STATEHOUSE REPORT

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209 East State Street · Columbus OH 43215-4309 · Phone: 614-221-5627 · Fax: 614-221-6986 · www.ccao.org

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On Tuesday, Ohioans took part in the 2026 General Election. They voted on local ballot issues, a statewide ballot issue, and elected officials at the local, state, and federal level. The results of these votes are discussed in the articles below.

Election Results: Ballot Issues

A file showing the outcome of all county ballot issues is available here.

Property Tax Levies

After three years of property tax reform proposals and the enactment of the largest scale reforms since the 1970s as well the prospect of a citizen-initiated constitutional amendment campaign, property tax issues loomed large on the November ballot.

Counties had 87 property tax levies on the ballot. The majority were renewals or a funding decrease, but 29 were new money requests. Overall, levies had an 82% passage rate.

County Property Tax Levies on November Ballot by Request Type			
Request Type	Count	Passed	Passage Rate
Renewal	57	57	100%
New Money	29	13	45%
Additional Levy (New)	*21*	*9*	*43%*
Renewal & Increase	*8*	*4*	*50%*
Reduced Money	1	1	100%
Total	*87*	*71*	*82%*

The last election where all county renewal levies passed was the November 2023 election.

The 87 property tax issues were split among several different purposes. As is often the case, the majority of levies on the ballot were for human services functions. The bulk of new money requests came in this purpose category, as increasing placement costs for children

services and increasing Medicaid waiver match costs for developmental disabilities boards strain existing budgets.

The specific levy purpose that struggled most was developmental disabilities boards. Only five developmental disabilities levies passed.

County Property Tax Levies on November Ballot by Levy Purpose			
Levy Purpose	Count	Passed	Passage Rate
Human Services	57	46	81%
Mental Health and Recovery	*20*	*19*	*95%*
Senior Services	*14*	*14*	*100%*
Developmental Disabilities	*12*	*5*	*42%*
Children Services	*5*	*3*	*60%*
County Home	*3*	*3*	*100%*
Omnibus Human Services	*3*	*2*	*67%*
Public Safety	10	9	90%
9-1-1 System	*5*	*5*	*100%*
Emergency Medical Services	*2*	*2*	*100%*
Sheriff Department	*2*	*1*	*50%*
Criminal Justice	*1*	*1*	*100%*
Health District	6	5	83%
Library	4	3	75%
Park District	4	2	50%
OSU Extension	3	3	100%
Roads & Bridges	2	2	100%
Science Center	1	1	100%
Total	*87*	*71*	*82%*

According to data compiled by the Ohio School Boards Association, school district property tax levies fared well. Renewals passed at a rate of 81% (near the historical average) and new money property taxes passed at a rate of 56% (well above the historical average of 30%).

According to data compiled by the Ohio Township Association, township property tax levies had an 86% overall passage rate. Half of the new money levies on the ballot passed while 98% of renewal levies passed.

Sales Tax Levies

There were three county sales tax levies on the ballot, all renewals. Holmes County (0.25% for permanent improvements) and Wyandot County (0.50% for sheriff and EMS) were successful, while Logan County's renewal (0.50% for permanent improvements) was unsuccessful.

Logan County's county rate is currently at the maximum 1.50%. The levy will cease collections in July 2027.

There were two transit authority sales tax issues on the ballot, one of which passed and the other was unsuccessful.

The Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) passed its 0.25% renewal levy. SARTA had been unsuccessful in the spring passing an increased rate. Facing a financial cliff if the levy expired, the Authority opted for a renewal levy.

The recently created Delaware County Regional Transit Authority sought a 0.20% continuous sales tax to fund its operations. The levy was unsuccessful.

County Charter Amendments

Cuyahoga County, one of two charter counties, had three charter amendments on the ballot. All three amendments were adopted.

They 1) require the County Council to confirm any removal of members of county boards by the County Executive; 2) establish clear duties and powers of the appointed county director of law; and 3) change the appointing authority for the county Charter Review Commission from solely the County Executive to split between the Executive and Council.

Non-County Ballot Issues

Voters decided on one statewide issue. Issue 3, to add an amendment to the Ohio Constitution that requires a photo ID in order to vote, was approved by a wide margin.

The amendment (now Section 5 of Article V) requires voters to provide photo ID to vote at polling places or other voting locations. The extent of other voting locations is delegated to the General Assembly; practically speaking, it covers early voting locations. The General Assembly is also authorized to create an alternative method of verifying the identification for those with a sincere religious objection to being photographed.

"Photo identification" refers to the any of the following, provided they are not expired:

- A driver's license or a state ID card issued by the Ohio BMV (or successor agency);
- A temporary document issued by the BMV to an applicant for a driver's license or state ID card, provided it contains all the information otherwise found on a driver's license or state ID card;
- A US passport or passport card; or
- A US military ID card, an Ohio National Guard ID card, or an ID card issued by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (or successor agency).

Additionally, the General Assembly can pass laws requiring voters to provide photo identification or a signature and another unique identifier when voting by any other method authorized by law; practically speaking, when voting absentee.

