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**Ohio Association of Ambulatory Surgery Centers  
Legislative Update**

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- HB90**      **OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNOR'S AND HEALTH ORDERS** (WIGGAM S, EDWARDS J) To establish legislative oversight of the Governor's executive orders, certain public health orders, and emergency rules, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee.  
*Current Status:* 2/24/2021 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-90>
- HB110**      **OPERATING BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2023, to levy taxes, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.  
*Current Status:* 7/1/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; effective 7/1/21  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-110>
- HB122**      **TELEHEALTH SERVICES** (FRAIZER M, HOLMES A) To establish and modify requirements regarding the provision of telehealth services, to establish a provider credentialing program within the Medicaid program, to revise the law governing the State Medical Board's One-Bite Program, and to extend the suspension of certain programs and requirements under the state's insurance laws until January 1, 2026.  
*Current Status:* 12/22/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 3/23/22  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-122>
- HB160**      **HEALTH CARE COST ESTIMATES** (HOLMES A) Regarding the provision of health care cost estimates.  
*Current Status:* 3/10/2021 - House Insurance, (First Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-160>
- HB196**      **REGULATE SURGICAL ASSISTANTS** (KELLY B, CARRUTHERS S) To regulate the practice of surgical assistants.  
*Current Status:* 5/24/2022 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Health, (Seventh Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-196>



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- HB218 COVID-19 VACCINE - QUALIFIED IMMUNITIES** (CUTRONA A) To address medical requirements for employees and students; to address qualified civil immunity regarding certain coronaviruses; to authorize emergency medical technicians to administer COVID-19 tests; to expressly cover COVID-19 vaccine injuries under the workers' compensation system; and to repeal sections 3792.05, 3792.07, and 3792.08 of the Revised Code on September 30, 2025.  
*Current Status:* 12/7/2021 - Senate General Government Budget, (Second Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-218>
- HB267 LIMIT PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS** (JORDAN K) To limit the duration of public health orders and to allow the General Assembly to act via concurrent resolution in response to a public health emergency if the Governor or Department of Health does not.  
*Current Status:* 5/4/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-267>
- HB356 REDUCE ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS** (LOYCHIK M, BIRD A) Regarding a proposal to reduce the abuse of prescription opioids, to establish addiction treatment facilities, to increase penalties for drug trafficking violations, to modify penalties for drug possession, to require an offender convicted of a drug possession or drug trafficking offense involving certain drugs to be subject to ten years of post-release control, to allow a criminal defendant who has a severe substance use disorder involving certain drugs to be confined by a state detoxification provider while awaiting trial, to create restitution work programs, and to make an appropriation.  
*Current Status:* 4/6/2022 - House Criminal Justice, (Third Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-356>
- HB388 REGARDING VACCINE REFUSAL** (JORDAN K) To prohibit taking certain actions against an individual because the individual refuses to be vaccinated against a disease.  
*Current Status:* 8/12/2021 - Introduced  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-388>



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- HB401 EMPLOYER-MANDATED COVID VACCINATION INJURY** (EDWARDS J) To exempt an injury or disability caused by an employer-mandated COVID-19 vaccination from the Workers' Compensation Law and to allow the employee to sue the employer for damages.  
*Current Status:* 8/24/2021 - Introduced  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-401>
- HB411 INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY, ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACT** (CLICK G, GRENDALL D) To prohibit mandatory disclosures related to an individual's COVID-19 vaccination status, to name the act the Individual Privacy and Anti-Discrimination Act, and to declare an emergency.  
*Current Status:* 9/8/2021 - Introduced  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-411>
- HB424 COVID-19 VACCINE - QUALIFIED IMMUNITIES** (KOEHLER K) To prohibit a political subdivision, public official, public school, state agency, or state institution of higher education from taking certain actions related to the COVID-19 vaccine, to codify the qualified civil immunities under H.B. 606 of the 133rd General Assembly permanently, to repeal section 3792.05 of the Revised Code on the date that is two years after the effective date of that section, and to declare an emergency.  
*Current Status:* 9/20/2021 - Introduced  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-424>
- HB425 COVID-19 - GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES** (WIGGAM S, HALL T) To prohibit certain actions related to COVID-19 and genetic technologies.  
*Current Status:* 9/20/2021 - Introduced  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-425>
- HB435 VACCINE REQUIREMENTS** (CARFAGNA R, SEITZ B) To address COVID-19 vaccine requirements for employees and students; to extend certain timelines for qualified civil immunity and expand immunity to include hearing aid dealers and hearing aid fitters; to authorize emergency medical technicians to administer COVID-19 tests; to expressly cover COVID-19 vaccine injuries under the workers' compensation system; and to repeal sections 3792.05, 3792.06, 3792.07, and 3792.08 of the Revised Code on June 30, 2023.  
*Current Status:* 10/13/2021 - Bills for Third Consideration; (Pending Committee Report)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-435>



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- HB454      **SAFE ACT** (CLICK G, GRENDALL D) To prohibit certain procedures to alter a minor child's sex and to designate this act as the Save Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act.**
- Current Status:** 6/1/2022 - House Families, Aging and Human Services, (Fourth Hearing)
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-454>
- HB477      **EXPULSION, TERMINATION BASED ON VACCINATION STATUS** (RICHARDSON T) To prevent expulsion from school and termination from employment based on COVID-19 vaccination status.**
- Current Status:** 11/1/2021 - Introduced
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-477>
- HB481      **COVID VACCINE, PASSPORT PROTECTION ACT** (JORDAN K) To enact the COVID-19 Vaccination and Passport Protection Act to prohibit schools, institutions of higher education, employers, and places of public accommodation from requiring COVID-19 vaccines or proof of vaccination.**
- Current Status:** 11/8/2021 - Introduced
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-481>
- HB489      **INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE ACT** (CLICK G) To enact the Inalienable Rights of Conscience Act regarding students and employees who object to certain vaccines and other treatments based on reasons of conscience, including religious convictions.**
- Current Status:** 11/16/2021 - Introduced
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-489>
- HB598      **PROHIBIT ABORTIONS BASED ON CONDITION** (SCHMIDT J) To enact the Human Life Protection Act to prohibit abortions based upon a condition precedent.**
- Current Status:** 5/26/2022 - House Government Oversight, (Third Hearing)
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-598>
- HB704      **DESIGNATE PERSONHOOD FROM CONCEPTION** (CLICK G) To enact The Personhood Act to recognize the personhood of an unborn human individual from conception.**
- Current Status:** 7/11/2022 - Introduced
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-704>



