) and equalize those contributions across the police and fire jurisdictions. Firefighter employers currently contribute substantially more per employee than police agencies.
- HB73 (K. Miller-T. Hall), which would create a Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) in the law enforcement division of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS-LE), akin to the program currently offered by OP&F.
- HB424 (Willis-Craig), which would lift some restrictions on the transfer of service credit from OP&F or the Highway Patrol Retirement System (HPRS) to OPERS.

The State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) Board of Trustees re-elected retired economics professor Rudy Fichtenbaum as chair Thursday and chose Berea teacher Pat Davidson as vice chair, now that a preliminary injunction is in place for the foreseeable future to block governance reforms included in the most recent state budget.



association management - government relations - strategic planning

PEOPLE

Long-time lobbyist and most recently a partner in the law firm of Barnes & Thornburg David Paragas died Monday, Oct. 13 at the age of 64 following a 2024 diagnosis of gastroesophageal cancer. A celebration of life is set for Friday, Oct. 17 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. at The Stack at Municipal Light Plant in the Arena District, 589 W. Nationwide Blvd., Columbus. The service is to begin at 6 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) Division of State Fire Marshal (SFM) recently announced \$4 million in grant funding to help fire departments across the state purchase modern radio communications equipment. Applications are now open for the Multi-Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS) Grant. Applications will be accepted through Saturday, Oct. 25, 2025. The MARCS Grant application can be found HERE.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

With the task of drawing a new congressional map in the hands of the Ohio Redistricting Commission and the clock ticking on the panel to act, Gov. Mike DeWine announced he will convene the panel Tuesday, Oct. 21. The commission will meet at 9 a.m. in the Senate Finance Hearing Room.

STATE GOVERNMENT

All but two state agencies have achieved a regulatory reduction goal of 30 percent since the passage of legislation requiring them to do so, according to the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR). They announced Thursday that all state agencies required to submit reports on their rule reduction activity had now done so. While the co-chairs did not name those two agencies, JCARR staff confirmed to *Hannah News* that they are the Ohio EPA and the Department of Veterans Services.

TAXATION

Amid legislative debate on property tax changes, the Ohio Municipal League Board of Trustees released a set of recommendations it said are meant to balance tax relief for vulnerable residents with the need to preserve essential services. They include expanding the homestead exemption and eliminating the non-business credit but expanding the owner-occupancy credit, among others.

WORKFORCE



association management - government relations - strategic planning

The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and nonprofit Ohio Excels hosted this year's "Aim Hire" conference at the Hilton in downtown Columbus Thursday, with speakers including Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel, Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) Chancellor Mike Duffey and Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) Director Steve Dackin. Sen. Kyle Koehler (R-Springfield) and Rep. Bride Sweeney (D-Westlake) participated in a panel discussion in the conference as well.

actionTRACK - Hannah News Service, Inc.

The Fitzgibbon Group 88 E. Broad Street, Suite 1450 Columbus, Ohio 43215 www.fitzgibbongroup.com