



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

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 May 8, 2026

- HB23** **CREATE ESCAPED CONVICT ALERT PROGRAM, ALLOW PARENT COMPANY APPLICATION** (ROEMER B, WILLIAMS J) To create the escaped convict alert program and to allow a prior parent company of a bank to apply to the Secretary of State for the appointment and commission of banking police officers.
Current Status: 12/1/2025 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 3/2/26
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: 12/19/2025 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 3/20/26
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: 3/24/2026 - House Technology and Innovation, (Second 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



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

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

Current Status: 12/19/2025 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 3/20/26

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: 5/12/2026 - House Finance, (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: 3/18/2026 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/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.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-422>



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

- HB425 PROHIBIT TRESPASS, UNAUTHORIZED RECORDING-DRONES** (HOOPS J) To prohibit trespass and types of unauthorized recording with an unmanned aerial vehicle system.
Current Status: 3/10/2026 - House Transportation, (First Hearing)
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: 3/4/2026 - House Local Government, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-466>
- HB473 PROHIBIT PUBLIC EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION PAYMENTS** (THOMAS D) To prohibit a public employer from paying employee contributions to a state retirement system.
Current Status: 2/25/2026 - House Public Insurance and Pensions, (Third 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>
- HB503 REQUIRE VOTER APPROVAL-RECIPROCITY TAX CREDITS** (ROEMER B, WORKMAN H) To require voter approval to reduce or repeal a municipal income tax reciprocity credit, to allow a voter initiative to enact or increase such a credit, and to require the Department of Taxation to conduct a study of municipal income taxation.
Current Status: 3/24/2026 - Senate Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-503>
- 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: 2/4/2026 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Local Government, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-520>



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

- HB598 ALLOW RESIDENTIAL STABILITY ZONES-TAXES** (SIGRIST M, HOOPS J) To authorize local governments to create residential stability zones where homeowners may qualify for a partial property tax exemption.
Current Status: 3/11/2026 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-598>
- HB608 LAW CHANGES-PROPERTY TAXES** (THOMAS D, GLASSBURN C) To modify the law governing property taxes and other local taxes.
Current Status: 2/4/2026 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-608>
- HB673 PROPERTY TAX CREDIT EXPANSION** (STEPHENS J) To expand the statewide owner-occupied residence property tax credit to all tax levies.
Current Status: 2/25/2026 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-673>
- HB695 NDA PROHIBITION-LOCAL OFFICIALS** (BIRD A, STEWART B) To prohibit certain local elected officials from entering into nondisclosure agreements.
Current Status: 3/11/2026 - House Local Government, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-695>
- HB746 POLITICAL SUBDIVISION HEALTH PLANS** (THOMAS D) To allow a political subdivision to participate in the same state health plan offered to state employees.
Current Status: 3/18/2026 - Referred to Committee House Local Government
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-746>
- HB833 REGARDING RETIREMENT SYSTEM INVESTMENTS** (LAMPTON B) Regarding investment options for state retirement system defined contribution plans.
Current Status: 4/27/2026 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-833>
- 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->



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

[summary?id=GA136-SB-69](#)

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: 10/28/2025 - Senate Ways and Means, (First Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-275>

Friday, May 8, 2026

ABORTION/REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito at least temporarily put on hold Monday a Friday appellate ruling that upended a Biden-era regulation allowing an abortion medication to be prescribed remotely. The U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals granted a request for a stay of the regulation on prescribing mifepristone, which a district court had decided was flawed but had declined to stay on its own. But on Monday, Alito issued an order for the U.S. Supreme Court freezing the Fifth Circuit's ruling through 5 p.m. on Monday, May 11. Taking mifepristone is the most prevalent form of inducing abortion in Ohio. Of about 25,000 abortions reported in Ohio in 2025, mifepristone was used in about 15,000, according to the latest annual report on abortions from the Ohio Department of Health. In the litigation, the state of Louisiana said the remote dispensing of mifepristone was facilitating nearly 1,000 abortions in violation of state law, which generally bans administering, prescribing, procuring or selling a drug like mifepristone for abortion. The state also cited expenses its Medicaid program has borne for women who face complications from abortions caused by mifepristone.

AGING

Building on its efforts in recent years to provide more informational resources to older Ohioans and their families, the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) celebrated the first day of May as Older Americans Month and Older Ohioans Month by introducing a new collection of online resources called the Ohio Aging Compass (OAC) to help older Ohioans find health care, housing, caregiving, transportation and more in one central hub. ODA Director Ursel J. McElroy said OAC is the result of stakeholder sessions and community feedback from each of Ohio's 88 counties to build a "gateway to aging well," citing what she called a tremendous opportunity to engage older Ohioans seeking resources and a strong desire for the resources to be in one centralized platform. The compass, which can be found [HERE](#), combines the Long-Term Care Quality Navigator with the newly announced Healthy Aging Resource Hub and Aging Data Explorer tools.



