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Emergency Management Association of Ohio

Legislative Update

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Report created on July 11, 2025

- 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: 6/30/2025 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. immediately
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 refundable income tax credit or rebate for homeowners and renters whose property



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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

A Hamilton County judge this week expanded the effects of her injunctions against state abortion restrictions to block potential licensure sanctions against certain advanced practice clinicians (APCs). Judge Anne Hatheway of Hamilton County Common Pleas Court last year enjoined enforcement of state laws restricting medication abortions, including a law barring nurse practitioners, physician assistants and certified nurse midwives from providing medication abortion. Plaintiffs in the case, a group of Planned Parenthood affiliates and medical providers, argued that despite Hatheway's ruling, other laws effectively left the ban in place. They targeted two provisions of law and one administrative rule.

ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Former Attorney General Marc Dann and former Rep. Jeff Crossman (D-Parma) Monday officially filed a class action lawsuit against the state over a budget provision that will use unclaimed funds to help pay for a new Cleveland Browns stadium in Brook Park.

Ahead of the Superman movie's Friday release, Gov. Mike DeWine and Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel joined TourismOhio to celebrate Superman's return to the Heart of it All. According to the governor's office, "Before he became known around the world as the 'Man of Steel,' Superman was created by two Cleveland teenagers, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who dreamed up the superhero while attending high school in Cleveland's Glenville neighborhood in the early 1930s. Now, nearly a century later, the superhero is back in Ohio in a new movie filmed in the city that gave him life."

ATTORNEY GENERAL



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The Ohio Attorney General's Office is contributing to the Trump administration's 2025 National Health Care Fraud Takedown, an enforcement campaign of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) that has uncovered \$14.6 billion in false Medicaid bills and 15.6 million pills of illegally diverted drugs. The attorney general (AG) busted 13 home health aides and one behavioral health specialist in June for allegedly stealing and/or defrauding more than \$189,000 in Medicaid funds purportedly to care for the elderly and disabled.

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced another \$1.2 million in Medicaid theft Thursday as part of a continued campaign against homecare grifters. Following last week's indictment of 13 Medicaid fraudsters, Yost charged eight more home health aides and one mental health specialist, with a Cleveland man apparently accounting for three quarters of a million dollars in theft from the state.

BALLOT ISSUES

The Ballot Board voted 3-2 along party lines Wednesday to split a proposed equal rights constitutional amendment into two issues: one focused on specifying rights cannot be abridged for reasons of race, sexual orientation or other factors; and another to repeal the 2004 ban on same-sex marriage adopted by voters. Backers of the amendment said they're now weighing their options. Attorney General Dave Yost had approved petition summary language for the proposed amendment last week.

FY24-25 BUDGET

According to preliminary data from the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) released Monday, Ohio exceeded its revenue forecast for the just concluded FY25 by \$1.04 billion or 3.7 percent. The Personal Income Tax accounts for the bulk of the overage, coming in \$691.3 million or 7.1 percent over estimates on the year.

IT'S IN THE FY26-27 BUDGET

The FY26-27 budget, like those before it, launches a collection of studies and workgroups on topics of interest to lawmakers. They cover everything from children's crisis care to a Toledo-to-Columbus highway connection to health effects of marijuana to multi-system youth, among others.

Meanwhile, Gov. Mike DeWine also set up a few study groups of his own via veto messages, planning working groups on property taxes, a ban on buying soft drinks with food stamps and emergency response at state parks.

The HB96 (Stewart) conference committee report agreed to by both chambers retained House changes to the Welcome Home Ohio (WHO) program, while eliminating House-



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added housing accelerator grants and keeping the Senate's addition of residential economic development district grants. A separate program added by the Senate provides \$100 million to support single-family housing construction in rural areas.

The Ohio Treasurer's Office recently announced a series of changes to the STABLE account program as part of the budget, saying they will help more Ohioans living with disabilities benefit from its specialized savings and investment accounts. Under the STABLE program, Ohioans can save up to \$19,000 per year without losing federal assistance, and an additional \$15,060 if they are employed. STABLE account earnings grow tax-free if they are spent on qualified expenses that include housing, transportation, living expenses, health care and assistive technology.

Budget provisions for the Ohio History Connection (OHC) and Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial (America 250-Ohio) underwent several changes during the legislative process, with some items removed and others added in the final version.

