



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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Overview of General Assembly election results

This week, Ohio and the rest of the United States held the 2024 General Election. The CCAO policy team was watching the Ohio General Assembly races to see how the composition of the upcoming 136th General Assembly would differ from the current Assembly.

Each even-numbered year, the entire Ohio House of Representatives is up for reelection (99 years) and about half of the Ohio Senate is up for reelection. In presidential election years, sixteen Senate seats are elected (those representing even-numbered districts). This year, however, a seventeenth seat was on the ballot as an unexpired seat to fill the vacancy created when Michael Rulli won election to the US House of Representatives.

According to the unofficial results from election night, the Democratic Party picked up two seats in the House for the 136th General Assembly. This result will likely hold, as there were no House races within the 0.5% margin that triggers an automatic recount. With the two new Democrats in the House, the partisan split for the incoming House will be 65-34, with the Republican Party in the majority. However, the pickups for the Democratic Party brings the Republican majority below the “veto-proof” majority of 67 seats.

In the Senate, the Democratic Party also picked up two seats. Similar to the House races, none of the Senate contests finished election night within the automatic recount threshold, so the results are unlikely to change. The partisan split for the incoming Senate will be 24-9, with the Republican Party in the majority. While the Democratic Party increased its minority, the Republican Party still holds a “veto-proof” majority of at least 23 seats.

All CCAO formers who ran for reelection retained their seats. Senator Bob Hackett, a former Madison County Commissioner, was term-limited and Representative Scott Wiggam, a former Wayne County Commissioner, ran for and won the Wayne County Clerk of Courts position. Other formers, Senator Shane Wilkin and Senator Al Landis, were not up for reelection this year.

A new CCAO former has also joined the ranks for the General Assembly. Current Washington County Commissioner Kevin Ritter won his campaign to represent the 94th House District.

In other election news, Issue 1, a statewide proposed constitutional amendment to create a new body to administer General Assembly and Congressional redistricting was voted down by Ohioans. The failure of Issue 1 means that, barring unexpected legal rulings or an attempt to pass a similar amendment in a future election, the current legislative maps will remain throughout the rest of the 2020s.

CCAO congratulates the incoming 136th General Assembly on winning their elections to represent their communities in Columbus. The Association is excited to meet new members and to work with the entire General Assembly to advance policies to help counties effectively govern and provide vital services to Ohioans throughout the state.

Statewide election results can be accessed on the [Secretary of State's website](#). CCAO has also [prepared a document](#) with General Assembly outcomes that includes the counties each district represents.

Discussion of county races and ballot issues will be included in Monday's edition of Counties Current. In the meantime, you can access documents with the outcomes of [CCAO member races](#) and [ballot issues](#) on [CCAO's website](#).

Senate begins process to reauthorize the OPWC State Capital Improvement Program

Senators Brian Chavez and Hearcel Craig have cosponsored [Senate Joint Resolution 4](#) to reauthorize the Ohio Public Works Commission's State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) to assist local governments with their infrastructure needs.

The SCIP program is funded with state general obligation debt, which requires a constitutional amendment approved by the voters. The current debt authorization expires July 1, 2025, after 10 years of being in effect. SJR 4 authorizes the issuance of up to \$250 million in bonds annually for ten years, an increase of \$50 million per year above the current annual level.

In order to qualify for the May 2025 ballot, both the House and Senate would have to pass identical resolutions at least 90 days before the election. The House is expected to introduce an identical version of the resolution soon, sponsored by Representatives Scott Oelslager and Dan Troy.

The resolution authorizes bond proceeds to be used for roads and bridges, waste water treatment systems, water supply systems, solid waste disposal facilities, and storm water and sanitary collection, storage, and treatment facilities, including real property, facilities and related equipment.

It should be noted that the funding provided by SCIP renewal is separate from OPWC's two other infrastructure funding sources: the Local Transportation Improvement Program (funded by fuel tax receipts) and the Revolving Loan Program (funded by loan repayments to the OPWC from loans made under both SCIP and RLP).