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- HB714      ADVANCED PRACTICE RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS** (YOUNG T, JOHN M) To license advanced practice respiratory therapists and to amend the version of section 4761.01 of the Revised Code that is scheduled to take effect September 30, 2024, to continue the change on and after that date.  
*Current Status:* 8/31/2022 - Introduced  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-714>
- SB22      LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT-PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS** (JOHNSON T, MCCOLLEY R) To establish legislative oversight of orders issued by the executive branch, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee.  
*Current Status:* 3/24/2021 - Consideration of Governor's Veto; House Overrides Veto, Vote 62-35  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-22>
- SB150      NONCOMPETE PROVISIONS-PHYSICIANS** (JOHNSON T, WILLIAMS S) To prohibit the use of noncompete provisions in physician employment contracts.  
*Current Status:* 10/27/2021 - Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity, (Third Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-150>
- SB157      ATTEMPTED ABORTIONS** (JOHNSON T, HUFFMAN S) To require reports to be made after a child is born alive following an abortion or attempted abortion, to establish certain civil or criminal penalties for failing to preserve the health or life of such a child, and to make changes regarding variances from written transfer agreements.  
*Current Status:* 12/22/2021 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 3/23/22  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-157>
- SB161      SURGICAL SMOKE** (BRENNER A) Regarding surgical smoke.  
*Current Status:* 3/16/2022 - Senate Health, (Third Hearing)  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-161>



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**SB321**     **REGARDING APRN AUTHORITY** (ROMANCHUK M) Regarding the authority of advanced practice registered nurses, and to amend the versions of sections 3701.5010, 3705.30, and 3929.67 of the Revised Code that are scheduled to take effect on September 30, 2024, to continue the changes to those sections on and after that date.

**Current Status:** 5/18/2022 - Referred to Committee Senate Health

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-321>

**SB322**     **SEX OFFENSES, MEDICAL PROFESSIONS** (HACKETT R) Regarding sex offenses and individuals regulated by the State Medical Board.

**Current Status:** 5/18/2022 - Referred to Committee Senate Health

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-322>



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**Friday, Oct. 21, 2022**

### **APPALACHIA**

The DeWine administration Thursday released detailed guidelines for the Appalachian Community Grant Program, including project requirements, eligibility and the funding timeline. The program will provide \$470 million for development projects and up to \$30 million for project planning and technical assistance. The goal of the \$500 million in total funds is to "revitalize communities and stimulate transformational change," according to the administration. It will be managed by the Governor's Office of Appalachia, which is part of the Ohio Department of Development (DOD). Grant applications will be accepted starting Wednesday, Nov. 2. The office will also host a webinar at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2022, to present the guidelines in detail and allow interested parties to ask questions.

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Attorney General Dave Yost on Friday rejected the summary for a proposed constitutional amendment that would increase the state minimum wage rate. "Raise the Wage Ohio" would also modify existing requirements for various groups of employees, the Ohio Attorney General's Office said. "The attorney general's role in the petition process is to determine whether the summary is a fair and truthful representation of the proposed statute. The submitted petition does not meet that requirement," the AG's office said.

Attorney General Dave Yost awarded \$7,000 to a Northeast Ohio nonprofit for anti-bullying education, the AG's office announced Tuesday. The grant to the Values-in-Action Foundation is the first one provided from the sale of Ohio's specialty license plate aimed at preventing bullying. Values-in-Action, based in the city of Mayfield in Cuyahoga County, promotes social-emotional learning, kindness and workforce readiness through trainings that have reached 750 schools in 73 of Ohio's 88 counties and 4,500 schools nationwide.

### **AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY**

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) Wednesday announced it would award \$75 million to support an expansion plan that will upgrade Cirba Solutions' existing lithium-ion battery recycling facility to produce battery-grade raw materials. This is part of the first phase in a total of over \$7 billion for battery supply chains through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure law. According to Cirba, the facility will be able to produce enough battery-grade critical minerals used in cathode production to power more than 200,000 new electric vehicles (EVs) annually. It will also create an estimated 150 new





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jobs in the Lancaster area and is slated to be one of the largest commercial-scale battery recycling facilities in North America.

### **BUSINESS/CORPORATE**

Ohio State University (OSU) and the OSU Wexner Medical Center received the 2022 Governor's Inclusive Employer Award Monday, with Lt. Gov. Jon Husted making the announcement during an event on OSU's campus. The Cleveland Clinic and Meijer were also recognized as "Ohio Inclusive Employers." According to Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), this award recognizes OSU's and Wexner Medical Center's "commitment to individuals with disabilities in the workplace and being leaders of diversity and inclusion best practices in Ohio."

Calling it the start of a "10-year conversation," Ohio Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Steve Stivers joined other business leaders Tuesday in releasing a "Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future" that was prepared by the Ohio Chamber and Accenture. Stivers said Accenture reviewed data on economic competitiveness from many different sources and prepared policy recommendations for state leaders. "Ohio is not just competing with other states, we are competing in a global economy," he said. "While there is much to be proud of regarding Ohio's efforts to be business friendly, we must take steps now to lay the foundation for future growth in the years to come."

### **CIVIL RIGHTS**

The latest iteration of the "Transgender Spotlight" multimedia series is now available, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio, Equality Ohio and TransOhio. The project -- which includes photoshoots and interviews of individuals in the trans and gender-non-conforming community (TGNC) -- is a direct response to "harmful legislative tactics" such as the effort to ban transgender girls and women from playing school sports, the ACLU of Ohio said. The initiative aims to educate the public and help more people get to know the TGNC community.

