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Emergency Management Association of Ohio

Legislative Update

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- HB23** **CREATE ESCAPED CONVICT ALERT PROGRAM** (ROEMER B, WILLIAMS J) To create the escaped convict alert program.
Current Status: 6/25/2025 - Referred to Committee Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety
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: 7/21/2025 - Consideration of Governor's Veto; House Overrides Veto on Item 66, Vote 61-28
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-96>
- HB309** **LAW CHANGES-COUNTY FUNDING** (THOMAS D) To modify the law governing county budget commissions, property taxation, and alternative apportionment formulas for local government and public library funds.
Current Status: 6/11/2025 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-309>
- HB335** **LAW CHANGES-COUNTY FUNDING** (THOMAS D) To modify the law governing property taxation, county budget commissions, county sales taxation, and alternative apportionment formulas for local government and public library funds.
Current Status: 6/18/2025 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Ways and Means, (First 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



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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>

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>

ABORTION/REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani on Monday issued a preliminary injunction against a provision in the federal "One Big Beautiful Bill" (OBBB) that blocks health care providers that offer abortion services from participating in the Medicaid program. But two Ohio Planned Parenthood centers affected by the provision will still close because of ongoing legal risks.

AGRICULTURE

Local sponsors have been approved to purchase agricultural easements on 45 family farms representing 4,131 acres in 33 counties, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg) announced Monday. Local sponsoring organizations -- which include land trusts, counties, and local soil and water conservation districts -- receive funding from the Clean Ohio Fund to manage the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP). The easements ensure farms remain permanently in agricultural production.

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

While the Ohio Arts Council (OAC) didn't receive as large of an increase as arts advocates requested, the final version of HB96 (Stewart) included about \$500,000 more per fiscal year than the governor proposed in his executive budget. The final budget includes \$26.7 million in FY26 and \$26.8 million in FY27, with the Senate proposing the \$500,000 per fiscal year increase.

ATTORNEY GENERAL



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Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost hosted the sixth annual human trafficking summit Wednesday, including recognition of three outgoing survivor ambassadors who had spent the past four years helping statewide anti-trafficking efforts. The event was organized by Yost's Human Trafficking Initiative (HTI) and brought together hundreds of advocates, first responders and community leaders to discuss the issue. Yost described the importance of hearing personal experiences, as opposed to reviewing "all the data in the world," and said the ambassadors have changed how his office works on human trafficking issues. He also detailed previous work by the three outgoing ambassadors - Annette Mango, Harold D'Souza and Stephanie Rollins - and how they will continue their efforts outside of the ambassador role.

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced the state's 12th solicitor general Thursday following Wednesday's U.S. Senate confirmation of Elliot Gaiser as President Donald Trump's assistant attorney general for the Office of Legal Counsel in the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) under U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi. Mathura Sridharan, deputy solicitor general since 2021 and lead counsel in the AG's recent Ohio Supreme Court arguments on pot-impaired driving, will direct all state appeals in Ohio and U.S. courts pending Gaiser's official swearing in over the next several weeks.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals Friday rejected motions from former House Speaker Larry Householder and former Ohio Republican Party Chair Matt Borges asking for a review of their appeal on their federal convictions by the full court of appeals. A three-judge panel of the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the 133-HB6 scandal-related convictions of Householder and Borges in May, saying they found "no reversible error" in their convictions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/URBAN REVITALIZATION

Intel this week indicated further delays in its Ohio chip plant projects, saying in its second quarter earnings announcement that it will "further slow the pace of construction in Ohio to ensure spending is aligned with market demand." The announcement did not deter Gov. Mike DeWine, who said the chipmaker has made a commitment to its Central Ohio project.

Gov. Mike DeWine's administration announced Monday the approval of assistance for three projects expected to create 1,241 new jobs and retain 742 jobs statewide. During its monthly meeting, the Ohio Tax Credit Authority (TCA) reviewed economic development proposals brought by JobsOhio and its regional partners. The projects are expected to collectively result in more than \$65 million in new payroll and spur more than \$13 million in investments across Ohio.



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The Ohio Department of Development (DOD) announced it is now taking applications for the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, which helps property owners and developers to transform historic buildings into "thriving community assets" and encourage reinvestment while preserving architectural heritage.

The Ohio Department of Development (DOD) and its BroadbandOhio office recently announced they are now taking applications for a program to expand high-speed Internet service coverage across Ohio. The application deadline is Friday, Aug. 15, and applicants must provide other pre-qualification information by 12 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 8.

