**Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts
*Legislative Report – February 2025***

**GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.
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**February in Ohio: News to Know**

There was plenty of love shown for Ohio during the month of February, especially in state government. In lieu of U.S. Senator Jon Husted’s move to D.C., Jim Tressel was officially sworn in as our new Lieutenant Governor.  This month also saw the announcement of several 2026 bids for statewide offices—including governor, secretary of state, and state treasurer. Additionally, the Office of Budget and Management reported an exceedingly strong outlook for state tax receipts for this fiscal year. To hear more details about this month’s events, please continue reading below.

**Jim Tressel Sworn in as Ohio’s 67th Lieutenant Governor**

On February 12, 2025, lawmakers of the 136th General Assembly confirmed former Ohio State football coach Jim Tressel as the next lieutenant governor. The Ohio Senate voted 31-1 to confirm Tressel, and the Ohio House voted 68-27 (along party lines) to confirm Tressel.

Two days later, during a ceremony in the Rotunda of the Ohio Statehouse, Jim Tressel was officially sworn in as Ohio’s 67th Lieutenant Governor. Tressel was joined by his wife, Ellen Tressel, members of the General Assembly, and dozens of his former Ohio State Buckeye football players.

Joining for the final 695 days of Governor Mike DeWine’s gubernatorial term, Lt. Gov. Tressel’s background in education—having served as President of Youngstown State University—is expected to lead to the new lieutenant governor’s involvement in Ohio’s workforce and economic development, as a whole. For more information and details on Lt. Gov. Tressel’s ceremony, click [here](https://governor.ohio.gov/media/news-and-media/jim-tressel-sworn-in-as-ohios-67-lieutenant-governor).

**Statewide Office Campaigns: Who’s Running and For What?**

Over the past several weeks, there were a handful of individuals who announced their intent to run for statewide offices that will be up for election in 2026.

**Attorney General:** Late last month, current State Auditor Keith Faber launched his bid to become Ohio’s next Attorney General. It remains unclear if the Faber will face a competitive Republican primary for AG, and no Democrat has yet announced a campaign for the office.

**Governor:** Also last month, term-limited Attorney General Dave Yost launched his campaign to replace term-limited Governor Mike DeWine in the 2026 gubernatorial race. AG Yost is one of two GOP candidates as Vivek Ramaswamy formally launched his campaign for governor on February 24, 2025. At present, the lone Democrat to announce a bid for governor is former Department of Health Director Amy Acton.

**Secretary of State:** On February 5, 2025, term-limited State Treasurer Robert Sprague announced his bid for secretary of state. As of now, Sprague is the only GOP candidate in the race. Democrat Bryan Hambley, a hematology oncologist, became the first candidate from either party to launch a campaign for the office in early January.

**State Auditor:** On February 6, 2025, the current Secretary of State Frank LaRose announced his bid for state auditor. Democrats have yet to field a candidate for state auditor.

**State Treasurer:** On February 12, 2025, former Senator Niraj Antani announced his bid for state treasurer, thereby suspending his initial campaign for secretary of state. Regarding the decision to drop his bid for secretary of state, Antani wrote in a social media post, “…unfortunately we see no path forward to victory with Treasurer Sprague in the [secretary of state] race.” On February 13, 2025, current Senator Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) announced her campaign for state treasurer. Sen. Roegner’s campaign plans to spotlight her government experience, which includes 14 years in the General Assembly. She currently chairs both the Senate Higher Education Committee and Senate General Government Committee. Additionally, Sen. Roegner is vice chair of the Senate Ways & Means Committee.

**OBM Monthly State Revenue Report: Tax Receipts Outperform in January**

On February 10, 2025, the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) released the [Monthly Economic Summary and State Financial Report](https://obm.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/e9c4aab7-5d77-48b0-8eb1-801e360f347d/02_mfr_2.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_K9I401S01H7F40QBNJU3SO1F56-e9c4aab7-5d77-48b0-8eb1-801e360f347d-pjNeIFl) for January. According to OBM’s report, state tax receipts are running over a half-billion dollars ahead of schedule this fiscal year, with additional padding from higher-than-anticipated investment earnings.

The state’s year-to-date standing improved as January’s tax receipts brought in $172.5 million more than anticipated, 6.6% above the estimate. Non-Auto Sales Tax collections posted the strongest positive variance by dollar amount, running $79.3 million (7.1%) above the monthly estimate. The Commercial Activity Tax (CAT) was a close second at $76.8 million (150%). The CAT was followed by Auto Sales Tax collections that were $11.4 million (7.7%) above January's forecast. The state pulled an additional $92.7 million from investments, which is $30.2 million (48.3%) more than expected for January. In fact, at this point in the fiscal year, earnings on investments are $58.3 million (35.9%) more than projected. The only category to fall short was the Personal Income Tax, ending the month $37.9 million (3.3%) shy of projections.