### **CORONAVIRUS/MONKEYPOX**

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff told reporters Thursday that the level of COVID-19 in Ohio "has continued to decline significantly," but raised concerns that new subvariants may lead to another wave that coincides with the holiday season and larger indoor gatherings. He again said prevention through updated vaccines, testing and treatment still help alleviate the spread of COVID-19.

Case counts have dropped nearly 30 percent recently, though Vanderhoff said the case number may be underreported due to home testing. Hospitalizations show a "more





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accurate" picture and have gone down by around 25 percent. However, there are still around 12 COVID deaths each day in Ohio and he said the state passed the "unfortunate milestone" of 40,000 total deaths under the data reported Oct. 13.

The weekly COVID-19 data released by ODH Thursday showed 11,097 new cases, up from 8,535 on Oct. 13, and 422 hospitalizations, up from 396. ICU admissions increased from 22 to 27 while deaths fell from 87 to 74. The Ohio Hospital Association reported there were 874 hospital patients and 122 ICU patients currently testing positive for COVID-19, compared to 822 and 111 on Oct. 13. Since the pandemic began, there have been 3.17 million cases, 127,998 hospitalizations, 14,318 ICU admissions and 40,111 deaths. ODH also reported Thursday that an additional 143,553 people received the bivalent vaccine booster in Ohio over the past seven days, bringing the total to 744,171.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Honda and LG Energy Solution's investment of over \$4 billion for electric vehicle production is expected to receive \$156.3 million in state incentives, including an estimated \$71.3 million in expanded Job Creation Tax Credits. Ohio Department of Development (DOD) Chief Communications Officer Todd Walker told *Hannah News* the tax credit will be considered at an upcoming meeting of the Ohio Tax Credit Authority (TCA). It is for 1.871 percent over 30 years and is performance-based. That will require fulfillment of job creation and payroll commitments as well as annual reports that verify progress. The project is expected to involve investment of at least \$4.2 billion and creation of over 2,500 jobs. DOD is also working with the General Assembly for state investment of \$85 million in local water and transportation infrastructure upgrades that ensure project success and benefit local communities.

### ECONOMY

A report released this week by Washington, D.C.-based Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) found less than 1 percent of Ohioans hold more than \$850 billion of the state's wealth. The group released a 50-state report on wealth inequality, arguing that it limits economic opportunities for everyday Ohioans and "both reflects and exacerbates racial inequality. ... A very small number of households hold a staggering share of nationwide wealth, and they've been able to grow their fortunes in part because our tax system asks very little of them," said Carl Davis, ITEP's research director and an author of the report. "New and strengthened taxes on extreme levels of wealth could dramatically reduce the runaway inequality we face today."

Moody's Investors Service elevated Ohio's credit outlook to "positive" and affirmed the state's "Aa1" issuer rating, the DeWine administration announced recently. The announcement follows a similar move by Fitch Ratings, which upgraded Ohio's rating to



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"AAA" from "AA+." The Moody's analysis cites evidence of new economic development that can diversify the state economy.

### **EDUCATION**

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) said that over the course of National School Bus Safety Week -- which runs from Oct. 17 through Oct. 21 – it increased enforcement efforts on school bus violations, such as passing a stopped school bus, school zone violations and other school bus or school zone-related activity. According to OSHP, National School Bus Safety Week is supported by the National Association for Pupil Transportation and serves as a reminder to motorists, students and school bus drivers of the important role they each have in ensuring children's safety. This year's theme, "1 Bus + 1 Driver = a BIG Impact on Education," reminds motorists and students about the dangers that exist outside the school bus.

### **ELECTIONS**

Secretary of State Frank LaRose referred 75 individuals to the Ohio Attorney General's Office and county prosecutors for further investigation and potential prosecution of alleged voter fraud, LaRose's office announced Monday. "Thanks to a joint partnership with several states around the nation, Ohio has been able to identify individuals who allegedly voted first in one state, and then cast another ballot in Ohio in violation of state law. All violations occurred in the 2020 general election," the Ohio Secretary of State's Office said. This is the second round of referrals and includes individuals identified through partnerships with Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. The first round yielded four referrals from four states. Additional referrals in conjunction with other partner states are expected.

### **ELECTIONS 2022**

The Ohio Attorney General's Office would drop its appeal of the preliminary injunction currently blocking "heartbeat" abortion ban 133-SB23 (Roegner) if he is elected in November, Democratic candidate Jeff Crossman said Friday. In a virtual press conference, Rep. Crossman (D-Parma) criticized Attorney General Dave Yost and Gov. Mike DeWine for their efforts to revive what he called the "heartless bill." "I don't believe there is any empathy or heart in that bill. It causes real harm to the people of this state. It's jeopardizing the health and wellbeing of women and young girls, and ultimately treats women as second-class citizens," Crossman said. Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas Judge Christian Jenkins recently issued a preliminary injunction blocking enforcement of SB23 indefinitely. Shortly thereafter, Yost filed an appeal to the First District Court of Appeals.



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Singer-songwriter Dave Matthews is scheduled to perform at Kemba Live! on Monday, Oct. 24 to rally voters for Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Tim Ryan. Ryan is in a statistical dead heat with Republican opponent J.D. Vance, according to recent polling.

Gun violence and former President Donald Trump were among the topics discussed by Tim Ryan and J.D. Vance in the second and final scheduled U.S. Senate debate on Monday night. The event, which took place at Stambaugh Auditorium in Youngstown, was livestreamed and broadcast by WFMJ. Republican author Vance and U.S. Rep. Ryan (D-Niles) were asked about a wide range of issues, including many of the same ones they addressed during the first debate, such as inflation, abortion and energy. The most significant issue discussed during the second debate that didn't receive attention in the first debate was gun violence. The candidates were also asked about HB99 (Hall), which significantly reduced the number of hours required for educators to carry firearms in schools. That law became effective in June 2022.