While the Senate sought to remove them, several budget items on workforce development added by the House were restored in conference committee and will now be implemented. They include a "platinum provider program" for the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP); an accelerated career pathways program; and a pilot program on artificial intelligence (AI) at community colleges.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

From education and health to economic wellbeing and issues of family and community, approaches to what children and youth need can vary widely from state to state. Looking at those four indicators, the Annie E. Casey Foundation recently released its Kids Count Data Book ranking each state on its progress on four metrics in each category. Nationally, the report says seven of those 16 key indicators have improved, six have worsened and three have stayed the same.

DISASTERS

Gov. Mike DeWine announced Monday he was sending Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) troopers as well as multiple Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) K-9s and their handlers to help Texas authorities with search, rescue and recovery work following the devastating floods along the Guadalupe River there.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/URBAN REVITALIZATION



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JobsOhio this week announced that it has completed an agreement with defense technology Anduril Industries that includes a \$310 million grant for a new manufacturing facility in Pickaway County.

ECONOMY

Ohio has climbed from No. 7 in 2024 to No. 5 in 2025 in CNBC's annual "America's Top States for Business" rankings, continuing a three-year ascent that began with a jump to No. 12 in 2023, JobsOhio announced Thursday. "This performance marks Ohio's highest ranking since the index launched in 2007. Among the states CNBC ranked as the Top 5 States for Business overall, Ohio has the best infrastructure, the lowest cost of doing business and the lowest cost of living."

EDUCATION

The Reading Recovery Council of North America recently dropped the remaining element of its lawsuit against science of reading mandates established in the prior state budget bill so that it could file an appeal on the trial court's determination it lacked standing to pursue other claims.

The Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) Division of Financial Institutions announced Monday that eight organizations will be receiving a combined total of \$50,000 in FY26 under the Financial Literacy Education Grant Program. The division received a record 156 grant applications, up more than 600 percent from the 22 received in the previous year. DOC said that reflects the growing demand for these programs.

The state's largest appeals court has found public K-12 is not liable for failing to block obscene, violent or otherwise harmful content on school IT devices issued to students who later die by suicide off campus.

Coordinators of the landmark voucher litigation expressed confidence Wednesday that the trial court judge laid a strong foundation for their case as they prepare to move to the appellate stage. Meanwhile, the coalition is aiming to substantially grow the ranks of districts supporting the legal effort. Vouchers Hurt Ohio, the group supporting the lawsuit, organized a virtual press conference where coalition steering committee members gave their interpretation of Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Jaiza Page's June 24 decision. Page sided with the plaintiffs on three of five counts, determining the EdChoice Scholarship program violates the requirement in the Ohio Constitution that lawmakers create a "common" school system, and the prohibition on giving control of education money to religious sects.



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The State Board of Education (SBOE) released Wednesday the names of Ohio's eleven 2026 State Board District Teachers of the Year. The Ohio Teacher of the Year program recognizes exceptional teachers statewide and celebrates their work in and outside the classroom. Four of those 11 will move to the final selection phase for the 2026 Ohio Teacher of the Year. The teacher selected from those four will represent Ohio teachers statewide and nationally during the 2025-2026 school year.

While Thursday's meeting of the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) saw several projects get approved statewide for construction to begin, the meeting also bid farewell to an OFCC employee who is retiring this summer after more than three decades of service. OFCC Chief of Planning Melanie Drerup will retire later this summer after working with the commission since 1994, before it was formalized into the OFCC office that exists today.

ELECTIONS

Secretary of State Frank LaRose this week hosted the annual statewide elections conference in Columbus, focusing on election integrity and security for the gathering of county elections officials from around the state. Welcoming nearly 500 officials from 85 counties for the two-day training seminar, the event featured sessions ranging from logistics and early voting strategies to the latest in cybersecurity and threat mitigation.

ELECTIONS 2026

Rep. Beth Lear (R-Galena) is eyeing a move to the Senate in the next General Assembly and has launched a campaign to succeed the term-limited Sen. Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware). Lear is in her second term in the House since she was elected in 2022. Her campaign website has been changed to reflect her run for the Ohio Senate.

Rep. Phil Plummer (R-Dayton) Tuesday officially announced his candidacy for the 5th Ohio Senate District, seeking to succeed the term-limited Sen. Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City). Plummer's announcement sets up a potential primary with Rep. Rodney Creech (R-West Alexandria), who announced his candidacy in May.

Republican Secretary of State candidate Marcell Strbich said Tuesday that his campaign for secretary of state has raised \$200,000 in the six weeks since he launched his campaign, with more than 1,500 donors.