ECONOMY

A report released by personal finance website WalletHub Tuesday found Ohio was among the 10 lowest states for median credit card debt, the cost to pay it off and the time needed to do that. Ohioans have \$2,476 in median credit card debt; an interest cost of \$263 to pay it; and it typically takes 11 months and 14 days for them to complete that. Ohio ranked ninth lowest nationally for each category.

EDUCATION

Cincinnati Public Schools and the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) are among numerous plaintiffs in a lawsuit alleging the Trump administration illegally withheld billions of dollars in federal education funding for the upcoming academic year. However, late last week, multiple media outlets reported that the Trump administration was releasing \$5.5 billion frozen education funds.

Educators in Cuyahoga, Franklin, Montgomery and Seneca counties are the finalists to become the 2026 Ohio Teacher of the Year, the State Board of Education announced Tuesday.

School principals must register by Thursday, Aug. 7 in order for their students to participate in the new statewide fitness challenge led by Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel. The challenge, for students in grades 4-8, will run from September through November and aims to help students form healthy habits in physical activity, sleep and nutrition through goal setting. Students can earn one of three recognition levels - bronze, silver and gold. Any public, private or charter school student will have the option to participate if their school opts in, according to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW).

While charter school leaders must take annual training on public records and open meetings laws under 2015 statutory changes, they're not bound by the requirement imposed on locally elected school board members to undergo training offered by or under the aegis of the attorney general. Absent further statutory specification, the state auditor



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can set standards on the nature of the training. That's the upshot of a formal legal opinion issued Wednesday by Attorney General Dave Yost, who was responding to an inquiry from Auditor Keith Faber sparked by apparent disparities in the level or content of current training. Faber wrote that his office believed charter school officials needed to take the attorney general's training, regardless of their non-elected status.

ELECTIONS

Facing a tight deadline and potentially not enough funding, the Ohio Elections Commission is looking to "do as much as we can" before passing on its duties to a new panel in the secretary of state's office on Jan. 1, 2026. Lawmakers abolished the commission in biennial budget HB96 (Stewart), replacing it with a five-member Ohio Election Integrity Commission in the secretary of state's office that will be appointed by the secretary of state and leaders of the General Assembly. Elections Commission Executive Director Phil Richter told *Hannah News* that staff and commissioners are still discussing what needs to be done before it finishes its work.

A new poll released Monday by the Democracy Defense Project shows Ohioans in support of election reforms such as the federal SAVE Act and more protections for poll workers. Democracy Defense Project, a group that includes former Republican Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell and former Democratic Ohio U.S. Rep. Zack Space on its board, conducted the poll with Guidant Polling and Strategy from June 2-6 among 600 likely voters to gauge voter confidence in elections and test support for several legislative proposals under consideration by the General Assembly.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose this week issued a new statewide directive instructing election officials to begin the process of removing certain registrations. The newest directive comes as the secretary of state's office and boards of elections prepare to remove nearly 352,389 inactive registrations by Sept. 23 under the previous supplemental process.

ELECTIONS 2026

Democratic secretary of state candidate Bryan Hambley's campaign said Monday that he has raised \$533,428 in the first half of this year, which the campaign said is more than any other Democratic secretary of state candidate in Ohio's history at this point in the election cycle.

Both of the current leading candidates for governor in 2026 claimed record fundraising for their campaigns in the first six months of 2025, but Republican Vivek Ramaswamy holds nearly a 10-fold advantage over Democrat Amy Acton in cash on hand, according to campaign finance reports. Thursday was the filing deadline for statewide and



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legislative candidates to file their semiannual reports covering fundraising activity for the first six months of the year.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The Ohio Senate campaign of Phil Plummer announced the endorsement of U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Urbana).
- The secretary of state campaign of Democrat Bryan Hambley announced the endorsements of Ohio Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood), Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus, Hamilton County Clerk of Courts Pavan Parikh, and reproductive rights leader Lauren Beene of Cleveland.

GAMING/GAMBLING

The Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC) should remove proposition bets from the list of legal wagers that can be placed in the state, Gov. Mike DeWine said Thursday. Prop bets are wagers that a specific statistical achievement will or will not occur during a sporting event, other than the score or outcome of the game. The OCCC already banned player-specific prop bets on college athletes in February 2024 after DeWine and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) President Charlie Baker asked for the prohibition. In his office's news release announcing the request, DeWine noted that Major League Baseball (MLB) has placed two Cleveland Guardians pitchers on leave related to a "sports betting investigation."

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Senate President Pro Tempore Bill Reineke (R-Tiffin) said Thursday he intends to seek the Senate presidency for the 137th General Assembly after current Senate President Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) leaves due to term limits. His announcement sets up a potential battle with another senator for the spot -- Sen. Jerry Cirino (R-Kirtland), who currently serves as the chair of the Senate Finance Committee.