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

AMERICA 250-OHIO

This year's America 250-Ohio celebration will give a nod this weekend to the state's history of natural conservation through the years at a celebration near Circleville. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Parks and Watercraft will host a celebration of creativity and nature at A.W. Marion State Park in Pickaway County on Saturday, May 9, from noon to 4 p.m. in conjunction with local art gallery ArtsaRound. The event will dedicate a new historical marker at the park honoring namesake Alonzo W. Marion, a Pickaway County native who built a life rooted in agriculture, environmental stewardship and public service. The event will feature live music and performances at the A.W. Marion Monument, as well as a lakeside watercolor painting program from 1:30-2:30 p.m. and a tree journaling hike from 3-4 p.m.

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Gov. Mike DeWine officially appointed author and speaker Edward Julian Sr. of Blacklick as the fourth Ohio poet laureate, succeeding Kari Gunter-Seymour. Julian's term began Friday, April 17, and will end Dec. 31, 2027. Originally from Cleveland and founder of the Begin Within Initiative, LLC -- an organization committed to skills coaching, reentry-focused consulting, mentorship and motivational speaking -- Julian plans to broaden access to poetry by taking the artform into educational settings, correctional and reentry facilities and public spaces, the Ohio Arts Council (OAC) said. After spending 14 years in federal prison, Julian chose to pursue "accountability, therapy and continuous self-improvement," which ultimately led to a career in advocacy through the arts. As the state's poet laureate, Julian will continue to share the story of how he's "confronted struggle, taken accountability and stoked positive change," OAC said.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost will resign effective Sunday, June 7 and start a new role the following day as vice president for strategic research and innovation at the national nonprofit law firm Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), according to a social media post by Yost and announcements by ADF and Gov. Mike DeWine. "I've been honored to serve Ohio, and will continue to fight for freedom," Yost wrote. DeWine said he will give the appointment of Yost's successor "thoughtful and deliberate consideration" and noted he previously served as attorney general himself.

Yost announced his office had reached an agreement with Nexstar Media Group as the company seeks to acquire rival Tegna and other states join an antitrust lawsuit seeking to block the merger. Yost said the agreement, announced April 30, "protects the independence of local journalism and ensures that Ohioans have a choice for local news and programming. Journalistic independence is a cornerstone principle of our



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

democracy," Yost said. "I'm pleased that Nexstar has committed to upholding local news standards without going to court." Under the proposed \$6.2 billion merger with Tegna, Nexstar would require several television stations in Ohio. A federal judge placed the sale on hold in April. Yost said the memorandum of understanding his office reached with Nexstar secures commitments from the company regarding its management of WBNS-TV in Columbus and WKYC-TV in Cleveland -- the two markets where the company would own dual stations following the merger.

BEHAVIOR HEALTH

An embattled youth treatment center using facilities owned by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and licensed by the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) says the Ohio Supreme Court should force the DeWine administration to release three quarters of a million dollars earmarked for the Mohican Youth Star Academy in the FY26-27 budget. DBH describes the private facility as a "troubled" institution in a court filing Monday -- but Mohican calls those and past misconduct claims "unmeritorious." The 140-acre campus was carved out of the Mohican-Memorial State Forest during the Great Depression and went through several uses before the former Ohio Youth Commission took over in the early 1960s and operated it as the Mohican Juvenile Correctional Facility (MoJCF) under the renamed Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) until 2010, when it closed as a state-run property and reverted to ODNR ownership.

FY26-27 BUDGET

Two months before the end of FY26, the state's General Revenue Fund (GRF) tax revenues continue to come in ahead of projections, exceeding estimates through April by nearly \$1.2 billion or 4.9 percent according to preliminary data released Thursday by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM). Revenues for the month of April alone were \$338.9 million or 13.3 percent over estimates. In addition, the non-auto sales tax collections were \$65.9 million or 5.8 percent higher than the monthly estimate and \$282.2 million or 2.8 percent higher than the year-to-date estimate. Auto sales tax collections surpassed the estimate for the month by \$10.2 million or 5 percent and are running nearly \$59.5 million over for the year. However, cutting into the sales tax surpluses is the \$44.9 million that was transferred for the Sales Tax Holiday. That brings those two taxes to a total of nearly \$296.8 million or 2.5 percent over estimates for the fiscal year.

ECONOMY

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced Friday that Ohio's unemployment rate fell from 4.2 percent in February to 4.1 percent in March as



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

nonagricultural wage and salary employment increased 12,500 over the month. The numbers, which were released later than normal due to last year's federal government shutdown, showed the number of workers unemployed in Ohio in March was 243,000, down from 251,000 in February 2026. The number of unemployed has decreased by 45,000 in the past 12 months from 288,000. The March unemployment rate for Ohio decreased 0.7 percentage points from 4.8 percent in March 2025. The U.S. unemployment rate for March 2026 was 4.3 percent, down from 4.4 percent in February 2026 and up from 4.2 percent in March 2025.