Elected officials and the American public need to stop arguing over "stupid stuff" and focus on implementing bipartisan solutions to the country's problems, Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Tim Ryan said Monday. "We're not going to let a bunch of extremists who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6 and tried to overthrow the peaceful transition of government -- built on a lie -- destroy the government. I don't care what political party you're from," U.S. Rep. Ryan (Niles) told attendees of a forum hosted by the City Club of Cleveland. "We have a choice. This is not thrust upon us. We have to say 'no' to that," Ryan continued.

Two groups announced Monday the release of their own voter guides for the November election. Left-leaning Innovation Ohio's Voter Guide can be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/7aprcfaa>. This interactive guide provides information based on an individual's address. It was developed in partnership with BallotReady and includes information on the candidate's position on key issues such as the economy, abortion and others.

The right-leaning group We the People also released its iVoter Ohio Voter Guide. Touting that it is "grounded in God; rooted in research," this guide is intended "to equip and empower Christians to vote wisely and be good stewards of their citizenship in order to restore the principles of limited government, free enterprise and traditional American values." Disclaiming affiliation with iVoters, this guide can be found online at <https://ivoterguide.com/all-in-state/oh>. Entries include a visual depiction of the candidate's standing from "verified conservative" to "verified liberal." It also provides a personalized ballot if an address is entered.

The Brunner for Chief Justice Campaign announced Monday that a series of ads and testimonials from 18 retired judges from all levels of the judicial system will begin



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appearing in all 88 counties on social media, and in letters to the editor, among other means. Those testimonials can be found online at <https://www.justicebrunner.com/retired-judges-for-brunner>.

Quarterly campaign finance reports for activity from July through September in Ohio's U.S. Senate race showed U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Niles) outraising and outspending author J.D. Vance. Ryan reported total receipts of about \$17.3 million and spending of about \$19 million. Vance reported about \$6.9 million in receipts and spending of about \$3.4 million. Vance reported having about \$3.4 million on hand, while Ryan reported about \$1.4 million.

With three weeks until Election Day, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose announced Tuesday that requests for early and absentee ballots now total 943,105, a 2.7 percent increase over the same point in the 2018 gubernatorial statewide election. As a part of that total, 71,764 Ohioans have now voted early in-person and 871,341 have requested an absentee ballot by mail.

With fewer than three weeks to go before the Tuesday, Nov. 8 General Election, Ohio's Poll Worker Tracker shows 37,479 Ohioans have signed up to serve as a poll worker, surpassing the statewide goal of 35,811, the Ohio Secretary of State's (SOS) Office announced Wednesday. While the overall statewide goal has been surpassed, not all counties have yet met their designated goal. As of Monday, Oct. 17, 42 of the 88 counties had met their target number, the SOS said. A total of 69 counties have met the minimum number. County poll worker data can be viewed at <https://pollworkertracker.ohiosos.gov/>. In order to ensure an adequate number of poll workers are trained and available in case of unforeseen challenges, LaRose set a goal of 115 percent of the minimum number of poll workers necessary to execute a successful election on Nov. 8.

Former Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley discussed plans to frequently wield the veto pen and to consider growth opportunities beyond the Central Ohio region if elected governor this fall during Wednesday's Columbus Metropolitan Club forum. Whaley, the Democratic nominee, appeared at the forum that was intended to also feature Gov. Mike DeWine, who declined to participate, as he's done for all head-to-head debates with Whaley this campaign season. Moderator Colleen Marshall of NBC4 in Columbus addressed the incumbent's absence and the discussions about holding so-called empty chair debates, saying it's important for politicians to engage in open discussion "that goes beyond the messages that are canned and prepared that you see in political ads. ... All candidates for office, regardless of their party, have an obligation to answer unscripted questions about their agenda, their beliefs and their record. And when one candidate refuses ... we cannot allow that refusal to stop the conversation," Marshall said.



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The GOP should emulate the Ohio State Buckeyes' football team during the remainder of the 2022 campaign, Ohio Republican Party Chair Bob Paduchik said Thursday, as he called for the candidates “to run up the score” to send a message to Washington, D.C. regarding Republican positions. The "Our Ohio Families Tour" event also featured comments from First Lady Fran DeWine, Second Lady Tina Husted, Darlene Yost (wife of Attorney General Dave Yost), Andrea Faber (wife of Auditor of State Keith Faber) and Lauren LaRose (wife of Secretary of State Frank LaRose). The spouses emphasized the importance of not only their husbands' races, but also the races for Ohio Supreme Court and the U.S. Senate race between author J.D. Vance and U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Niles).

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The following judges came out in support of Jennifer Brunner for chief justice: the Honorable **Ronald B. Adrine**, Cleveland Municipal Court; **Nadine Allen**, Hamilton County Common Pleas, Hamilton County Municipal Court; **Patricia Ann Blackmon**, Eighth District Court of Appeals in Cleveland; **Eric Brown**, former Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court, Franklin County Probate Court, Franklin County Municipal Court; **Dale Chase**, Medina Municipal Court; **Stuart K. Friedman**, Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas; **Jeffrey Froelich**, Second District Court of Appeals, Montgomery County Common Pleas Court; **Rosemary Grdina Gold**, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, Division of Domestic Relations; **Barbara Gorman**, Montgomery County Common Pleas Court General Division; **Burt Griffin**, Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas; **Mabel Jasper**, Cleveland Municipal Court; **Una Keenon**, East Cleveland Municipal Court; **Stuart K. Miller**, Wayne County Municipal Court; **Carla Moore**, Ninth District Court of Appeals; **Adele M. Riley**, Montgomery County Municipal Court; **Ken Rocco**, Eighth District Court of Appeals; **Jose Villanueva**, Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas; and **Sandra Walker**, East Cleveland Municipal Court.