GUNS

Attorney General Dave Yost issued a formal legal opinion Monday that determined county fair boards are subject to the state law preempting local restrictions on carrying firearms. Yost issued an opinion to Kevin Talebi, the Champaign County prosecutor, who had asked Yost's office whether the Champaign County Agricultural Society is a political subdivision for purposes of ORC 9.68, which sets out uniform state regulation of firearms and subjects local governments seeking to institute separate rules to potential lawsuit damages.



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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

GuardCare weekend, an annual event at which the Ohio National Guard and other agencies provide free health care services, will take place in Bucyrus in August. The event, which includes health services and a resource fair, will happen 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 9 and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 10 at Trillium Event Center, 1630 E. Southern Ave. Services will be provided via a partnership including the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), Ohio National Guard, Crawford County Public Health, Crawford County Board of Developmental Disabilities and other community partners.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Miami University announced that students from 29 counties in Indiana can attend its main Oxford campus for the same tuition cost as Ohio resident students for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Miami already had tuition reciprocity agreements for students in parts of Indiana and Kentucky for its regional campuses. The Oxford campus is one of 19 Ohio campuses represented in the agreement. Seven Indiana campuses are in the agreement and offer in-state tuition to residents of 15 Ohio border counties.

While President Donald Trump's executive order on college sports was a step in the right direction, the business of college athletics will continue to lack clarity and stability until Congress takes action, according to Ohio State University (OSU) Athletics Director Ross Bjork. "You have state by state law operating the NIL environment. So, some of those state laws conflict with the House case settlement," Bjork told NBC4 anchor Matt Barnes during a Columbus Metropolitan Club (CMC) event on Wednesday.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

A more thoughtful approach to how the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) allocates federal tax credits for the construction of new affordable housing statewide is currently open for public consideration and comment in advance of a public hearing on Wednesday, July 30. OHFA has released the first draft of its updated 9% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for program years 2026 and 2027. According to the draft, the QAP establishes "the selection criteria to be used to determine housing priorities of the housing credit agency [OHFA in Ohio] which are appropriate to local conditions."

The Ohio Department of Development this week announced the awarding of \$1.4 million in grants and tax credits as part of the fourth round of the Welcome Home Ohio program. The program administered \$100 million in grants in FY24-25 to help landbanks purchase,



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rehabilitate, or build qualifying residential properties for income-eligible Ohioans. It was created in biennial budget 135-HB33 (Edwards).

JUDICIAL

A newly approved rule by the Supreme Court of Ohio requires courts to adopt a local rule and a written compliance plan to ensure that specific background information -- including fingerprints, case dispositions, mental health adjudications, protection orders and certain traffic convictions -- is reported to law enforcement databases. It is the responsibility for administrative judges in local courts to work with their clerks and other criminal justice partners to comply with several reporting requirements established in Rule 4.01 (G) of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio.

An Ohio woman who grabbed the trade name of a Lima car dealership after it repossessed her car is not required to go to arbitration over the naming rights, the Ohio Third District Court of Appeals recently ruled. The dispute between Taylor Automotive Group and Tiah McCreary went to the appeals court after McCreary discovered the dealer's rights to the name Taylor Kia of Lima had expired while exploring her legal rights in the wake of a repossession.

LOBBYISTS

Government Strategies Group has announced it has partnered with former Ohio Republican Party Executive Director Cameron Sagester and his firm, Crosley Consulting, as a strategic partner. Under the partnership, the firms said Sagester "will be focused on using his network, experience, and intuitive understanding of the current political environment to provide strategic counsel and communications consulting, enhance advocacy efforts, and execute public affairs strategies for the firm's clients."

MARIJUANA/HEMP

Ohioans interested in growing hemp will need to receive a production license through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) beginning on Jan. 1, 2026. The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg) informed the USDA that Ohio will withdraw its Approved State Plan for hemp on Dec. 31, ODAg said in a news release.

All of the adult use cannabis tax revenue collected during the first year of legal sales is required to be distributed to the General Revenue Fund (GRF) and the Host Community Cannabis Fund, according to budget law HB96 (Stewart). The FY25 ending balance of the Adult Use Tax Fund was \$55.6 million, Ohio Office of Budget and Management (OBM) spokesperson Pete LuPiba told Hannah News.



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MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

A recent analysis of state spending on Medicaid by the Pew Charitable Trusts found the largest single year rise in spending in at least two decades in FY23. Pew analyzed state spending on Medicaid for FY23, finding a combination of expiring federal COVID-19 pandemic aid, slowing tax revenue growth, and rising costs led to a 17.8 percent increase in the state share of revenue dedicated to Medicaid, or \$44 billion, over the previous year.