ELECTIONS 2026

More Ohioans cast a ballot during Tuesday's primary election than the two previous gubernatorial primaries, according to the secretary of state's office. Tuesday's preliminary results show 1,781,296 ballots have been counted, with 1,073 military and overseas ballots still outstanding and 10,778 provisional ballots outstanding. Unofficial turnout in Tuesday's election is listed at 22.56 percent. That compares to the 2022 gubernatorial primary, when Gov. Mike DeWine was running for re-election and faced off against Joe Blystone, Ron Hood and Jim Renacci in the Republican primary, and Democrats Nan Whaley and John Cranley battled for the Democratic nomination in a race that saw Whaley emerge as the winner. Final results for that election showed 1,659,377 ballots counted, with official voter turnout at 20.88 percent. In 2018, the last gubernatorial primary election without an incumbent on the ballot saw DeWine defeat Mary Taylor and Richard Cordray defeat Larry Ealy, Dennis John, Bill O'Neill, Paul Ray and Joe Schiavoni for the Democratic nomination. In that race, 1,673,152 ballots were counted for a turnout percentage of 21.07 percent.

Results from Tuesday show unopposed Democratic gubernatorial candidate Amy Acton currently has 762,457 votes, while in 2022, 509,146 votes were cast in the Democratic primary. In 2018, 688,788 votes were cast in the Democratic gubernatorial primary. Meanwhile, Vivek Ramaswamy currently has won about 82 percent of the 817,159 votes cast in the Republican gubernatorial primary. In 2022, 1,080,083 votes were cast in the Republican gubernatorial primary, and in 2018, 834,967 votes were cast in the Republican gubernatorial primary.

General Assembly incumbents survived unscathed in their primary elections Tuesday evening, but lawmakers looking to move to the other chamber were not as lucky. Facing tough primary challengers, former Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) and Reps. Ron Ferguson (R-Wintersville) and Rodney Creech (R-West Alexandria) easily won on Tuesday, with the latter two facing former lawmakers Frank Hoagland and J. Todd Smith, respectively. Stephens defeated businessman Larry Kidd, who had earned the endorsement of the Ohio Republican Party. Also winning their primaries were Reps. Dontavius Jarrells (D-Columbus), Brian Stewart (R-Ashville), Brian Lorenz (R-Powell),



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

Jean Schmidt (R-Loveland), Brian Lampton (R-Beavercreek) and Gary Click (R-Vickery), and Sens. Kent Smith (D-Euclid) and Bill DeMora (D-Columbus).

However, those looking to switch to the other chamber were not as fortunate. Rep. Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon) lost to former Rep. Craig Riedel in a close Senate District 1 Republican primary, while Rep. Beth Lear (R-Galena) and Sen. Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware) lost their respective bids to switch chambers for each other's seats. Lear lost to Ryan Rivers in the 19th Senate District Republican primary, and Brenner lost to former Rep. Shawn Stevens in the 61st House District. All three races saw large spending by the super PAC American Conservative Fund, which has been funded by gambling website DraftKings, which backed Hoops, Brenner and Rivers.

Former Rep. Jay Edwards, with the backing of Vice President JD Vance and U.S. Sen. Bernie Moreno (R-OH), defeated Sen. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) in the hotly contested Republican primary for state treasurer and will now face Democratic nominee and Cincinnati Councilman Seth Walsh in November. Roegner, who had the backing of now-Republican gubernatorial nominee Vivek Ramaswamy, had been running neck and neck with Edwards throughout the evening before conceding shortly before 11 p.m.

In the secretary of state's race, Treasurer Robert Sprague easily defeated newcomer Marcell Strbich, and will face Rep. Allison Russo (D-Upper Arlington), who won the Democratic nomination handily over newcomer and Southwest Ohio cancer doctor Brian Hambley. Both Sprague and Russo earned nearly 70 percent of the vote in their respective races.

In the attorney general's race, attorney John Kulewicz earned more than 60 percent of the vote to defeat former Rep. Elliot Forhan, and will face current state Auditor Keith Faber, who was unopposed in the Republican primary for attorney general. At an event in Columbus Tuesday evening, Kulewicz said he was honored to be the Democratic nominee and that if elected, he would represent "a people's lawyer who will stand up for the rule of law, fight consumer fraud, take on wage theft, prosecute Medicaid provider fraud and make the economy of Ohio work better for everyone."