"Other unique identifier" can mean either a unique numeric or alphanumeric descriptor assigned to a voter by an agency of the state or the federal government, or a truncated version of such a descriptor.

In local, non-county ballot issues, there were 21 local issues pertaining to data centers. All of the issue outcomes were on the side angled against data centers. Some of the issues were municipal charter amendments establishing the outright ban of data center construction, others were adding requirements that any data center developments be approved by popular vote, and yet others were referenda on either specific projects or zoning changes to allow a specific project.

Election Results: CCAO Member Races

There were 105 CCAO member seats on ballot: one seat in the 86 statutory counties, six Cuyahoga County Council seats, the Cuyahoga County Executive seat, three Summit County Council seats, and nine unexpired seats.

There were 71 incumbents on the ballot, 29 of whom ran unopposed. Of the 42 who had a contested race, three were defeated.

When considering these races, along with contested races that do not feature an incumbent, CCAO will welcome 37 new members. Three of these new members have previously served as a county commissioner:

- Terry Boose, Huron County – A two-time former CCAO member who served on multiple Association boards of directors. Last served in 2023.

- Ken Stiverson, Marion County – A former CCAO member. Last served as a commissioner in 2022.

- Mark Van Buren, Licking County – A former CCAO member. Last served in 2008 (a single year as an unexpired term).

One of the new members will be a former legislator. Lauren McNally, a current State Representative in her second term, won the open Mahoning County Commissioner seat.

The only seat that is within the automatic recount threshold (a margin of 0.5% or less) is the Delaware County seat currently held by the retiring Commissioner Barb Lewis. Republican Renee Vaughan finished election night with a 514-vote lead on Democrat Ryan Grissinger. The final outcome of that race remains to be seen.

Election Results: General Assembly Races

The election also saw the entire House of Representatives up for election and half of the Senate up for election.

House of Representatives

All 99 seats of the House were on the ballot this week.

The current partisan split in the House is 65 Republicans to 34 Democrats. Depending on the outcome of four races that are too close to call, that split will change to between 52 to 56 Republicans and 43 to 47 Democrats.

The four races within the recount threshold are:

- District 29 (Hamilton County): Incumbent Representative Cindy Abrams (R) is up on Jonathan Brader (D) by 19 votes.
- District 37 (Montgomery County): Tom Herner (D) is up on incumbent Representative Tom Young (R) by 134 votes.
- District 44 (Partials of Lucas, Ottawa, and Wood counties): Edward Schimmel (R) is up on David Fournier (D) by 56 votes.
- District 75 (Wood County): Incumbent Representative Haraz Ghanbari (R) is up on Jake Kielmeyer (D) by 126 votes.

There were nine former CCAO members on the ballot as incumbents, all of whom won:

- Representative Brian Stewart (R, District 12)
- Representative Dan Troy (D, District 23)
- Representative Veronica Sims (D, District 33)
- Representative Rodney Creech (R, District 40)
- Representative Marilyn John (R, District 76)
- Representative Roy Klopfenstein (R, District 82)
- Representative Bob Peterson (R, District 91)
- Representative Jason Stephens (R, District 93)
- Representative Ty Moore (R, District 95)

Representative Bill Roemer (R), a former Summit County Councilmember, is leaving the legislature due to term limits.

There will be one new CCAO former in the legislature: former Lorain County Commissioner Matt Lundy (D) won the race for House District 53. The seat is currently held by Representative Joe Miller III.

Senate

Half of the seats in the Senate were on the ballot this year. Odd-numbered districts are elected in gubernatorial years.

The current partisan split in the Senate is 24 Republicans to nine Democrats. The split will to change to 22 Republicans to 11 Democrats.

The two seats that will shift from a Republican to a Democrat are District 3 (Madison and Pickaway counties and parts of Franklin County) and District 27 (Portage County and parts of Geauga and Summit counties).

There were two CCAO formers on the ballot, both of whom won:

- Senator Shane Wilkin (R, District 17)
- Senator Al Landis (R, District 31)

Senator Jerry Cirino (R, District 18), a former Lake County Commissioner, was not up for reelection in this cycle.

Election Results: Statewide Races

The suite of executive positions was up for election, as were two Ohio Supreme Court seats. The results are listed below.

- Governor/Lt. Governor: Amy Action/David Pepper (D) defeated Vivek Ramaswamy/Rob McColley (R)
- Attorney General: John Kulewicz (D) defeated Keith Faber (R)
- Auditor of State: Frank LaRose (R) defeated Annette Blackwell (R)
- Secretary of State: Allison Russo (D) defeated Robert Sprague (R)
- Treasurer of State: Seth Walsh (D) defeated Jay Edwards (R)
- Justice of the Supreme Court: Marilyn Zayas (D) defeated Daniel Hawkins (R)
- Justice of the Supreme Court: Jennifer Brunner (D) defeated Colleen O'Donnell (R)

As a note, the signature threshold for citizen-initiated constitutional amendments is 10% of the most recent gubernatorial election vote total. Based on counts from election day, the threshold will become 459,727 signatures. That is an increase of 46,239 signatures from the current threshold (413,488).

These numbers may change when results are fully certified later this month.