OHIO STATE FAIR

The legislative agriculture committees continued a tradition at the Ohio State Fair Wednesday, holding a joint meeting at the Expo Center's Kasich Center and hearing from nine witnesses ranging from state officials to the 2025 Ohio Fairs queen. The House Agriculture Committee and Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee also received updates on various projects occurring at the Expo Center and through various state agencies. Adam Heffron, the executive director of the Ohio Expositions Commission, said their 2050 Master Plan is helping the fairgrounds realize its full potential. He said the project is on its way to full completion by July 1, 2026, which will be in time for next year's fair.

PENSIONS

The Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund's (OP&F) bid to boost employer rate contributions now has a vehicle for discussion in the Senate after Sen. Al Cutrona (R-Canfield) this week introduced SB239. His legislation would incrementally increase the contribution rate for police officers from 19.5 percent to 24 percent, making it equal to that for firefighters. The legislation also would allow further increases, up to 1.5 percent spread over three years, if the projected period to pay down unfunded liabilities of the system exceeds 30 years.

PEOPLE

Sam Streicher has been promoted to senior manager of membership operations at the Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance (ORHA), the organization announced Monday. "A dedicated member of the ORHA team, Streicher has consistently brought fresh ideas and a forward-thinking approach to the membership department, and tracks industry trends to help shape initiatives that truly resonate with members," the group said in a news release.

POVERTY



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Ohio placed 29th nationally in a recent report measuring how states support people in poverty that was released by SmileHub, a tech company focused on charitable giving. Among neighbor states, Ohio placed fourth. Michigan led them at 17th nationally, followed by Pennsylvania, 20th; Indiana, 28th; Kentucky, 39th; and West Virginia, 41st.

PUBLIC SAFETY

With a brawl in downtown Cincinnati last weekend going viral and drawing reactions from a number of politicians, including Vice President J.D. Vance and Ohio's two U.S. senators, Gov. Mike DeWine announced Wednesday evening that the state will be providing additional manpower to support the Cincinnati Police Department. The announcement was made in conjunction with Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval and Cincinnati Police Chief Teresa Theetge and comes after community members raised concerns about recent instances of violence.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Continuing its recent analysis of state budgets, Pew Charitable Trusts recently found the share of states' total revenue coming from federal funds has stayed near record highs, but there are uncertainties ahead. Looking at the numbers from FY23, despite a modest dip in the federal share of state budgets, Pew found the continuing near record highs had been bolstered by ongoing pandemic aid, infrastructure funding, and a slowdown in state tax collections.

TAXATION

As members contemplated at their first meeting, the next meeting of the property tax working group set up by Gov. Mike DeWine will not be open to the public nor press. According to the governor's office, the group next plans to meet virtually on Wednesday, Aug. 6. Bill Seitz, the former state legislator who is co-chairing the group, said at the body's first meeting DeWine's office advised him the group is not subject to the open meetings laws.

Ohio is now observing its two-week expanded sales tax holiday, during which most items priced at \$500 or less will be tax-free. State leaders in the prior budget bill created a policy of expanding the existing sales tax holiday for a weekend of back-to-school shopping into a longer, broader holiday in years where sufficient surplus revenue exists to support the holiday. The back-to-school holiday remains in law for years when there is not enough surplus revenue. The sales tax holiday runs from 12 a.m. Friday, Aug. 1 through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 14.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE



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Following through on a plan outlined during the debate on the transportation budget, Gov. Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Director Pamela Boratyn Tuesday announced the creation of 1,400 new truck parking spaces beginning next year around the state. Speaking at a press conference in Warren County, DeWine said that as part of his administration's efforts to improve road safety around the state, it has become clear that there needs to be more space for trucks traveling through the state to park.

Lawmakers in the biennial budget gave state transportation officials more time and more flexibility to develop a new corridor that connects two major highways in the state after ordering them to begin planning for the corridor in the transportation budget earlier this year. After transportation budget HB54 (Stewart) required the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission to prepare a joint plan regarding the feasibility of connecting U.S. 23 and I-71 in the northern part of the state, the Senate in HB96 (Stewart) amended the language to split the plan into two components - an interim report and a final joint plan. Those Senate changes ended up in the final conference committee report adopted and signed by Gov. Mike DeWine.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Public employer taxing districts would see a statewide rate decrease of 1 percent starting on Jan. 1, 2026 under a proposal from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) management team. "This recommendation gives due consideration to both the actuarial rate indication and BWC management's goal of maintaining stable rate levels," BWC Chief Actuarial Officer Dan Myers said in a memo.

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