

HIGHLIGHTS OF SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 96 OMNIBUS AMENDMENT

Restores the current public library distribution formula rather than the population-based formula. Appropriates \$490M in FY26 and \$500M in FY27.

Increases funding for the Child Care Choice Voucher Program by \$50M each FY.

Provides \$10M in FY26 from the Lottery Profits to support the School Bus Safety Grant Program and adds ESCs as eligible recipients.

Modifies the requirement that the County Budget Commission reduce school district property tax rates based on the district's carryover balance by increasing the threshold from 25% to 30% of previous FY general fund expenditures, creates an earlier timeline for reviewing school district data and rate reductions, and establishes a special timeline for FY25 and TY25. Specifies that rate reductions only apply to that tax year and requires new language on the tax bill explaining the temporary rate reduction.

Abolishes Ohio Elections Commission (ELC) on January 1, 2026, and shifts enforcement authority and administrative responsibilities to the Ohio Secretary of State for certain candidates and campaign organizations and shifts enforcement authority to county Boards of Elections for local candidates.

States that not later than December 31, 2025, the General Assembly shall determine a manner of expanding gaming opportunities in the State of Ohio.

Establishes the Public Office Compensation Advisory Commission that will, at the beginning of every odd-numbered General Assembly, review and make recommendations about the compensation amounts of General Assembly members and the executive statewide elected officials.

Increases official pay raises from 1.75% to 5% annually through 2029 for justices, judges, and county/township officials, followed by CPI-based adjustments (capped at 3%) starting in 2030.

Raises the motor vehicle registration and renewal fee by \$5 and requires revenue be used by the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

K-12 Education

Requires DEW to establish a system for comparing the performance data of state scholarship students enrolled at chartered nonpublic schools with the data of similar students in nearby schools.

Provides \$400,000 each FY to the Trailblazers in Training: Preparing Girls for Tomorrow's Workforce program.

Creates a permanent exception to permit certain licensed teachers to teach computer science without a computer science specific license.

Restores the current law requirement that qualifying public or chartered nonpublic schools or an interscholastic conference permit an individual to pay cash for a ticket to a school-affiliated event.

Provides \$1.5M each FY to the Stay in the Game! Network.

Permits a school district to excuse a student from the financial literacy instruction graduation requirement if the student participates in a program offered through the student branch of a credit union or bank.

Eliminates the law that requires licensed school counselors to complete a mandatory training program on building and construction trades career pathways.

Clarifies that a public school may partner with private entities, in addition to public and nonprofit entities, to assist students and families in reducing absences.

Provides \$20M in FY26, to be used by OFCC to support the construction or renovation of a school building to each district that meets certain criteria.

Amends the HB 2 (135th GA) appropriation to redirect the Chardon Memorial Stadium Restroom Concession Project to the South Ridge Christian Academy school building and roof renovations project and the Agricultural Career Education Academy DOPR career-technical program and infrastructure project.

Requires ODH to create informational materials on Type 1 Diabetes for parents, guardians, and educators, and public school districts to provide a copy to each student's parent or guardian.

Provides \$500,000 in FY26 to transition St. Rita School for the Deaf to a public school (Rita Community School) under the supervision ODBES.

Clarifies that a newly opened community school is exempt from law requiring DEW to deduct or withhold certain funds from state payments.

Provides \$450,000 each FY for DEW to award rural transportation grants to dropout prevention and recovery community schools that meet certain requirements.

Extends, through the 2025-2026 school year, the provision allowing qualifying community schools to report enrollment using the lesser of either the time-enrolled calculation or the attendance/credit-earned calculation on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis.

Requires the TOS to develop an application procedure for the Nonchartered Educational Savings Account Program (ESA) by February 1, 2026, and clarifies that the ESA funds should be returned to the GRF when a student disenrolls from a participating school.

Specifies the bill's exemption for the involuntary disposition law only applies to a building located on, or adjacent to, a tract or parcel of land where other school district facilities used for educational instruction are also located.