Republican entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy cruised to victory Tuesday night over Perrysburg automotive engineer Casey Putsch with more than 80 percent of the vote based on preliminary returns in the GOP gubernatorial primary. The Associated Press called the race for Ramaswamy shortly after polls closed, and the candidate spoke to supporters at an Arena District bar in Columbus soon afterward. Ramaswamy was preceded in speaking by his running mate, Senate President Rob McColley (R-Napoleon), who called the results "one of the most historically dominant primary wins we've seen in modern history in the state of Ohio."



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

In remarks Tuesday evening, uncontested Democratic gubernatorial nominee Dr. Amy Acton and running mate David Pepper continued to contrast themselves against the Republican ticket of Vivek Ramaswamy and Rob McColley, following their primary victory. Acton drew on her childhood story of growing up in poor conditions, including living in a tent during the winter for a time, saying that showed her who helped and who "looked the other way." She said people around the state are struggling even as they do everything right and that she refuses to look the other way. Acton shared a specific example of a young family in Clermont County facing \$300,000 in medical debt amid rising costs for utilities, gasoline and property taxes, and how the family now needs child care for their two twins who'd been born prematurely.

Former Rep. Derek Merrin secured the GOP nomination Tuesday night for Ohio's highest profile U.S. House race, setting up a rematch with U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Toledo), who sits in a district newly redrawn to be even more favorable to Republicans. In the next most competitive race, for U.S. Rep. Greg Landsman's (D-Cincinnati) seat, Eric Conroy - a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and the CIA who won the endorsement of President Donald Trump -- prevailed in a three-way primary.

Former Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Colleen O'Donnell will face Supreme Court Justice Jennifer Brunner in November after winning a four-candidate Republican primary. Brunner is currently the only Democratic justice on the Supreme Court and had no primary challenger. With nearly all precincts reporting statewide, O'Donnell was leading with about 32 percent of the vote, while her closest opponent was Fifth District Court of Appeals Judge Andrew King with close to 30 percent. Ninth District Court of Appeals Judge Jill Flagg Lanzinger had close to 20 percent, followed by Second District Court of Appeals Judge Ronald Lewis at about 18 percent.

The majority of school tax issues on the May primary ballot went down to defeat, with an unusually higher proportion of new money requests bringing down the win rate, according to results compiled by the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). OSBA said Tuesday's ballot was atypical, with only 16 out of 66 issues seeking renewal of existing funding arrangements. By contrast, about half of the funding issues on the May 2025 primary ballot were renewals. The lineup also included a large crop of school district income tax requests, most of which failed in the preliminary count of election results, OSBA said. Overall, 24 of 66 school funding issues were approved. Out of 32 income tax requests, 24 were defeated.

Ohio library systems saw a large majority of their funding requests approved in the primary election Tuesday, including most requests for new funding, according to the Ohio Library Council. With 13 systems seeking a total of 14 issues, only two levy requests failed: an additional 1.7 mill, 30-year levy for the Norwalk Public Library in



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

Huron County, which got only 43 percent voter approval; and an additional 0.5 million, 10-year levy for the Washington County Public Library, which failed narrowly, 48-52.

Only one of four levies to fund children services agencies won voter approval Tuesday, according to the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). Mercer County Job & Family Services' 10-year, 0.4 mill renewal levy request prevailed with 65 percent voter approval. In Clermont County, a renewal/increase levy request, for a 0.8 mill renewal and 0.2 mill increase for five years, failed, getting 46.5 percent support. In Guernsey County, a request for an additional 1.25 mill levy for 10 years saw 2,865 people vote against the levy, versus 1,488 in favor. In Portage County, a broader additional levy of 0.4 mills for human services that would have funded children services lost, getting 12,753 votes in favor versus 14,779 opposed.

Ohio voters approved 10 of 14 local funding issues for parks and recreation in the primary election in preliminary results, according to the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA). All nine renewal levy requests were approved. The fate of new funding issues was mixed.

According to the secretary of state's office, only one independent candidate has filed to run for statewide office in November. Monday was the deadline for independent candidates seeking to be on the Nov. 3, 2026 General Election ballot, to file their nominating petitions. Statewide candidates must file with the secretary of state's office. A spokesman for the office said Greg Levy filed to run as an independent for U.S. Senate.

One day before Ohio's primary election Democratic gubernatorial candidate Amy Acton appeared in Columbus to rally canvassers for her campaign with a message of making Ohio more affordable, ending corruption in the Statehouse and fighting to bring back services like public schools and libraries that make life better for all Ohioans.

GOP gubernatorial candidate Vivek Ramaswamy vowed to restore Ohio to the economic preeminence it enjoyed more than a century ago, attacked Democratic rival Amy Acton as a "socialist" and took questions on artificial intelligence (AI), education, immigration enforcement and other topics Monday at a campaign town hall event on the eve of the primary election.

