



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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State SNAP administration funding, budget clean-up items await Governor DeWine's signature

This week, the House of Representatives concurred on Senate changes to [House Bill 434](#) (Representatives Bernard Willis and Brian Lampton), a budget clean-up bill. With the concurrence, the bill goes to Governor DeWine for signature or veto.

Appropriations were added to the bill to begin addressing SNAP error rates, which will have an impact on how much the state pays for SNAP benefits beginning in October 2027. The bill appropriates \$21 million in SFY 2026 for upgrades to the Ohio Benefits system. Ohio Benefits is the system that the state uses to coordinate and administer benefits, so the funding is intended to enhance the system to reduce errors from occurring.

An additional \$14.8 million was added to ODJFS administration funding, also with the intent to reduce error rates. Within 90 days of the bill's effective date, ODJFS must develop a methodology and technical system to determine payment error rates within SNAP. The system is required to distinguish errors that occur from county agencies, from clients receiving assistance, and from the Ohio Benefits system itself.

In addition to the SNAP administration appropriation, the bill makes several other small clean-ups to provisions that were enacted in the state operating budget. The following are of note to counties:

- Clarifies that the local option ("piggyback") homestead exemption is given to all current homestead recipients. Language in the enacted budget was unclear about if the "grandfathered" population (those who received the exemption before means testing was implemented) would receive the credit.
- Clarifies that the Drones for First Responders Program is open to county and township applicants, not just municipal applicants.

- Removes a prohibition on the use of court special projects funds from being used for training outside of the state. Funds can be used on training anywhere in the continental United States.
- Removes a scoring component in the Workforce Housing Project Grant Program that favored one type of water pipe over another.

If you have questions concerning these cleanup provisions, please contact policy@ccao.org.

Adams County testifies on bill to modify property tax exemptions for conservation organizations

This week, [House Bill 540](#) (Representatives Justin Pizzulli and David Thomas), a bill to align tax exemptions for land owned by certain conservation entities in line with the tax exemptions given to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) for state parks, received its second hearing.

ODNR pays taxes on 2.5% of the unimproved land value, while large conservation entities (those owning more than 15,000 acres in a single county) pay no taxation. The bill requires those entities to pay taxes on unimproved land at the same valuation rate. The bill was amended this week to change the payment model from a payment in lieu of taxes to simply reducing the tax exemption percentage from 100% to 97.5%.

The [Adams County Board of County Commissioners provided proponent testimony](#) on the bill, delivered by Commissioner Jason Hayslip. Commissioner Hayslip shared that a single conservation company in Adams County owns more than 20,000 acres and pays no taxes on the land, despite generating significant revenue from carbon credits and other programs. This has caused a tax shift onto working families and smaller communities.

The [Adams County Auditor](#), the [Adams County DD Board](#), several [Adams County townships](#), as well as [a school district](#) and [a fire district](#), provided testimony in support of the bill as well.

County property tax levies fair well at the November 2025 ballot box

On Tuesday, Ohioans headed to the polls to vote on a number of county tax issues. CCAO tracked 68 property tax levies, four sales tax levies, and one other issue (a Summit County Charter amendment).

[The full results table can be accessed here.](#)

Property Taxes

Property taxes are the main source of revenue for many county functions, especially human services functions such as developmental disabilities boards, children services, and ADAMHs boards, among others. This week's elections were the first since a ballot initiative to fully eliminate property taxation began gathering signatures.

Of the 68 property tax levies that CCAO followed, 56 passed (a rate of 82%). Twenty-nine of the levies were for new money; of those, 18 passed (a rate of 62%). The remaining 39 levies were renewals; only one of those failed to pass.

Of note is that yesterday was the last election at which entities could put a replacement tax on the ballot. There were 13 county issues on the ballot as replacements; ten passed and three failed to pass. The replacement tax levy type was eliminated following successful General Assembly veto overrides over the summer and autumn.

There were two results that fell within the 0.50% margin and could change. These were a children services renewal and increase in Clermont County (unofficial results have the levy failing to pass) and an ADAMHS replacement levy in Tuscarawas County (unofficial results have it passing).

The tables below show summary figures for property tax levy outcomes by levy effect (new money or renewal) and by levy purpose.

Table 1. County Property Tax Levy Passage Rate, by Effect November 4, 2025, Election			
Levy Effect	Total Levies	Levies Passed	Passage Rate
New Money	29	18	62.1%
Flat Money	39	38	97.4%

Table 2. County Property Tax Levy Passage Rate, by Purpose November 4, 2025, Election			
Levy Purpose	Total Levies	Levies Passed	Passage Rate
Senior Services	17	15	88.2%
Developmental Disabilities	16	12	75.0%
ADAMHS	13	11	84.6%
Children Services	7	5	71.4%
9-1-1	4	3	75.0%
EMS	2	2	100.0%
Crime Victim Services	1	0	0.0%
Zoo	1	1	100.0%
Public Safety	1	1	100.0%
Soil and Water District	1	1	100.0%
Health and Human Services	1	1	100.0%
OSU Extension	1	1	100.0%
County Home	1	1	100.0%
Bridges	1	1	100.0%
Jail	1	1	100.0%

The next issue of *Counties Current* (to be released on Monday, November 10) will include comparisons of levy passage rates from prior elections.