Adds the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) to the list of programs that may be considered an "advanced standing program" at public and chartered nonpublic schools and allows passing scores on the CLEP exams as a demonstration of post-secondary readiness on the state report card.

Clarifies that a community school may only be reimbursed by the resident school district for purchasing mass transit passes for its students who are in grades 9-12.

Reduces the duration for school district operational revenue and expenditure forecasts from five to three years.

Provides \$250,000 each FY to fund grants supporting regional partnerships that connect early childhood to post-secondary education and the workforce.

Provides \$400,000 in FY26 to the Showers Family Foundation.

Requires schools that resell buildings obtained through the involuntary disposition or right of first refusal processes for a profit to remit the profit to the original school district.

Requires DEW to compile and report assessment scores for students with an ESA for each nonchartered nonpublic school and create a measure of growth for those students in grades 4-8.

Establishes the Career-Technical Planning District Construction Study Committee.

Includes chartered nonpublic schools in the list of schools that receive priority access to purchase or lease unused school facilities on the market.

Changes the time school districts must permit students to attend religious release-time instruction from hours and minutes to periods.

Provides \$500,000 each FY to the Ohio Arts Council.

Provides \$750,000 to Say Yes for Cleveland and \$250,000 to University Circle in FY 2026.

Higher Education

Provides \$150,000 in FY26 to the Wadsworth Area Historical Society.

Provides \$750,000 each FY to the Clark County unmanned and general aviation STEM pilot programs and reduces the Drones for First Responders Pilot Program to \$1.5M in FY26.

Provides \$500,000 each FY to the Alliance for Working Together Foundation.

Provides \$100,000 each FY to S.U.C.C.E.S.S. for Autism.

Provides \$250,000 in FY26 to the Ashland University's Ashbrook Center.

Adds private nonprofit institutions to “qualifying institution” for the Governor’s Merit Scholarship if they admit any Ohio 12th-grade graduate in the top 10% of their class beginning FY27 and commit to adhering to a variety of policies similar to state institutions of higher education but shall not conflict with the current religious practices and policies of a religiously affiliated private, nonprofit institution. Grandfathers in current recipients of the scholarship.

Provides \$500,000 in FY26 to the America's River Roots Festival.

Provides \$125,000 each FY to the Nancy and David Wolf Holocaust and Humanity Center.

Expands eligibility for the Governor’s Merit Scholarship to eligible students enrolled in nonchartered nonpublic schools.

Increases the Commercial Truck Driver Student Aid Program to \$3M each FY.

Requires Ohio Technical Centers to enroll high school students through a contract with a school district.

Creates the Institutional Platinum Provider Program (IPPP) for state institutions participating in the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP).

Makes corrective changes to the Strategi Square Footage Reduction Fund provision.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Permits sporting organizations to conduct electronic instant bingo.

Requires the Department of Agriculture to administer a pilot High Blend Ethanol Rebate Program, provides \$10M in FY 2026.

Permits licensed fireworks manufacturers and wholesalers to conduct online transactions for the ordering and sale of consumer products in Ohio, including the collection of fireworks sales fees.

Provides \$250,000 each FY to the Future Farmers of America.

Reinserts certain pesticide law provisions from the executive version.

Adds electric services to the list of services that may be counted when evaluating whether a village qualifies for an automatic ballot question on village dissolution.

Provides \$10M each FY to the Division of Cannabis Control to contract with a statewide nonprofit corporation to implement cannabis and drug misuse prevention, education, and public awareness initiatives.

Provides \$500,000 in FY 2026 to the Mercer County Fairgrounds.

Provides \$800,000 each FY to establish the Ohio Livestock Show and Sale Fund.

Removes provision allowing certain permit holders to sell alcoholic beverages in outdoor areas adjacent to a convention center.

Extends the sunset date by 15 years for the 50¢ scrap tire fee that goes to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Requires greater permitting flexibility from OEPA to an aerospace manufacturing company located in Butler County.