Votes for Republican gubernatorial candidate Heather Hill will not count on Tuesday's primary ballot after the Ohio Supreme Court Monday dismissed her lawsuit challenging her disqualification due to her lieutenant governor pick withdrawing from the race. Hill had turned to the Ohio Supreme Court after Stuart Moats, her running mate when she filed to run for governor in February, withdrew from the ballot in the wake of a public spat on social media. Hill had attempted to replace Moats with Larry Barnett on the ballot, but Secretary of State Frank LaRose refused to accept the change, citing Ohio



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

Revised Code (ORC) 3513.311 (C), which only allows for candidates to be replaced on the ballot within 70 days of the election if the candidate dies.

According to the Ohio Secretary of State's Office, 358,939 Ohioans cast early ballots ahead of Tuesday's primary, including 235,604 who cast their ballots in-person by the end of early voting hours on Sunday. Overall, the secretary of state's office reported 396,242 absentee ballots have been requested, with 358,939 returned. Of those returned, 235,604 were cast in person and 123,335 were cast by mail. A majority of early votes, 235,745, were cast by Ohioans over the age of 65. Voters between the ages of 18-24 cast the least amount of early votes, 6,097.

The Delaware County Board of Elections did not abuse its discretion or act in clear disregard of applicable law in concluding that one of its members does not have a fixed habitation in Delaware County for purposes of voter registration or for purposes of election to the Ohio Republican Party State Central Committee for the 19th State Senate District, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled over the weekend. Republican board of elections member Melanie Leneghan had turned to the Ohio Supreme Court after the board of elections, in a 2-to-1 vote, ruled that Leneghan was not a resident of the county, cancelling her registration and disqualifying her from the primary ballot. The vote came after a protest hearing where Leneghan testified she and her husband had sold their Powell residence in January 2025, and that she owns a home in South Carolina, where her husband now lives.

Primary battles between a current state representative and former state senator, and a current and former lawmaker seeking to succeed Senate President Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) are leading the state in advertising spending ahead of Tuesday's primary. According to data collected by AdImpact, which tracks political spending, much of the primary advertising has been fueled by super PAC American Conservative Fund, which has been funded by gambling website DraftKings. Among the targets of the group is the 96th House District, where Rep. Ron Ferguson (R-Wintersville) is seeking to hold off former Sen. Frank Hoagland. According to AdImpact, American Conservative Fund has spent \$826,102, including \$559,650 on broadcast ads in the Wheeling, WV and Steubenville media markets, \$15,498 on cable, \$18,000 on radio, \$73,452 on digital, and \$159,503 on connected television (CTV). American Conservative Fund has also spent \$379,758 on the Republican primary between Rep. Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon) and former Rep. Craig Riedel in Senate District 1, held by the term-limited and now lieutenant governor candidate McColley.

Ad spending before the primary in support of Sherrod Brown's campaign for the U.S. Senate made large strides since just the end of April. Thus far in the campaign, Brown's advertising efforts have been focused on desktop and mobile ads soliciting donations to his campaign. As of the final week of April, however, the Brown campaign launched a



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

new television ad in markets throughout the state directly naming his opponent, U.S. Sen. Jon Husted, specifically for taking campaign contributions from Les Wexner, Columbus native and associate of Jeffrey Epstein. However, pro-Brown spending still lags pro-Husted spending in the race. Husted's campaign previously spent over \$300,000 reserving airtime in the Cleveland, Columbus and Toledo markets to run an ad promoting his own efforts in the U.S. Senate and Ohio state government concerning job creation and career tech education.

ENVIRONMENT

Gov. Mike DeWine's H2Ohio initiative took one step closer to a milestone on Wednesday as the ribbon was cut to mark the completion of the Mallard Club Wildlife Area Wetland Conservation and Restoration project in Lucas County. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) reports that now 499 wetlands projects are either complete or in process through H2Ohio. ODNR completed the Mallard Club Wildlife Area project in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, and the project uses a pump system to push water through the series of newly connected wetlands for maximum filtration of nutrients and sediment before it flows to the Maumee Bay and Lake Erie.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Sen. Jerry Cirino (R-Kirtland) acknowledged publicly Wednesday something he said he made known a while ago to colleagues -- he's no longer challenging Senate President Pro Tempore Bill Reineke (R-Tiffin) for the chance to lead the chamber next term. Cirino told *Hannah News* he decided to end his bid in February. "I thought by now, between the lobbyist community and my colleagues and so on, that it would have been clear that the caucus is going in a different direction," he said. "I had some very strong supporters who stuck with me, but it's all about numbers. I felt it was important to have Northeast Ohio represented, and it was my task to convince enough people, and that obviously didn't happen. That's fine. We'll move forward. I've got two and a half years remaining the Senate, and I plan to be doing a lot of things, continuing to focus on higher education reform," Cirino said. Cirino is not expecting to be reappointed as chair of the Senate Finance Committee. "I have no reason to believe that prospect is on the table," he said.