Sales Taxes

On the sales tax front, there were two renewal levies and two new money request levies. The renewals both passed (Athens County for 9-1-1, Auglaize County for the general fund) while

both new money requests failed to pass (Clark County for its jail and Lorain County for criminal justice purposes).

With the results, 51 counties remain at the maximum rate of 1.50%. With their renewals, Athens County and Auglaize County remain at 1.50%. Clark County is also at the maximum rate of 1.50%, but was trying to use the special additional 0.50% authority for jails.

Since that authority was enacted, Coshocton County has successfully utilized it while Lawrence County and now Clark County have both been unsuccessful at enacting it.

Lorain County is currently at 1.00%; its levy would have increased the county's rate to 1.25%.

Other Issues

Finally, the Summit County charter amendment to cap the county's unvoted property tax revenue increases at 3% passed. The Summit County charter proposal was the impetus for CCAO's advocacy of an inflation cap on inside millage revenue growth.

County property tax relief update

House Bill 96, the state operating budget, created two local permissive property tax relief options: a local homestead exemption and a local owner occupancy credit. The deadline to enact the options for the current tax year (Tax Year 2025, taxes payable in Calendar Year 2026) was last Thursday, October 31.

According to tracking conducted by CCAO staff, ten counties enacted the local homestead exemption and four counties enacted the local owner occupancy credit. These counties are listed in the table below.

Table 3. County Permissive Property Tax Relief Enactments	
Local Homestead Exemption	Local Owner Occupancy Credit
Butler County	Carroll County
Erie County	Erie County
Holmes County	Lorain County
Knox County	Richland County
Lake County	
Lorain County	
Medina County	
Miami County	
Pickaway County	

NOTE: This list may be incomplete. If your county has enacted one of the two options and is not listed, please contact Research Analyst Nick Ciolli at nciolli@ccao.org and the table will be corrected.

Legislative Activity

Floor Votes

The following bills that may be of interest to counties received floor votes in the indicated chamber this week.

Senate

- [Senate Bill 293](#) (Senator Theresa Gavarone): To require all marked absent voter's ballots to be delivered to the board of elections by the close of the polls on Election Day in order to be counted.
 - **PASSED 23-10**

Committee Hearings

The following committees held hearings this week regarding bills that may interest counties.

House Children and Human Services

- [House Bill 532](#) (Representative Kevin Miller): To require a public children services agency to take immediate custody of specified children who cannot be released to a parent, guardian, or custodian.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony.

House Public Safety

- [House Bill 346](#) (Representatives Mathew Kishman and Josh Williams): To require mandatory reporters of child abuse or neglect to report to both a peace officer and the public children services agency.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 371](#) (Representatives Phil Plummer and Tom Young): To make elected officials mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect.
 - Third hearing, interested party testimony from PCSAO
 - **AMENDED** to clarify that a county prosecutor that receives a report of abuse or neglect from a PCSA or peace officer in the course of official duties does not need to report the potential abuse or neglect to the PCSA or a peace officer.

House Transportation

- [House Bill 389](#) (Representatives Joe Miller and David Thomas): To eliminate the additional registration fee applicable to hybrid motor vehicles.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from three private individuals

Senate Local Government

- [House Bill 129](#) (Representatives David Thomas): To generally include fixed-sum levies in the calculation of a school district's millage floor and to authorize, with limitations, school district fixed-sum levies.
 - Third hearing, interested party testimony from a coalition of three school administration associations.
- [House Bill 309](#) (Representatives David Thomas): To modify the law governing county budget commissions and property taxation.

- Third hearing, opponent testimony from Policy Matters Ohio and interested party testimony from the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD, the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, the Ohio Municipal League, a coalition of three school administration associations, and the Buckeye Institute.
- [House Bill 124](#) (Representatives David Thomas and Thomas Hall): To modify the process for making property tax sales-assessment ratio studies.
 - Fourth hearing, no testimony
 - **FAVORABLY REPORTED**
- [House Bill 186](#) (Representatives Jim Hoops and David Thomas): To authorize a reduction in school district property taxes affected by a millage floor that would limit increases in such taxes according to inflation and to require a corresponding adjustment in the school funding formula.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from CCAO, the County Auditors Association, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, the Ohio REALTORS, Americans for Prosperity, and a private individual.
- [House Bill 335](#) (Representative David Thomas): To modify the law governing county budget commissions, property taxation, county sales taxation, and alternative apportionment formulas for local government and public library funds.
 - Second hearing. proponent testimony from the County Auditors Association, Ohio REALTORS, and Americans for Prosperity.
- [Senate Bill 281](#) (Senator Kristina Roegner): To authorize a board of county commissioners, on its own behalf, to award a franchise for the operation of a public transit system.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony and proponent testimony from Community Bus Services Inc.