- The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* released the following summary of its endorsements so far: U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Niles) for U.S. Senate; Justice Jennifer Brunner for Ohio Supreme Court chief justice; Judges Terri Jamison and Marilyn Zayas for justices on the Ohio Supreme Court; Rep. Kent Smith (D-Euclid) for the 21st Senate District; Rep. Bride Rose Sweeney (D-Cleveland) for the 16th House District; Rep. Tom Patton (R-Strongsville) for the 17th House District; Sen. Nathan Manning (R-North Ridgeville) for the 13th Senate District; and Rep. Dan Troy (D-Willowick) for the 23rd House District.

- Marsy's Law for Ohio has endorsed passage of State Issue 1 which addresses the setting of bail.





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### ENERGY/UTILITIES

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) Commissioner Daniel Conway sounded the alarm about rising energy prices that left many Ohioans with sticker shock this summer and are on track to more than double next year. Conway seized on this month's FirstEnergy commodity auction for its standard service offer (SSO) to issue an economic primer of sorts on the relationship between historic inflation, natural gas prices and electricity costs. He explained the delayed impact electric auctions have on retail prices many months later. Year-over-year, the FirstEnergy's wholesale cost spiked more than 143 percent to \$122.30 per megawatt hour (MWh) compared to \$50.21 in October 2021. Confirming the inflationary trend, Duke Energy Ohio's electric auction price rose more than 141 percent in late September to \$115.75 MWh compared to \$47.99 MWh in September 2021. PUCO staff had warned commissioners of "uncharted waters" for energy futures earlier this year.

PUCO recognized National Cybersecurity Awareness Month Wednesday to acknowledge the need to protect utility infrastructure and state oversight from potential bad actors. PUCO adopted a resolution to that effect at its biweekly meeting, where it took comment from Commissioner Dennis Deters. He called it "super-critical" that the state and commission acknowledge the threat to Ohio's utility distribution systems for electric, gas, water and landline telephone service.

### GAMING/GAMBLING

The Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC) approved several more sports gaming licenses on Wednesday as the state approaches the Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023 universal start date. The commission awarded its first type C sports gaming proprietor licenses during the meeting, granting them to UBet Ohio, Intralot, BetIGG and Skybox Sports Network. The OCCC also awarded one mobile management services provider license and four management services provider licenses to Barstool, and one mobile management services provider license and one management services provider license to FanDuel. Sports gaming supplier licenses were awarded to IGT, SimpleBet, IMG Arena US, Skybox Sports Network and Aristotle International.

OCCC Executive Director Matt Schuler reminded applicants that complete, final and OCCC-approved versions of responsible gaming plans, required procedures, house rules, facility plans, geolocation procedures and equipment test reports are due on Wednesday, Nov. 2 if a business plans to start sports gaming or use the relevant equipment on the universal start date. Additionally, all standard sports gaming employee applications are due by Nov. 2 to be guaranteed consideration in time for the universal start date.



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The Ohio Lottery signed a type C sports gaming contract with Gold Rush Amusements, the agency announced Thursday. The company is the fifth to sign a contract with the Ohio Lottery to provide sports betting equipment and services to type C host locations, which include establishments like bars, restaurants and bowling alleys.

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Sen. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) will retire from the Legislature, effective Monday, Oct. 31, the senator announced Thursday. "It has been an honor and privilege to serve in the Ohio Legislature for the past 22 years in both the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate," Fedor wrote in her retirement letter to Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima). "This was an extremely difficult decision to make and one that I reached after consulting with family, friends and colleagues," Fedor continued. "Although I will no longer serve in the Legislature, my passion having taught in our school classrooms for 18 years is still my core foundation -- children are 100 percent our future. It is my hope that I will be successful in continuing in public service." A spokesperson for Fedor's State Board of Education (SBOE) campaign told *Hannah News* that Fedor's retirement from the General Assembly will not affect her state school board campaign.

The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) allowed all agenda items to move forward Monday despite Democratic attempts to invalidate one rule regarding methods for determining the presence of a fetal heartbeat. Reps. Michael Skindell and Kristin Boggs raised multiple concerns about rule 3701-47-07 from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). Created as a result of 133-SB23 (Roegner), the rule "outlines the definitions and methods for detecting a fetal heartbeat in a pregnant woman and the gestational age of the unborn human individual and clarifies responsibilities to assist practitioners in complying with statutory requirements and the department in assessing compliance," according to the rule summary. Skindell asked if the rule went through any public hearings or if there was an opportunity for the public to provide feedback on the rule. Lance Himes, assistant director of ODH, told him no, Ohio law did not require public hearings and the department did not seek stakeholder feedback. Responding to other questions, Himes said the rule's "fetal heartbeat" definition was pulled directly from SB23.

Members of the Ohio General Assembly Cancer Caucus heard briefings on new and emerging cancer treatments during the virtual Wednesday meeting, including a presentation from Reps. Andrea White (R-Kettering) and Thomas West (D-Canton) on their legislation to require health care coverage of biomarker testing. A biomarker is a unique signal that is specific to a patient's disease and can be measured in blood or tissue. In cancer, biomarkers can include molecules like proteins and gene mutations found in cancer cells, and they help guide more targeted therapies and treatments. White and





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West's HB608 would require health benefit plans and Medicaid to cover biomarker testing.

Capital Square Foundation Chairman Charles Moses, ex officio member, said the board's Art Committee is providing "Ohioans in Space" candidates \$5,000 each for a proposed design and hopes to announce the final artist in January 2023, with a proposed unveiling the following January. He said the late President Dwight D. Eisenhower's granddaughter, Susan Eisenhower, will lead a fundraiser for the artwork on Nov. 30 at 11:30 a.m. in the Atrium. A professional in the energy industry, Eisenhower also will share insights into current events based on her many industry trips to Russia, Moses said.

Capital Square Review and Advisory Board Executive Director Laura Battocletti said the board would be able to stay with a flat funding request for its operational budget during the next General Assembly and has received a clean bill of health from the Ohio Auditor of State's Office (AOS).