Ohio is moving closer to joining several other states in partnership with the federal government to fund trials to research the Schedule 1 psychedelic drug ibogaine in hopes of developing a new prescription drug for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in veterans and substance use disorders. An executive order signed by President Donald Trump last month ordered the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to allocate a minimum of \$50 million dollars to partner with state governments to further ibogaine research, after a number of states, led by Texas, allocated funds to a joint research venture that Ohio's Ibogaine Treatment Study Committee Chair Rep. Justin



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

Pizzulli (R-Franklin Furnace) described as a sort of interstate compact using a public-private partnership. The Ibogaine Treatment Study Committee met for the fourth time on Wednesday following its formation in budget bill HB96 (Stewart). Witness testimony urged Ohio to join the partnership established by Texas in 2025.

GOVERNOR

Following media reports that Rep. Ty Mathews (R-Findlay) plans to introduce legislation to suspend the state's tax on gasoline before the summer travel season as gas prices have increased statewide following military action in Iran, Gov. Mike DeWine said on Friday that suspending the tax would be a great disservice to the people of Ohio. DeWine said that inflation has also affected the state's coffers, and the revenue the state collects from gas taxes is now worth about 30 percent less than what it would have been as recently as 2020. DeWine said that as revenue from the gas tax "doesn't go nearly as far," anything the state would take away from that revenue would put the state in a worse position concerning road maintenance. "No one wants to pay the tax, but everyone wants good roads," said DeWine.

DeWine also defended his comments to media in Cleveland on Thursday that if the funding mechanism for the Cleveland Browns stadium project originally passed by the General Assembly is eventually found to be unconstitutional, as is claimed in pending litigation, his plan B would be his original suggestion last year to increase the tax on sports gaming companies operating in Ohio. DeWine said the state has been helping sports teams build stadiums for over 30 years, but he doesn't want that money to take money away from where it goes now, namely education and public services including mental health and addiction services.

DeWine also declined to forecast what the U.S Supreme Court would ultimately do concerning Temporary Protected Status (TPS) held by thousands of Haitians in Ohio, only saying it would be a legal ruling instead of a policy one, but it would not be in the interest of Ohio to lose to deportation all the TPS holders who are contributing to the state's economy.

Appointments made over the week include the following:

- Laura A. Lyden of North Jackson (Mahoning Co.) reappointed to the Youngstown State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 2, 2026, and ending May 1, 2032; and Jeffery T. Kollar of Youngstown (Mahoning Co.) appointed as student member for a term beginning May 2, 2026, and ending May 1, 2028.

- Jeffrey P. Scott of Mount Vernon (Knox Co.) to the Central Ohio Technical College Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 1, 2026, and ending Sept. 30, 2027.



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

- Nathaniel H. Taylor of Cleveland (Cuyahoga Co.) as student member to the Cleveland State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 2, 2026, and ending May 1, 2028.

- Daniel L. Wilson of Novelty (Geauga Co.) reappointed to the School Employees Retirement Board for a term beginning May 1, 2026, and ending Sept. 27, 2028.

- David W. Johnson of Salem (Columbiana Co.), Chauncey A. Cochran of Newark (Licking Co.) and Peggy Griffith of Deerfield (Portage Co.) reappointed to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation Board of Directors for terms beginning June 12, 2026, and ending June 11, 2029; and Suzanne R. Kiggin of Powell (Delaware Co.) designated to serve as chairperson of the board, effective June 12, 2026.

- Mark W. Douglas, Jr. of Doylestown (Wayne Co.) to the Governor's Executive Workforce Board for a term beginning May 1, 2026, and continuing at the pleasure of the governor.

- Edward A. Julian Sr. of Blacklick (Franklin Co.) to serve as the Ohio Poet Laureate for a term beginning April 17, 2026, and ending Dec. 31, 2027.

- Sabrina K. Moore of Troy (Miami Co.) to the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Council for a term beginning June 2, 2026, and ending June 1, 2029.

- John F. McCaffrey of Lakewood (Cuyahoga Co.) reappointed to the Ohio Public Defender Commission for a term beginning May 1, 2026, and ending Jan. 12, 2030.

- Brian X. Gluntz of Dublin (Franklin Co.) to the Real Estate Appraiser Board for a term beginning May 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.

- Tracey E. Craig of Woodsfield (Monroe Co.) to the Banking Commission for a term beginning May 1, 2026, and ending Jan. 31, 2030; and Trevor A. Black of Senecaville for a term beginning May 1, 2026, and ending Jan. 31, 2029.

- Timothy S. Trimbach of Tipp City (Miami Co.) to the Ohio Board of Motor Vehicle Repair for a term beginning May 1, 2026, and ending January 1, 2029.