House Development

- [House Bill 284](#) (Representatives Mark Hiner and Erika White): To require iron or steel that is produced in the United States be used on projects supported by state funds.
 - Third hearing, proponent testimony from the Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association, McWane Ductile Ohio, and the Alliance for American Manufacturing.
 - **AMENDED** to allow the requirement be waived for certain projects and to establish an exception for the minimal use of foreign products.

House Local Government

- [House Bill 520](#) (Representatives Ty Mathews and David Thomas): To establish and convene a Blue Ribbon Committee in each county to review and assess each taxing unit within the county and each county program or department to identify duplication of services and generally to streamline and improve county efficiency and effectiveness.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Natural Resources

- [House Bill 522](#) (Representatives Kevin Ritter and Adam Bird): Regarding federal mineral royalty payments.

- Third hearing, no testimony
- **AMENDED** to make administrative changes to how royalty payments would be dispersed.

House Veterans and Military Development

- [House Bill 297](#) (Representatives Kevin Ritter and Johnathan Newman): To increase the amount a county may provide to military and veterans organizations for Memorial Day expenses.
 - Fourth hearing, no testimony
 - **AMENDED** to increase the amount a board of county commissioners must appropriate, if requested, to civic organizations for Memorial Day expenses from \$100 to \$200.
 - **FAVORABLY REPORTED**

Senate General Government

- [Senate Bill 153](#) (Senators Theresa Gavarone and Andrew Brenner): To require verification of an elector's citizenship before the elector may vote and to modify procedures regarding voter registration, voter roll maintenance, absent voting, and election petitions.
 - Fifth hearing, no testimony
 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ADOPTED** to make numerous changes.

Introduction of Bills

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

- [House Bill 571](#) (Representatives Josh Williams and Adam Bird): To remove the option for the juvenile court to transfer a proceeding against a juvenile to the county where the juvenile resides.
- [House Bill 572](#) (Representative Ty Mathews): To allow a public water system to use point-of-use and point-of-entry treatment devices in certain circumstances.
- [House Bill 574](#) (Representatives Jack Daniels and Mike Dovilla): To create the Political Subdivision Consolidation Incentive Grant Pilot Program and to make an appropriation.
- [House Bill 575](#) (Representatives David Thomas and Bob Peterson): To make various changes to the law governing the property taxation of farmland.
- [House Bill 577](#) (Representative Ron Ferguson): To require photo identification to cast absent voter's ballots by mail and to modify the law regarding voter registration.
- [Senate Bill 315](#) (Senators Tim Schaffer and Hearcel Craig): To require Ohio's SNAP program to begin using chip-enabled EBT cards and to make an appropriation.
- [Senate Bill 316](#) (Senator Andrew Brenner): To give specified local governments the authority to unilaterally approve an encroachment on a railroad company's right-of-way for certain utility work.
- [Senate Bill 318](#) (Senator Al Cutrona): To authorize a law enforcement agency to provide school resource officer services to a chartered nonpublic school.
- [Senate Bill 319](#) (Senators Paula Hicks-Hudson and Steve Wilson): Regarding adult protective services provided by county departments of job and family services.

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.

Wednesday, November 12

[House Public Safety](#) (11:15 a.m.)

- [House Bill 346](#) (Representatives Mathew Kishman and Josh Williams): To require mandatory reporters of child abuse or neglect to report to both a peace officer and the public children services agency.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony

[House Ways and Means](#) (11:45 a.m.)

- [House Bill 391](#) (Representatives Jack Daniels and Heidi Workman): To require tax rates be expressed as a percentage of true value on tax bills and ballot language.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 266](#) (Representatives Brian Lorenz and Jennifer Gross): To authorize a temporary property tax credit for certain continuously owned homesteads.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 391](#) (Representatives Adam Mathews and Josh Williams): To allow eligible homeowners to defer the payment of a portion of their property taxes.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

Thursday, November 13

[House General Government](#) (9:30 a.m.)

- [House Bill 554](#) (Representative David Thomas): To require government entities and private sellers to accept cash as payment in certain circumstances.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

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

- [House Bill 397](#) (Representatives Kellie Deeter and Mark Johnson): To expand the allowable uses of profits from jail commissary funds.
 - Fourth hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE VOTE**
- [House Bill 139](#) (Representative Thomas Hall): To require specified testing of fire hydrant systems.
 - Fourth hearing, no testimony
 - **POSSIBLE SUBSTITUTE BILL**
- [House Bill 129](#) (Representatives Ty Mathews and David Thomas): To establish and convene a Blue Ribbon Committee in each county to review and assess each taxing unit within the county and each county program or department to identify duplication

of services and generally to streamline and improve county efficiency and effectiveness.

- Second hearing, proponent testimony
- **POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS**