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# STATEHOUSE REPORT

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## Update on property tax abolition campaign

Yesterday, representatives of Ax Ohio Tax held a press conference to announce their progress on the signature collection efforts to abolish property taxes in Ohio.

The organizers indicated they have gathered roughly 305,000 signatures, meaning they are short of the signature threshold to place the amendment on the November ballot. They indicated that they have no plans to suspend their campaign.

The press conference was most likely intended to give supporters of the effort a boost of encouragement for them to continue gathering signatures.

### Signature Requirement

As a reminder, to get on the ballot, the campaign must submit at least 413,488 valid signatures by July 1. This includes at least 5% of the 2022 gubernatorial election turnout in 44 of Ohio's 88 counties.

Based on the signature validity rate of prior citizen amendment campaigns, it is likely that Ax Ohio Tax will need to submit about 704,000 signatures to hit the 413,488 valid signature threshold. If the campaign does not submit the required number of valid signatures, it receives ten additional days to gather supplemental signatures.

If the campaign does not put the proposed amendment on the November 2026 ballot, it can continue to gather signatures for the November 2027 ballot. Gathered signatures are evergreen (although they may become invalid).

The signature thresholds are determined by the total number of votes cast in the prior gubernatorial election. Since 2026 is a gubernatorial election, the number of valid signatures that the campaign will need, both statewide and to meet the 44/88 county threshold, will change once the November election results are certified.

This may result in the campaign needing more signatures or fewer signatures, depending on statewide and county-level turnout.

CCAO continues to play an important role in the coalition that has been formed to oppose this dangerous proposal. For information about the potential effects of abolishing the property tax, you can visit [ProtectPublicServices.org](https://www.protectpublicservices.org).

If you have questions concerning Ohioans to Protect Public Services, please contact Managing Director of Enterprise and Retirement Services [Steve Caraway](#).

## **Bills introduced to make crime reduction grant program permanent**

Legislators in both chambers introduced bills this week to codify the Ohio Violent Crime Reduction Grant Program as a permanent program moving forward. The program is under the Division of Criminal Justice Services of the Department of Public Safety.

[House Bill 830](#) (Representatives Jeff LaRe and Darnell Brewer) and [Senate Bill 425](#) (Senator Nathan Manning) are identical bills to establish the grant program in the Revised Code.

Like the existing grant program, the bills would require awarded grant funds to be used for at least one of the following purposes:

- Creating, implementing, and expanding violent crime reduction strategies;
- Implementing or expanding core strategies aimed at reducing juvenile gang involvement;
- Acquiring technology as part of a larger strategy;
- Providing overtime for personnel directly involved in a larger strategy;
- Purchasing equipment directly related to and necessary for a larger strategy;
- Developing and providing training;
- Receiving technical assistance for a larger strategy;
- Purchasing analytical tools and support to better understand and respond to violent crime and assess the effectiveness of a larger strategy; and/or
- Other purposes as approved by the Division of Criminal Justice Services.

The bills do not include an appropriation or specify a funding mechanism.

The program was launched in 2021 by the DeWine Administration to support crime reduction initiatives. The [15th round of grants was announced last week](#), bringing the total awarded through the program since 2021 to more than \$87 million.

## **DCY Director Wentte shares data, discussion points for commissioners**

Last week, the CCAO Board of Directors hosted Department of Children and Youth Director Kara Wentte and PCSAO Assistant Director Scott Britton for a presentation and discussion on

children services placement challenges and costs. You can view the [presentation recording here](#) and the [presentation slides are available here](#).

Following the presentation, Director Wente shared [county-level data on placement types](#). We encourage you to review this information and discuss with your PCSA director.

During the presentation, Director Wente shared some questions CCAO members can use in discussion with their PCSA directors, including:

- How many children do we have in custody?
- Where are they placed?
- What is our average length of stay overall? If you have children in congregate care what is their average length of stay?
- How many foster homes do we have in our county?
- What is the practice of our judge/court?
- What do you need to step children down?
- What community supports do we have in place to help stabilize families? What do we need?

If you have questions about the presentation or materials, please contact Rachel Reedy at [rreedy@ccao.org](mailto:rreedy@ccao.org).

## Legislative Activity

### Committee Hearings

*No hearings held this week.*

### Introduction of Bills

The following bill(s) that may be of interest to counties were introduced this week:

- [House Bill 829](#) (Representative Thomas Hall): To halt an expedited type two or three annexation upon objection of a township.
- [Senate Bill 424](#) (Senators Michelle Reynolds and George Lang): Regarding new community authorities.
- [Senate Bill 426](#) (Senator Al Cutrona): Regarding the closing of a public library branch and the forfeiture of public library funds for doing so.

### Upcoming Committee Hearings

*No upcoming hearings scheduled.*