GUNS

Rep. Darnell Brewer (D-Cleveland) renewed the call for gun safety Thursday by announcing legislation to make safe storage voluntary rather than mandatory while punishing those who fail to secure firearms that injure or kill curious children. Brewer gathered with the surviving family of Amya Frazier at a Statehouse press conference to



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

introduce "Amya's Law" after the 11-year-old girl was accidentally shot just before Christmas by a young cousin with her uncle's unsecured gun. The bill takes the bipartisan HR148 (Brewer-Deeter) one step further by not only urging safe firearm storage but also by imposing a 1st degree misdemeanor on owners of unsecured guns leading to "harm" and a 4th degree felony for those linked to "serious harm."

HANNAH NEWS RACES TO WATCH

A current and a former lawmaker are competing to succeed Senate President Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) in the Ohio Senate District 1 Republican primary, with the winner having no opposition in the fall on the way to the 137th General Assembly. The candidates are former Rep. Craig Riedel, who served in the Ohio House from 2017-2022 before making an unsuccessful run for Congress, and Rep. Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon), who will hit term limits for his second stint in the Ohio House at the end of this General Assembly. Riedel told *Hannah News* that he is running for the Ohio Senate for the same reasons he ran for the Ohio House in 2016 -- he wants to serve and enjoys helping people. Having worked in the steel industry for 27 years, he said he believes his work in the private sector has prepared him for his role in the Legislature.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Following a nationwide search, Miami University (MU) recently named Trent Gould as its new provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, effective July 1. Gould joins Miami from the University of Southern Mississippi, where he currently serves as dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences and professor in the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition. Gould began his career at Southern Mississippi in 2003 as assistant professor and director of the Athletic Training Education Program. He earned his Bachelor of Science in education from Bowling Green State University in 1998 before obtaining a Master of Science in physical education and Doctor of Philosophy, both from Ohio University. As a scholar, Gould has published more than 80 papers, book chapters, journal abstracts and conference papers, and has generated over \$10 million in research funding.

The University of Findlay (UF) announced the appointment of Richard Ludwick as the university's 18th president, effective July 1. Ludwick will succeed Katherine Fell, who will retire after 16 years of service at the university. Having most recently served as president of the University of St. Thomas in Houston, TX, Ludwick's tenure includes leadership positions held at Independent Colleges of Indiana, St. Gregory's University, Albany Law School, University of Florida and University of Oregon.

The University of Toledo (UToledo) recently announced the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) awarded \$19.2 million to the university to help establish a \$39 million nuclear



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

workforce initiative. The initiative, aka the Great Lakes Partnership to Enhance the Nuclear Workforce, will work to improve safety training pipelines for the light-water reactor workforce, attract qualified individuals to the nuclear sector, modernize curricula for advanced reactor concepts and establish industry-recognized nuclear safety certifications, UToledo said. DOE's Office of Nuclear Energy announced earlier this month it had awarded more than \$49.7 million to 10 university-led projects -- UToledo received the largest award.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

The Ohio Department of Development (DOD) awarded \$4.59 million in housing assistance grants to help nonprofits with work on essential home repairs, renovations toward handicap accessibility, up to \$5,000 per home in down-payment assistance and \$500 for homebuyer education per household. The home repairs can include heating systems, water heaters, plumbing systems, severely deteriorated roofs, walls, windows, doors and hazardous electrical systems. Nonprofits contract with locally qualified construction companies for that work, and eligibility can be based on Area Median Income (AMI).

HUMAN SERVICES

Starting Wednesday, May 13, Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards used by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) beneficiaries will default to locked status for online and out-of-state purchases, meaning beneficiaries will have to unlock their cards to proceed with those transactions. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Service (ODJFS) said the change is an anti-fraud measure meant to address "a large volume of skimming" taking place with those types of transactions. The department's SNAP fraud analytics team identified nearly 56,000 suspicious out-of-state transactions affecting nearly 13,000 Ohio EBT accounts, exceeding \$6 million. EBT cardholders can lock or unlock their cards at any time on ConnectEBT.com, through the ConnectEBT app or by calling 1-866-385-3071.

IMPACT OHIO

Thursday, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce sponsored its Impact Ohio post-election conference where various sessions covered the following:

- Campaign strategists discussed how primary results and the national mood may affect the General Election.
- Panelists discussed political sentiments around property taxes and data centers.



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

- State party chairs talked about their party's enthusiasm headed into the November election and their strategies.
- House leaders broke down the results of Tuesday's election and how they see that affecting their caucuses.
- Senate leaders looked at the three most competitive races in that chamber.