### HIGHER EDUCATION

Miami University has officially launched a new fundraising campaign, titled "For love. For honor. FOR THOSE WHO WILL." With a financial goal of \$1 billion, the campaign is the largest in the university's history. "The vision for this campaign emerged from Miami's ambitious strategic plan," Miami President Gregory Crawford said. "The plan reflects our mission to become the nation's most influential and inspirational undergraduate institution with premier graduate programs. Miami's future is about leading transformational change that will advance our academic disciplines, elevate the wellbeing of individuals and society, solve grand global challenges, and answer enduring questions in our dynamic and interconnected world. Our unwavering will, clarity of vision, inclusive mindset, and spirit of love and honor will drive this campaign in the coming years and empower us to accelerate positive change."

Attorney General Dave Yost said Wednesday that he is suing three companies for shoddy design and workmanship on a Zane State College building that has created a danger to students and staff and already necessitated the closure of one entrance because of the risk from falling debris. The lawsuit, filed in Muskingum County Common Pleas Court, explains that the faulty design and construction of Zane State's Advanced Sciences and Technology Center have caused the brick and stone facade to split and crumble on the building's south, east and west sides. The building was constructed in 2013.

### JUDICIAL

The Ohio Supreme Court moved to discipline one judge and uphold the prosecution of a former county sheriff on ethics violations in cases highlighting troubled children's



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services that Gov. Mike DeWine is set to address in next year's budget. Tuesday's Court announcements could also effectively end the legal career of suspended Cleveland Judge Pinkey Carr, says Justice Sharon Kennedy. The Supreme Court found the Ohio Ethics Commission's investigatory powers did not prevent Williams County Prosecutor Katherine Zartman from bringing a separate case and securing a conviction against former county Sheriff Steven Towns for posting confidential child abuse reports on the sheriff's website and Facebook. One investigation involved juvenile rape and another infant death. Towns argued that children's services and other local officials' alleged lack of due diligence amounted to public corruption. The Williams County prosecutor said his actions were a violation of R.C. 2151.421(I)(2)(a)'s ban on "unauthorized dissemination" of child abuse reports and R.C. 102.03(B)'s confidentiality provisions for all government officials.

### **LIQUOR/ALCOHOL**

Ohio Liquor (OHLQ) will hold the last two of four "liquordation" events this weekend on Saturday, Oct. 22 in Warren and Toledo. The hours for both are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. These events feature thousands of "Last Call" and specialty products, OHLQ Exclusives, limited-release single barrels, and more. "This will be the largest selection of 'Last Call' products anywhere in the state," said Jim Canepa, superintendent of the Division of Liquor. "We are excited to partner with these OHLQ locations to host opportunities where customers will be able to find some gems at an incredibly low cost -- and even some great single barrel selections. We encourage everyone to visit us and grab these bottles before they are gone forever." The locations of the Saturday sales are as follows:

- Bulk Beverage Co., 3314 Secor Rd., Suite D, Toledo, OH 43606.
- Giant Eagle, 2700 Mahoning Ave., State Rd. NW, Warren, OH 44483.

### **MARIJUANA/HEMP**

The Source Holding Ohio LLC in South Euclid has been awarded a provisional dispensary license, the Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) announced Thursday. This is the 72nd provisional license awarded under the RFA II process, according to OBP spokesperson Cameron McNamee.

For the first time, the majority of patients have expressed some level of satisfaction with the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program (MMCP), according to the latest survey from the Ohio State University (OSU) Moritz College of Law's Drug Enforcement Policy Center (DEPC). Just over 56 percent of respondents reported being satisfied with the program, with 15.3 percent being "extremely satisfied" and 40.8 percent being



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"somewhat satisfied." In the 2021 report, 55 percent of patients reported being "dissatisfied" with the program.

### **MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM**

The Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC) voted Thursday to set a growth target of 3.3 percent for per-member, per-month (PMPM) costs in the Ohio Medicaid program for FY24, and 3.4 percent in FY25. State law calls for the committee to adopt such a target and for the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) to limit growth to that rate or the three-year average increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The vote came after a presentation by CBIZ Optumas, contracted actuary for the committee, on its growth projections. The firm provided two scenarios, one assuming the status quo and another assuming that the federal public health emergency (PHE) declaration expires, meaning the state could again start to disenroll people from the Medicaid program who are no longer eligible. The state has not been able to do that since the outset of the pandemic because maintaining coverage is a condition of accepting extra federal Medicaid money. Ohio gets about \$300 million per quarter in additional funding while the PHE remains in effect.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES**

The new Hocking Hills State Park Lodge and Conference Center has officially opened. "Hocking Hills attracts millions of visitors each year, and this new lodge will provide an even greater experience for Ohio and all its visitors," Gov. Mike DeWine said in a statement. "There is so much local flavor that people will see all over the lodge," said General Manager Todd Tucker. "The artwork, the live-edge lumber that surrounds the bar, the Nelsonville-made mantles above the fireplaces on the fireside concourse -- all of these things are from right here in Ohio and it's those special touches that make this place even more exceptional." The new Hocking Hills State Park Lodge was built on the same footprint as the state park's former lodge restaurant and conference center, which was destroyed by a fire in December 2016. The total cost was \$40 million.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife presented the Toledo Zoo and Aquarium with a \$250,000 check to fund the zoo's continuing wildlife conservation work. The check was presented during the zoo's release of lake sturgeon, a state-endangered fish, into the Maumee River. The funds will support the zoo's efforts to restore lake sturgeon and eastern hellbenders into their natural waterways.

The ODNR Division of Forestry recently honored two Ohio organizations for their outstanding contributions to forestry in Ohio at the Forest of Honor ceremony in Zaleski State Forest. They included Project Learning Tree-Ohio and the Ohio Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation.



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The ODNR Division of Wildlife will release ring-necked pheasants at public hunting areas in late October and November. Releases will begin Saturday, Oct. 22 during Ohio's youth small game hunting season. Each fall, the Division of Wildlife releases male pheasants (roosters) at 25 public hunting areas throughout Ohio. More than 14,000 pheasants are scheduled to be released this fall.