Clarifies that the \$210,000 each FY provided to the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments must be used support the study and construction of oil and natural gas pipelines within multiple counties.

Provides \$172,000 in FY26 for channel excavation and removal of sediment at Grand Lake St. Mary's.

Provides \$150,000 in each FY for Canalway Partners to support the 2027 bicentennial recognition of the Ohio & Erie Canal.

Restores the functions of the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority to OEPA.

Makes technical changes to the provisions governing the State Land Royalty Fund.

Expands A-4 permit holders' manufacturing rights to include low-alcohol coolers (0.5-10% ABV mixed spirituous drinks sold in 4-12 packs of 16oz containers) and reduces their excise tax from \$1.20 to \$0.35 per gallon.

Modifies the additional annual fee for Title V permit holders and synthetic minor facilities.

Inserts recurring uncodified law regarding Public Works Commission debt service payments and Clean Ohio administrative costs.

Economic Development and Workforce

Increases funding to the Welcome Home Ohio Program.

Provides \$4M each FY to People Working Cooperatively for the Safe and Healthy at Home Initiative.

Authorizes Fairfield County commissioners to renew a special lodging tax.

Exempts township zoning amendments related to megaprojects from the zoning referendum process.

Provides \$250,000 in FY26 to Boardman Township for flood mitigation assistance matching funds.

Expands the purposes of the existing Roadwork Development Fund to include tourism attractions and professional sports facilities, allows DEV to issue loans.

Provides \$2.5M each FY for a housing development incentive program for townships and municipal corporations that adopt pro-housing policies.

Allows counties to use Ohio Housing Trust Fund fees for housing-related purposes as determined by the board of county commissioners.

Provides \$15,000 in FY26 to the Village of Grand River for sidewalk repairs.

Expands the Tax Commissioner's discretionary authority to apply interest penalties to include additional types of income tax.

General Government

Modifies the State Appropriation Limitation (SAL) to ensure all GRF tax revenue spent outside the GRF is included in the SAL calculation, eliminates the alternative growth factor, and requires, to the greatest extent possible, the Governor to move non-GRF appropriations subject to the SAL into the GRF in the executive budget proposal.

Establishes a process for the creation of a receivership for counties, townships, and municipal corporations in fiscal emergency.

Modifies legislative appointment authority to the Emergency Response Commission.

Transfers the administration of the Ohio Public Employees Deferred Compensation Program to the OPERS Board.

Increases funding to the SOS Address Confidentiality Fund.

Exempts broadband internet access service from PUCO regulation.

Exempts a wireless service provider from being considered a public utility subject to the assessment for purposes of funding OCC.

Removes provisions of the bill that require additional regulatory requirements for solid waste facilities.

Prohibits a government entity from placing menstrual products in the men's restroom of a public building.

Increases, from \$250,000 to \$330,000, the threshold amount of a veteran's, fraternal, or sporting organization's proceeds from instant bingo and electronic instant bingo that determines the percentage of the annual proceeds that must be given to a 501(c)(3) or government entity and the percentage the organization may keep to cover its expenses.

Expands the number of hours, from 12 to 16, that a veteran's, fraternal, or sporting organization may offer electronic instant bingo and permits them to begin at 8 a.m. instead of 12 p.m.

Removes the county prosecutor from the county budget commission and makes the president of the board of county commissioners a member instead.

Removes OBM Director's authority to increase GRF and non-GRF appropriations to effectuate changes to exempt state employee salaries.

Changes from 100% to a range of 80-100% the supplemental compensation amount a county engineer receives to perform the duties of a county engineer in another county during a vacancy.

Removes the county coroner as an elected official and instead requires that position to be appointed by each board of county commissioners and grandfathers in currently elected county coroners.

Clarifies that for expedited contracts under \$4M with construction managers at risk and design-build firms, public authorities must evaluate initial proposals, rank and select candidates before reviewing pricing proposals.

Health and Human Services

Requires, beginning January 2027, monies received as part of the state share of the national opioid settlement litigation to be deposited into the Targeted Addiction Assistance Fund.

Provides \$175,000 each FY to the 1N5 Foundation.

Provides \$300,000 each FY to DBH to assess cannabis regulation and its effects of use and submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly.

Requires that a health benefit plan reimburse certified registered nurse anesthetists at the same rate as physicians.

Modifies the Medicaid electronic visit verification (EVV) process to allow providers the opportunity to review and correct certain claims and data, prohibits entities from denying a claim that is not supported by the EVV system, and prohibits entities from auditing solely based on information in the EVV system.

Requires pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), except the state PBM, to reimburse Ohio pharmacies for the actual drug acquisition cost plus a minimum dispensing fee set by the Insurance Superintendent. Prohibits lower reimbursements than those received by affiliated pharmacies. Allows pharmacies to refuse service if underpaid and file complaints for violations, with a \$1,000 daily penalty for PBMs. Bans PBM retaliation against reporting pharmacies. Authorizes the Superintendent to implement rules exempt from regulatory restriction requirements.

Provides \$300,000 each FY to provide Medicaid reimbursement for rapid whole genome sequencing for infants under one year old.

Provides \$1M each FY to support graduate medical education residency spots in family medicine and psychiatry.

Requires DCY to establish requirements for group homes regarding background checks, training, supervision, and staff-to-child ratios.

Provides \$250,000 each FY to Star House.

Establishes a timeline for ODM to seek and implement a Medicaid waiver to provide reentry services to incarcerated individuals.

Provides \$250,000 in FY26 to Dayton Children's Hospital for pediatric therapy students.

Requires ODJFS to seek a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to exclude sugar-sweetened beverages as items that may be purchased under SNAP.

Removes all provisions repealing the presumption that a custodial and residential parent's child support obligation is spent on that child and requiring a CSEA to collect child support from both parents.

Provides \$100,000 each FY to the Applewood Centers, Inc.

Creates a state-directed payment program for Bon Secours Mercy Health system locations in Ohio.

Increases funding by \$1M each FY for the Children's Hunger Alliance.

Provides \$500,000 each FY to the Department of Aging for Senior Community Services and prohibits the funding from being used for administration.

Limits the number of Medicaid nursing facility private room incentive payments to 15,000 rooms, requires ODM to submit quarterly reports to JMOC on licensed private room occupancy.

Requires ODH's annual abortion report to include information on age, in-state versus out-of-state resident, and total number of abortions performed on minors.

Increases funding by \$75,000 each FY for Dads2Be.

Increases funding by \$1M each FY for the Ohio Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs.

Permits Medicaid coverage of doula services only in the six counties with the most infant deaths.

Removes provision that would have prohibited a Medicaid provider from seeking a payment greater than the median rate of private insured services.

Increases GRIT Program funding by \$1M each FY.

Revises provisions that provide a temporary assessment for FQHCs and hospitals if ODM terminates medical assistance for the Group VIII eligibility group.

Provides \$100,000 each FY for the Columbus Speech and Hearing Center to enhance services for DeafBlind individuals.

Prohibits the distribution of Medicaid funds to provide mental health services that promote or affirm social gender transition.

Provides \$100,000 each FY to Best Buddies Ohio.

Requires a hospital with a maternity unit that accepts Medicaid to enter into a transfer agreement, upon request, with any freestanding birthing center located within a 30-mile radius.

Requires DBH to collect and report data on spending, uses, and outcomes by ADAMH Boards that receive state block grants.

Adds \$250,000 each FY for the Imagination Library.

Exempt intellectual and developmental disability services from the House-added prohibition on using Medicaid funds for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Authorizes the ODM director to establish an ICDS successor program to operate in all Ohio counties if the director terminates the current ICDS.

Prohibits ADAMH boards that receive certain state funding from refusing to contract with hospitals in the board's service district.

Provides \$1M each FY to Memorial Hospital for the Mid-Ohio Cardiovascular Health Improvement Initiative.

Provides \$2M each FY to the Values-In-Action Foundation for the Kindland Initiative.

Provides \$150,000 each FY to the Special Olympics.

Appropriates \$250,000 each FY for local government lead abatement projects.

Limits employee eligibility for the Child Care Cred Program to 400% FPL.

Clarifies that if ODM terminates medical assistance for the Group VIII eligibility group, the required fund transfers do not include federal share GRF.

Provides \$250,000 in FY26 to the Providence House Feasibility study.

Restores the Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Program to the executive version.

Justice and Public Safety

States it is the General Assembly's intent to abrogate the common law actions for unlawful extraction, exploitation, or conversion of another's mineral rights.

Sets a timeline for Ohio Civil Rights Commission to authorize the Attorney General to file a suit in a housing discrimination claim and gives an individual the right to sue if the commission or the Attorney General fail to act in a timely manner.

Specifies that debt that has been discharged in bankruptcy or is no longer owed based on a final non-appealable court order is considered a resolved finding of recovery in certain circumstances.

Terminates LGF reductions for townships and counties that previously employed traffic cameras to issue citations.

Exempts, except for willful or wanton misconduct, VOIP service providers from liability in a civil action for damages resulting from their acts or omissions in connection with the 9-8-8 Hotline.

Provides \$1M each FY to Civil Legal Aid.

Subjects contractors in DRC or DYS facilities to enhanced penalties for conveying drugs into a facility.

Allows the Ohio Public Defender to contract with private counsel for indigent defendants in matters involving parole, probation, community control, or post-release control revocation.

Provides up to \$50,000 each FY for the Ohio Public Defender to provide indigent defense legal training programs for appointed counsel.

Prohibits DRC from licensing a halfway house, reentry center, or community residential center that operates within 500 feet of a school or childcare center.

Allows juvenile records for an unruly child to be sealed under the following conditions: (A) the person has turned 18 and is not subject to a complaint alleging he or she is a delinquent child, and (B) using a balancing test, the court finds that a governmental need for the records does not substantially outweigh sealing.

Removes a provision that would have required DRC to make every effort to acquire lethal injection drugs in collaboration with the U.S. Attorney General.

Provides for each fiscal year the following: \$150,000 for First Responder's Bridge, \$150,000 for Save a Warrior Foundation, and \$200,000 for Tri-State Peer Support Team.

Provides \$1M in FY26 for a DRC pilot program to acquire a monitoring system for inmate phone calls and requires DRC to report on the program's efficacy.

Requires online distributors of obscene materials to verify the age of users and authorizes the Attorney General to file a civil action for violations, criminalizes deep fake sexual imagery.

Clarifies that the provision that DYS holds a felon until the person turns 18 or until released from prison only applies to convictions after the effective date of the amendment. Requires a convicted felon under 18 to be committed to DRC instead of DYS if DYS's director determines DYS cannot house the felon.

Requires any UAVs purchased through the Drones for First Responders Pilot Program to comply with federal regulations.

Eliminates the Torrens Law Assurance Fund and related statutory content and reappropriates the remaining GRF balance from FY25 to FY26 for the County Recorder Electronic Modernization Program. Provides \$1.75M in FY26 to reimburse counties for record digitization and electronic recording implementation and requires transferred funds to reimburse county Recorder's Technology Funds.

Transportation

Adopts the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact, provides \$25,000 each FY for the costs associated with joining the compact.

Requires school districts in the eight largest counties ensure student transfers on mass transit systems do not take place at central hubs. Requires these transit systems to ensure students are transported via direct route or one transfer.

Excludes trailers from the Motor Vehicle Dealers Law, except for fifth-wheel trailers, park trailers, travel trailers, tent-type fold-out camping trailers, or semitrailers.

Expands the eligibility of a qualified Regional Transportation Improvement Project (RTIP) and requires a feasibility study to include both an economic feasibility assessment, approved by DEV, and a technical feasibility assessment, approved by ODOT.

This summary has been compiled by staff. For full details of each amendment, please refer to the appropriate LSC documents and bill text.