Ryan Rivers, a Lewis Center businessman and former Orange Township trustee, announced he is running for the 19th Senate District currently held by Sen. Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware), who is term-limited.



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EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported Thursday the nation added 147,000 jobs in June while the unemployment rate changed little at 4.1 percent. Employment rose in state government and health care, while federal government employment continued to decline. The number of unemployed people was also little changed in June at 7.0 million, and BLS said the unemployment rate has been between 4.0 and 4.2 percent since May 2024.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) set aside the wishes of Microsoft, Google, Amazon and other members of the data center industry Wednesday while seeking to assure large investors that the state is open for business -- namely, the rapid growth in IT mega-processing. Commissioners issued their long-awaited ruling on American Electric Power (AEP) of Ohio's recommended plan to impose special distribution and transmission charges, financing guarantees and megawatt (MW) thresholds on Big Data to ensure Central Ohio's purportedly unique industry advantages do not crash the state's electric grid.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The Ohio Statehouse and its underground garage will be closed for periods of time from 8 p.m. on Friday, July 11 to about noon on Saturday, July 12, the Capital Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) advises. During that time, there will be an electrical shutdown from 8 p.m. to midnight, which will affect various areas throughout the Statehouse. CSRAB stresses, "The Statehouse will not be accessible to tenants or the public during this time."

HUMAN SERVICES

Individuals with lived or professional experience with the developmental disabilities (DD) community are encouraged to apply to join the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC). The council works to support independence, inclusion and opportunities for people with disabilities across Ohio.

JUDICIAL

Judges, lawyers and members of the public can now find a collection of bench cards, guides and toolkits on the Supreme Court of Ohio's website to help with navigating the state's legal system. "Resources for the Bench" is a compilation of statutes and court



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decisions in the state of Ohio and is intended as a summary of Ohio's law as it pertains to different courts. The materials are [HERE](#).

A case before the Ohio Supreme Court raises new questions about the meaning and responsibilities of a "harborer" of a dog that attacks humans, a term which neither the Ohio Revised Code nor the current House-passed dog omnibus HB247 (K. Miller) defines. The Court will hear an appeal in which the 2nd District found the landowner of a mobile home community "strictly liable" for serious injuries to a boy who attempted to pet a neighbor's dog.

The Ohio Supreme Court says any party who discloses the contents of a guardian ad litem (GAL) report even in passing, not to mention the report itself, is flirting with court action including contempt findings, jail time and/or fines. Rule 48.06(B) of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio will now read as follows if proposed language survives the 42-day comment period: "The court must approve any additional disclosure of this report or its contents by a party. Unauthorized disclosure of the report or its contents may be subject to court action, including the penalties for contempt, which include fine and/or incarceration."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) Tuesday announced new leadership positions for two of its staff members. Tim Hoverman has been named managing director of IT/operations. Steve Caraway has been appointed managing director of enterprise and retirement services.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Bald eagle nests were found in all but one of Ohio's 88 counties this year by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), a testament to statewide conservation efforts since 1979, when Ohio hosted only four bald eagle nesting pairs, the department said.

OHIO HISTORY

The America 250-Ohio Commission Wednesday announced several new stops on its Ohio Air and Space Trail as part of national anniversary festivities next year, building off an initial announcement of 34 sites including museums, a state park and military installations.

PARKS/RECREATION



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Women looking for a supportive, beginner-friendly introduction to outdoor activities including boating, fishing, shooting sports, nature programming and more are invited to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) 11th annual Ohio Women's Outdoor Adventure Weekend. The popular event will feature three days of fun and outdoor exploration from Friday, Sept. 12 through Sunday, Sept. 14 at Deer Creek State Park and Lodge in Mount Sterling.

Statewide efforts to improve accessibility at Ohio's state parks hit another milestone last week with the opening of both an inclusive playground and an accessible beach area at Strouds Run State Park in Athens County. The new inclusive playground at the north end of the beach at Strouds Run features accessible swings, sensory-friendly equipment and interactive play elements designed for children of all abilities. The playground is located adjacent to the beach's ADA-compliant restroom to further provide convenient, accessible facilities to further improve the park experience.

As the summer months draw Ohioans out into nature, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) reminds outdoor enthusiasts that the best trips are the ones where everyone remains safe, whether on the land or in the water. "Summer is a time where we see our state parks, nature preserves, forests, rivers and lakes full of people with their families and we want everyone to have fun while staying safe," said ODNR Director Mary Mertz. "A safety plan is something I encourage everyone to make ahead of a day trip to the lake or a weekend in one of our state parks."