Wildlife officers in Northeast Ohio recently concluded a months-long investigation into illegal dumping activities on private property that culminated with 30 individuals' being issued a total of 40 summonses, according to ODNR. Individuals were cited for litter, shooting from the roadway, and driving with a suspended license. Significant issues with illegal dumping in southern Columbiana County prompted several Ohio Wildlife officers to investigate the violations in coordination with the landowner. The officers conducted surveillance for several months to determine suspects and violations.

### **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Nearly \$6 million in grant funding is available for nonprofit organizations, religious institutions, chartered non-public schools and licensed pre-schools to help implement safety and security enhancements, Gov. Mike DeWine announced Friday. Security upgrades that could be funded include those assisting organizations in preventing, preparing for or responding to acts of terrorism and acquiring or retaining the services of a resource officer, special duty police officer or licensed armed security guard, among others.

### **OHIO HISTORY**

The Ohio History Connection recently broke ground on a new \$17 million storage center that will house and protect about half of the state's collections objects. The new Collections Care Center is being built on the northeast part of the Ohio History Center's Columbus campus. The building will have 16,500 square feet of storage space and 12,800 square feet of offices and workspace. Construction is expected to be completed by April 2024.

The state commission charged with planning Ohio's participation in the nation's 250th, or semiquincentennial, anniversary on July 4, 2026 released a report with more than 40 recommendations. The Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial, also known as America 250-Ohio, was formed earlier this year on March 1 after details on the commission were laid out in HB110 (Oelslager). The commission is led by Co-Chairmen Doug Preisse and Michael B. Coleman and consists of 29 voting members from across the state; Todd Kleismit serves as the executive director. The report highlights opportunities to collaborate on existing programs or projects, but also includes new initiatives. The commission recommended establishing a new Ohio film festival, adopting



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a program to restore some of Ohio's historic county courthouses, highlighting educational opportunities like "Ohio Firsts" as well as creating America 250-Ohio branding for state parks, and establishing a new grant program to accomplish many of the ideas in the report.

### PEOPLE

The Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACB) announced Tuesday the appointment of Monica Juenger as its next chief policy officer. Juenger, currently director of government contracts at Molina Healthcare of Ohio and former director of stakeholder relations for the Governor's Office of Health Transformation, replaces OACB's longtime policy chief, Lori Stanfa. Stanfa retires in December after working in Ohio's developmental disability service delivery system for more than four decades. Juenger begins her new role on Monday, Oct. 31.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio State Highway Patrol Friday announced it was easing its policy on visible tattoos, allowing current troopers and future applicants to wear long sleeves to cover their tattoos. Previous policy prohibited troopers from having any visible tattoos, and the troopers could not alter uniform requirements in order to meet the policy. On Friday, the patrol said troopers will be required to wear their long-sleeve uniform shirt year round to cover tattoos "effective immediately."

Federal counter-terrorism experts say the real concern with far-right or far-left ideologies like that of Dayton shooter Connor Betts is whether those beliefs advocate violence and -- in the extreme -- mass murder. President and founder Mark Pohl and Executive Vice President Ken Wall of The Pohl Group, which assists police, schools and employers with threat assessment training and law firms with investigations of violent incidents, said the question should not be a political one but rather a practical one of identifying real dangers to public safety. They anchored "The Oregon District Shooting and How Threat Assessments Can Prevent Violence: A Case Study" at the recent Ohio Attorney General Law Enforcement Conference. "It's gotten worse and worse and worse," Wall said of U.S. mass shootings since the Columbine, CO incident in 1999, which he said led to new threat protocols. "Most importantly, the number of casualties has gotten worse and worse and worse. They're not going down. We're not getting better at it."

The Ohio Department of Commerce's Division of Liquor Control (DOLC) and the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) are reminding bars and liquor permit holders to follow state liquor laws during this Halloween season when alcohol violations such as underage drinking, over-serving, and other violations like illegal sales may be seen. "While Halloween parties and gatherings are fun, they can turn dangerous quickly," said OIU





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Commander Erik Lockhart. "Businesses and individuals that hold gatherings must follow Ohio's laws and rules to provide a safe environment for all involved." For locations without proper licenses, operating without a valid permit is against the law. Consumers can use the DOLC search lists of online permits to determine if a venue is illegally selling alcohol. That list can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/5c99ap7a>.

### RACES TO WATCH

The race to replace U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) could be one of the closest statewide contests in the Tuesday, Nov. 8 General Election. While Republicans have generally dominated statewide elections outside of U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown's (D-OH) seat and the Ohio Supreme Court in recent years, numerous polls and campaign fundraising numbers indicate that Democrat Tim Ryan is neck-and-neck with Republican J.D. Vance. Vance, a newcomer to politics, rose to national fame following the publication of his 2016 memoir *Hillbilly Elegy*. He won a crowded Republican primary after receiving the coveted endorsement of former President Donald Trump. Ryan has represented the Youngstown region in Congress for the last 20 years and ran a short-lived campaign for president in 2020. He easily won the Democratic primary. According to the RealClearPolitics.com poll average, Vance is leading Ryan by 2.5 percentage points. Polling averages from FiveThirtyEight.com show Vance with a 0.8 percent lead.

One incumbent has a clear path to re-election while another seat will definitely see new representation in this fall's State Board of Education races. Five of the board's 11 elected positions are on the ballot in November. At year's end, four of the eight seats filled by the governor will come up for appointment. Since new gubernatorial terms on the board start the second Monday of the new year after an election, Gov. Mike DeWine will get to fill those seats regardless of whether he is re-elected. Board races are officially nonpartisan, but the political parties often endorse candidates. Like other races, the State Board of Education contests were roiled by Ohio's protracted redistricting saga. Board districts are supposed to consist of three Senate districts apiece, but General Assembly maps were unsettled for a long time. In addition, DeWine's designation of which Senate districts corresponded to which board districts was based on a General Assembly map that's since been invalidated and superseded. Board districts, therefore, do not align to Senate district boundaries, but DeWine's office argues it lacks legal authority to designate districts anew.