In other OBM news, Ohio’s 2024 annual financial reports have been finalized and published—the [State of Ohio Annual Comprehensive Financial Report](https://archives.obm.ohio.gov/Files/State_Accounting/Financial_Reporting/Comprehensive_Annual_Financial_Report/2024/ACFR_2024.pdf) (ACFR) and the [State of Ohio Popular Annual Financial Report](https://archives.obm.ohio.gov/Files/State_Accounting/Financial_Reporting/PAFR/2024/PAFR_2024.pdf) (PAFR). According to OBM’s [news release](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/OHOBM/bulletins/3ca16d1), the ACFR includes the state’s basic financial statements, providing an overview of the state’s financial position and of the management of Ohio’s fiscal operations, for July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. The PAFR summarizes information from the ACFR with graphics and data visualizations.

**Below is a list of legislation we are tracking on your behalf:**

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| **HB14** | **INCORPORATE FEDERAL TAX CHANGES** (ROEMER B, WORKMAN H) To expressly incorporate changes in the Internal Revenue Code since March 15, 2023, into Ohio law and to declare an emergency. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/19/2025 - **PASSED BY SENATE**; Vote 32-0, Emergency Clause 32-0 |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-14> |
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| **HB18** | **DIGITAL ASSET INVESTMENT, CRYPTOCURRENCY RESERVE** (DEMETRIOU S) To address investments in exchange-traded products by the state retirement systems, to permit the Treasurer of State to invest certain interim funds in digital assets, and to name this act the Ohio Strategic Cryptocurrency Reserve Act. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/25/2025 - House Technology and Innovation, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-18> |
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| **HB49** | **CREATE WATER IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS** (CLAGGETT T) To allow for the creation of water improvement districts. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/5/2025 - Referred to Committee House Natural Resources |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-49> |
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| **HB54** | **TRANSPORTATION BUDGET** (STEWART B) To make appropriations for programs related to transportation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/27/2025 - Senate Transportation, (Third Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-54> |
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| **HB92** | **MUNICIPAL RECOVERY, LIEN LIMITATIONS** (JOHNSON M, MCCLAIN R) Regarding limitations on recovery and lien imposition by municipalities against property owners of non-owner-occupied properties for unpaid water, sewer, and disposal services rates and charges. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2025 - House Local Government, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-92> |
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| **HB93** | **RESTORE CLEAN OHIO FUND** (HALL T, SWEENEY B) To restore the Clean Ohio Fund to be administered by the Department of Development and the Clean Ohio Council. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2025 - Referred to Committee House Finance |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-93> |
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| **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:*** | 2/27/2025 - House Children and Human Services, (Sixth Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-96> |
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| **HB112** | **RIGHT TO REFUSE MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS** (GROSS J, LEAR B) To prohibit discrimination against an individual for the refusal of certain medical interventions for reasons of conscience, including religious convictions, and to name this act the Conscientious Right to Refuse Act. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/18/2025 - Introduced |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-112> |
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| **SB3** | **PHASE DOWN OHIO INCOME TAX** (LANG G, HUFFMAN S) To phase-down the state income tax to a flat rate of 2.75% over two years. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 1/29/2025 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-3> |
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| **SB8** | **PROHIBIT EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION-UNION ACTIVITIES** (HUFFMAN S) To prohibit a public employer from providing paid leave or compensation for a public employee to engage in certain union activities. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2025 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-8> |
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| **SB9** | **INCORPORATE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE CHANGES** (BLESSING III L) To expressly incorporate changes in the Internal Revenue Code since March 15, 2023, into Ohio law and to declare an emergency. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2025 - **PASSED BY SENATE**; Vote 31-0, Emergency Clause 31-0 |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-9> |
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| **SB15** | **ALLOW ESTABLISHMENT-COMMON BOND FUND PROGRAM** (BRENNER A, WILSON S) To allow port authorities to establish a Common Bond Fund Program to finance port authority facilities. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 1/29/2025 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-15> |
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| **SB45** | **EXPAND ELIGIBLITY-COUNTY SEWER RATE DISCOUNTS** (INGRAM C) To expand eligibility for county sewer discounted rates or charges. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2025 - Senate Local Government, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-45> |
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| **SB57** | **OHIO BITCOIN RESERVE ACT** (O'BRIEN S) To authorize investment of state funds in bitcoin, to require state entities to accept payment in cryptocurrency, and to name this act the Ohio Bitcoin Reserve Act. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/11/2025 - Senate Financial Institutions, Insurance and Technology, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-57> |
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| **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> |
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