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) is hoping to appear in the American Association of State Troopers' (AAST) "Best Looking Cruiser" calendar and was asking Ohioans to vote for its black Dodge Durango with characteristic "Flying Wheel" logo and golden retriever mascot.

Franklin County dominated the state with 1,900 Fourth of July incidents reported by the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) -- more than doubling its closest rival -- though busy highway interchanges straddling Cuyahoga and Summit counties together saw the most fatalities. A total of 10 died in 10 crashes between Thursday, July 3 and Sunday, July 6, with unused seat belts as the lead culprit.

State law enforcement agencies account for more than a third of all peace officers in the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) Training Academy's latest graduating class, and they don't include state troopers. The academy honored 37 Ohioans for completing all requirements of the 21-week Basic Peace Officer course, including nine who begin work with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Division of Parks and



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Watercraft and four with the Ohio Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU).

STATE GOVERNMENT

According to a new analysis by the Pew Charitable Trusts, revenue conditions among states appear to be stabilizing after a period of pandemic-induced volatility, but tax collections have remained sluggish nationally and in most states for five straight quarters. Pew found that after two consecutive fiscal years of widespread tax revenue declines, states had fewer resources to work with at the start of calendar year 2025 than they had in recent years, which limited the capacity to fund tax cuts, expand public services, prepare for recessions, and other priorities.

STUDIES/POLLS

As many Americans may gather to celebrate the Fourth of July holiday this weekend, new survey results suggest such times for socialization are becoming less common. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' American Time Use Survey (ATUS), the percentage of Americans who reported socializing or communicating on an average day in 2024 stood at 30 percent, down from 38 percent in 2014 and down over 30 percent from 2003. In 2024 on average, adults reported spending 35 minutes per day socializing or communicating.

TAXATION

The House will interrupt its summer break later this month to potentially override Gov. Mike DeWine's line-item vetoes of property tax provisions in biennial budget HB96 (Stewart). House Speaker Matt Huffman (R-Lima) announced that he is scheduling a session for Monday, July 21 "to consider overriding line-item vetoes made by the governor." Adding to the logistics of bringing back lawmakers during summer break, the House session will be held in the Senate chamber due to the ongoing maintenance and replacement of air conditioning units in the House areas of the Statehouse.

As lawmakers prepare to overturn Gov. Mike DeWine's vetoes on property tax provisions in the biennial budget and a group collects signatures to bar the collection of property taxes, Attorney General Dave Yost waded into the debate Wednesday, urging action before the ballot measure eliminates the system altogether. Yost issued a statement Wednesday calling for elected county officials to form a coalition to reform property taxes. Yost made the plea while speaking Wednesday to the Ohio Council of County Officials, a group representing all of Ohio's county elected officials.



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Gov. Mike DeWine announced co-chairs of the property tax reform working group he teed up when vetoing certain property tax provisions of the budget bill. Leading the group will be former state and federal lawmaker Pat Tiberi, now head of the Ohio Business Roundtable, and former state lawmaker Bill Seitz. Other members are to be announced soon, and DeWine wants a report by the end of September.

TOBACCO/SMOKING/VAPING

In a unanimous decision issued Tuesday, the Ohio 10th District Court of Appeals ruled that the General Assembly's efforts to preempt local ordinances regulating tobacco products violate the home rule provisions of the Ohio Constitution. Lawmakers had included language in the previous biennial budget, 135-HB33 (Edwards), that prohibited local regulations of tobacco and alternative nicotine products, but Gov. Mike DeWine used his line-item powers to strike the language from the budget. However, on a mostly party-line vote, the General Assembly voted to override that veto.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

Gov. Mike DeWine and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Thursday announced 55 recipients of \$137.5 million in grants for traffic safety projects in 41 counties across the state. The funding comes from the state's Highway Safety Improvement Program, which the DeWine administration said is investing more per capita on roadway safety than any other state.

The Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA) announced this week that it has awarded \$30.97 million through low-interest loans to Ohio communities to improve wastewater and drinking water infrastructure and make water quality improvements for Ohioans. OWDA said it funded eight projects in the month of June that will improve/replace aging infrastructure, with the projects receiving an interest rate ranging from 3.91 to 4.69 percent.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) announced Tuesday that it had reopened its safety grants program, which helps employers purchase equipment that "significantly" reduces the risk of workplace injury. More than \$41 million is available to employers in FY26.