The two candidates for the new 31st House District both have a history in local government for Summit County, as Rep. Bill Roemer (R-Richfield), the current representative of the 38th District, was previously on Summit County Council and his Democratic opponent Rita Darrow is a current county council member and past Macedonia city councilwoman. Under the new maps, the district is located entirely within Summit County, and Roemer previously held an at-large seat on the county council,



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giving him familiarity with the new district's communities and elected officials. Darrow told *Hannah News* she was motivated to run for the Statehouse because of redistricting, as she had previously been in the district represented by Rep. Casey Weinstein (D-Hudson).

Democrat Sean Brennan and Republican Jolene Austin, both newcomers to state politics, are vying for Ohio House District 14 this November. The district, previously House District 15, covers Parma and has been redrawn to cover Parma Heights but no longer includes the village of Brooklyn Heights or the city of Brooklyn. Brennan has served in numerous local government roles, including as Parma City Council president since 2011. Despite his long public service history, Brennan said he never seriously considered a run for the Statehouse, not seeing himself as much of a "political animal." But after winning reelection as Parma City Council president, Brennan said the time seemed right. Rep. Jeff Crossman (D-Parma), who is running for state attorney general this year, approached him about running, and now that his children are older, Brennan said he has the time to make trips down to Columbus. Austin said she became interested in local politics after dealing with transparency issues with her local school district. She began by restarting the "Parma Republicans Club," which she said has grown from eight members when she started about six years ago to now over 750. Austin ran unsuccessfully for the Parma City Council Ward 5 seat in 2021. She has been a member of the Cuyahoga County Republican Party's Central Committee for the last six years.

Upheaval in Ohio House District 18 sidelined one incumbent to leave two newcomers to vie for the district, which is heavily favored for Democrats. After former state Rep. Stephanie Howse won a seat on the Cleveland City Council, the House Democratic Caucus appointed Rep. Shayla Davis (I-Garfield Heights) to fill the seat for the remainder of the term. Davis initially appeared to be a placeholder for former state Sen. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland), who applied to fill the vacancy and said she was offered the seat, but ultimately declined the appointment. Williams had said her plan was to run for the seat, previously Ohio House District 11, but the prolonged redistricting process made it unclear how the district seats would change. Davis was reportedly appointed to the seat at the recommendation of Williams. Williams, however, never ended up running. She bowed out of the race and resigned her Senate seat to take a job as director of government affairs at Charter Communications. Davis got caught up in Williams' decision not to run as it came after the deadline for Davis to pull petitions to run for the seat herself. Davis then sought to run as an independent, which required her to "separate" from the Democratic Party. The race is now between Democrat Darnell Brewer and Republican Shalira Taylor.





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### REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) and Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima), along with their Ohio Redistricting Commission designees Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) and Rep. Jeff LaRe (R-Canal Winchester), announced Friday that they filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court over Ohio's congressional redistricting map. The Ohio Supreme Court invalidated the second congressional map adopted by the Ohio Redistricting Commission in July and ordered Ohio lawmakers to draw a new one. Cupp and Huffman, however, argued that the deadlines for drawing new maps do not kick in until after an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court is adjudicated or a deadline to file an appeal passes, which they said was Oct. 19. The legislative leaders said in August that the case has similar issues as *Moore v. Harper*, a redistricting case out of North Carolina already before the U.S. Supreme Court that will address the "independent state legislature theory" that argues the U.S. Constitution puts the power to determine issues around federal elections solely with state legislatures. In a statement released Friday, the legislative leaders said, "Today, we've asked our nation's highest court to review the Ohio Supreme Court's decision regarding Ohio's congressional map, a decision which we believe is fundamentally flawed. While many believe that the Ohio Supreme Court majority misinterpreted state law, there is also the broader concern that the Court assumed a role the federal constitution does not permit it to exercise. This is a matter that needs resolution by our nation's highest court. The United States Constitution expressly puts the responsibility to prescribe 'The times, places, and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives ...' with the legislature of each state. As our petition lays out, the 4-3 decision of the Ohio Supreme Court encroached on this legislative authority in multiple ways, and that action deserves to be tested in the U.S. Supreme Court. Our appeal today sets that process in motion."

### SECRETARY OF STATE

There were 14,493 new business filings in September 2022, Secretary of State Frank LaRose announced Thursday. That number is an 8.4 percent decrease from August 2022, according to the Ohio Secretary of State's Office. However, that number is only 0.3 percent lower than September 2021's 14,543 new business filings.

### STUDIES/POLLS

A report released by Washington, D.C.-based Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) found less than 1 percent of Ohioans hold more than \$850 billion of the state's wealth. The group released a 50-state report on wealth inequality, arguing that it limits economic opportunities for everyday Ohioans and "both reflects and exacerbates racial inequality. ... A very small number of households hold a staggering share of nationwide wealth, and they've been able to grow their fortunes in part because our tax system asks



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very little of them," said Carl Davis, ITEP's research director and an author of the report. "New and strengthened taxes on extreme levels of wealth could dramatically reduce the runaway inequality we face today."

### **TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission (OTIC) received the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Award from the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA), OTIC Executive Director Ferzan Ahmed said during the commission's monthly meeting.

### **WORKFORCE**

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Wednesday opened the registration period for the Nov. 2 OhioMeansJobs.com regional virtual job fairs it will host. Job seekers who register beforehand can have their resume viewed in advance and may be able to schedule meetings with employers on the day of the event. The job fairs run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and are organized by Ohio region, with one each for Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast Ohio.

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Matt Damschroder announced Thursday that an additional tool has been added to the [Apprentice.Ohio.gov](https://www.apprentice.ohio.gov) website to help Ohioans find answers to questions about apprenticeship programs: a "Chat with Virtual Assistant" feature. This automated assistant, named "Antonio," was built with artificial intelligence software. Users can simply type in their questions or -- to see categories of information -- click "What can Antonio help you with?"