JUDICIAL

The Ohio Supreme Court is providing just short of \$1 million in federal funding for domestic and juvenile courts to improve youth outcomes. The Court's Children and Families Section announced the grants and technical support in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY). "The awards will support courts as they implement innovative strategies to strengthen child welfare practices, improve legal representation, and foster collaborative solutions for children and families in cases of adoption or abuse, neglect and dependency," the Court said.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel announced the Team Tressel Fitness Challenge will return for the 2026 school year starting in the fall. Ohio schools with students in grades three through eight can now sign up for the challenge, which kicks off Monday, Aug. 31. Led by Tressel, the challenge has reached over 391,000 students across more than 1,300 schools in all 88 Ohio counties. Tressel's office noted nearly one in three high school students are overweight or obese, and said the challenge is helping students to "build healthy habits early and create a foundation for lifelong wellness." A 30-day program encouraging health habits through fitness, nutrition, sleep and goal-setting, the fitness challenge is free for Ohio schools and is designed to fit into a school's existing schedule, Tressel's office said, noting students progress at their own pace using grade-specific workbooks that can be completed at home or during the school day.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost spoke Thursday at the Ohio Peace Officers Memorial Ceremony, paying tribute to the lives and legacies of the state's four officers who died in the line of duty during 2025 as well as others from previous years he's been in office. The ceremony honored Hamilton County Sheriff's Deputy Larry Henderson, Morrow County Sheriff's Deputy D. Weston Sherrer, Lorain Officer Phillip Wagner, and Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) Trooper Nicholas Clayton.

TAXATION



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

Gov. Mike DeWine's office confirmed dates recently for the summer sales tax holiday, which this year will revert to the more limited, weekend-long event focused on clothing and classroom supplies for back-to-school preparations. In the FY24-25 budget, 135-HB33 (Edwards), lawmakers created an expanded sales tax holiday for many items priced at \$500 or less, to be instituted in years in which at least \$60 million in surplus revenue is available. However, in late 2025, lawmakers tapped into the fund set aside for that purpose in order to offset school revenue losses from major property tax reforms, cancelling the expanded holiday for 2026. HB33 left in place the prior back-to-school holiday for years where surplus revenues don't clear the threshold.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

Gov. Mike DeWine's Ohio Traffic Safety Council (OTSC) is zeroing in on motorcycle safety with a multi-pronged approach along with public education and training programs meant to curtail those hazards. OTSC met Wednesday to review a range of initiatives entitled Safer People, Safer Vehicles, Safer Speeds, Safer Roads, and Post-Crash Care. Common to all but one of them is a focus on reducing motorcycle deaths and injuries. To reduce motorcycle-related deaths and injuries, OTSC and OTSO are pursuing a number of initiatives with a long list of public and private partners including the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Motorcycle Ohio, Ohio Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Ohio Association of Public Safety Directors (OAPSD), American Automobile Association (AAA), Safe Communities, media professionals, County Engineers Association of Ohio (CEAO), DPS and OSHP including, among others, launching paid media initiatives with data-driven safety messages to motorcyclists and motorists.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) is looking to reduce fatal motorcycle crashes killing nearly 1,100 individuals in the last five years. As motorcycle riding increases with the return of warmer weather, OSHP urges riders and drivers to "stay alert, share the road and always drive sober." Of 19,674 Ohio accidents involving motorcycles between 2021-25, a total of 1,060, or more than 5 percent, left 1,096 dead. The patrol says motorcycle training classes, safety equipment and proper endorsements will help protect riders and others sharing the road. Ohio also requires motorcyclists under 18 and those with under one year of riding experience to wear helmets. Motorcycle passengers also must wear helmets if primary riders are. More information on safe motorcycling, including courses for new, intermediate and advanced riders, can be found [HERE](#).

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Gov. Mike DeWine reappointed Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Board of Directors Chair Chauncey "Chan" Cochran to his board seat Friday but designated another director, Suzanne Kiggin, as the new chair starting next month. Kiggin's leadership will begin Friday, June 12, the same day as new terms commence for Cochran



THE FITZGIBBON GROUP

association management - government relations - strategic planning

as well as David Johnson and Peggy Griffith, who also were reappointed as directors. Kiggin has been chairing BWC's Governance Committee. She has retail executive experience and also was recently appointed by DeWine to the Ohio State University Board of Trustees.

WORKFORCE

The Future Ready Apprenticeship Center announced Friday that Ohio was one of 10 states selected for its cohort in the federally-funded "Apprenticeship America" program, meant to position states as a "vanguard" for the Trump administration's goal of reaching one million active apprentices nationwide. The Center is a partnership between the Colorado Department of Labor and 501(c)(3) organization CareerWise, with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) providing funds for Apprenticeship America. Ohio was selected in a competitive process along with Alabama, Arizona, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Tennessee, Utah and Virginia. The states will receive expert-level strategic consulting, national infrastructure toolkits, systemic problem solving and \$200,000 for "catalytic implementation funding," according to CareerWise. Ohio will be using the program to help meet its demand for 70,000 advanced manufacturing workers, CareerWise noted as well.