The resolution will receive its first hearing on Tuesday, featuring both sponsor and proponent testimony. If you would like to submit proponent testimony, the [CCAO policy team](#) would be happy to help with drafting and submission.

CCAO requests that members discuss the importance of the State Capital Improvement Program with their legislators to ensure that this issue is a priority for the General Assembly.

Members with questions should contact Jon Honeck, jhoneck@ccao.org, 614-220-7982.

HB 497, county omnibus bill, to receive first Senate hearing

At Wednesday's Senate Local Government Committee meeting, House Bill 497 (Representatives Brian Stewart and Roy Klopfenstein) will receive its first hearing in the Senate. The bill is one of CCAO's main priorities in the Lane Duck session and we are happy to see it is receiving a hearing during the first week of Lane Duck.

The bill makes a number of non-controversial revisions to county law. You can read more about the bill on [CCAO's Bill Tracker](#).

REMINDER: OCCO Reception is next Tuesday

CCAO encourages all our members to attend the Ohio Council of County Officials (OCCO) legislative reception next week on November 12th at the Statehouse.

The reception is free and will take place at the Statehouse Atrium and will last from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Officials can [register to attend the reception here](#).

The reception is a great place to interact with your colleagues from other counties and row offices, and members of the General Assembly as the state moves into the lane duck session. All CCAO members are encouraged to attend!

Legislative Activity

Introduction of Bills

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

- [House Bill 684](#) (Representatives Scott Wiggam and DJ Swearingen): To prohibit the use of ranked choice voting.
- [Senate Bill 324](#) (Senators Theresa Gavarone and Andrew Brenner): To require proof of citizenship to register to vote and to modify procedures regarding voter roll maintenance, absent voting, and election petitions.

- [Senate Joint Resolution 4](#) (Senators Brian Chavez and Hearcel Craig): Proposing to enact Section 2t of Article VIII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to permit the issuance of additional general obligation bonds to fund public infrastructure capital improvements.

Upcoming Committee Hearings

The following committees are currently scheduled to meet and discuss bills that may be of interest to counties. Other committees will likely meet as well but as of press time for *Statehouse Report* they have not released agendas. Please note that these schedules are subject to change.

If you would like to offer testimony on any bill, please visit the committee page and contact the committee chair's office for instructions on how to submit testimony.

Tuesday, November 12

[House Families and Aging](#) (10:00 a.m.)

- [House Bill 583](#) (Representatives Andrea White and Phil Plummer): Express intent to increase accountability for group homes.
 - Third hearing, opponent and interested party testimony

[Senate General Government](#) (3:00 p.m.)

- [House Bill 583](#) (Representative Scott Wiggam): To require government contractors, private nonresidential contractors, and certain employers to use E-verify.
 - First hearing, sponsor party testimony

Wednesday, November 13

[Senate Health](#) (9:30 a.m.)

- [House Bill 236](#) (Representatives Beth Lear and Melanie Miller): To prohibit a congregate care setting from denying a patient or resident access to an advocate during public health emergencies and to name this act the Never Alone Act.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [Senate Bill 255](#) (Senators Stephen Huffman and Terry Johnson): To revise the law governing coroners and death certificates.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony
- [House Bill 303](#) (Representatives Thomas Hall and Nick Santucci): To establish a process for the revision of training subjects for EMS personnel.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

[Senate Local Government](#) (9:30 a.m.)

- [Senate Bill 300](#) (Senators Andrew Brenner and Kent Smith): To require any increased county real estate and manufactured home conveyance fees to be allocated for county-specific housing purposes.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 315](#) (Representatives Thomas Hall and Bill Seitz): To revise the township law.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

- [House Bill 497](#) (Representatives Brian Stewart and Roy Klopfenstein): To make various changes regarding county law.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony