THE OHIO PROSECUTOR

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In This Issue

At the Statehouse
- Top Ten Bills to Watch
- Spring Enactments
- Notable Legislation

New and Noteworthy
- Pending Supreme Court Cases of Interest
- OAG Opinions

Member Accomplishment

Training
- OPAA Summer Workshop
- Online Self-Study Trainings
- 2026 Training Dates

OPAA Officers
- 2026 OPAA Officers

Contact Us

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From your President…

Recently, Governor Mike DeWine made headlines by advocating for the repeal of the death penalty in Ohio. While the governor's opinion may have changed, Ohio law has not.

The Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association is committed to defending the ability of county prosecutors to seek the death penalty when appropriate. As prosecutors, we see first-hand that there are crimes so calculated, so brutal, and so devastating that the ultimate punishment is warranted. Current Ohio law recognizes that reality. In these cases, the death penalty is not theoretical—it is a lawful, necessary tool to achieve justice.

Over the past eight years, the stated reason for not carrying out death sentences was purportedly because Ohio has been unable to obtain the necessary drugs. Although the governor's recent pronouncement casts further doubt on that stated rationale, in reality, this reason never really held up. States like Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas have carried out executions in the past several months, navigating legal and logistical challenges and finding lawful ways to do so. Are we to believe that people in those states are so much smarter than the people of Ohio and have simply solved a problem that Ohio cannot? Or is it more accurate to say that where there is an actual commitment to enforce the law, solutions are found?

Others argue that a life sentence without the possibility of parole is always enough. But this argument ignores what has already happened elsewhere. In multiple states that have eliminated the death penalty, the very next effort has been to substantially limit or roll back life-without-parole sentences—significantly narrowing the class of offenders and conduct eligible for the most serious punishment available. The pattern is clear: once one line is erased, the next line becomes the new target for erasure.

Much is also made of the cost and delay in capital cases. But the same voices raising those concerns are often the ones driving them. Endless litigation, duplicative appeals, and deliberate delay tactics have stretched these cases over decades. That is not an unavoidable feature of the death penalty—it is a byproduct of intentional choices. If the concern is truly about cost and timeliness, then those practices deserve just as much scrutiny and attention as efforts to repeal the death penalty.

Additionally, claims that the death penalty lacks public support also do not hold up in practice. Juries across Ohio, including in places like Cuyahoga County (which votes substantially more blue than red), have shown that when they are presented with the full facts of the most heinous crimes, jurors are willing to impose a death sentence. The reason is simple: these decisions are not partisan or political—they are grounded in evidence, law, and the conscience of the community.

As Ohio's prosecuting attorneys, our role is not to rewrite the law—it is to enforce it. And in the most egregious cases, justice sometimes requires that we use every lawful tool available, which includes the death penalty. The Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association remains committed to defending prosecutors' ability to do so.

David P. Fornshell

From your Executive Director…

Prosecutors –

With county fair and election season about to get underway now is a good time to plug a few of OPAA's legislative priorities for the remainder of this General Assembly.

1) **Criminalizing Artificial CSAM**. Several bills address the growing problem of child sexual abuse material being generated by artificial intelligence. Senate Bill 163, Senate Bill 393, and House Bill 186 each amend R.C. 2907.321, 2907.322, and 2907.323 to criminalize "artificially generated depictions" of minor children. As of last August, 45 states had enacted laws to address this issue leaving Ohio as one of the few outliers.

2) **Burglary**. House Bill 252 addresses the Supreme Court of Ohio's decision in *State v. Bertram*, 173 Ohio St.3d 186, a 2023 decision that overturned a man's burglary conviction based on what the Supreme Court said was a lack of force, stealth, or deception in brazenly walking into an open garage in broad daylight to steal a leaf blower. The bill eliminates the need to prove force, stealth, or deception to obtain a conviction for aggravated burglary, burglary, or trespass in a habitation.

3) **Schedule III, IV and V Drugs and Fentanyl**. House Bill 88 increases penalties for trafficking fentanyl. Significantly, the bill also repeals the current requirement to prove a person in possession of a schedule III, IV or V drug mixed with fentanyl knew that the mixture had fentanyl in it in order to convict them and punish them for possession of fentanyl or a fentanyl related compound.

If you get the chance, please talk with your legislators about the importance of these issues and ask them to address them before the end of the year. A list of other legislation that we are working on and following can be found later in the newsletter.

Lou

At the Statehouse

Below is a current list of bills that have passed at least one chamber, are companion bills in both chambers, or are otherwise a priority for OPAA. A complete list of bills can be found on our website. **Please contact Lou if you have any questions about a piece of legislation or the reason for our position.** Also, if you have any questions about the work of the legislature or the status of any legislation, please let us know!

Top 10 Bills to Watch – July 2026

1) Senate Bill 393 (Sex Offenses – Juveniles/Animals). This is one of three pieces of legislation that would criminalize the creation, possession, and dissemination of artificial child pornography. See also Senate Bill 163 and House Bill 786. Senate Bill 393 also includes mandatory penalties for child pornography that depicts acts of violence and that depicts children under the age of 13, a 5-year specification for possession of 100 or more images of child pornography, provisions regarding sexting between juveniles who are 14 to 17 years of age, the creation of a close-in-age exception unlawful sexual conduct with a minor and gross sexual imposition, and an increased penalty for sexual conduct with an animal. OPAA supports this legislation.

2) House Bill 252 (Burglary). The bill addresses the Supreme Court of Ohio decision in State v. Bertram, 173 Ohio St.3d 186, in which the Court overturned the burglary conviction of an offender who walked into a victim's garage and stole a leaf blower. The conviction was overturned because the offender did not use "force, stealth or deception" in committing the theft. The bill removes the requirement of force, stealth, or deception. OPAA supports this legislation.

3) House Bill 88 (Drug Trafficking). The bill increases penalties for trafficking in fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, and meth, and creates a five year sentencing specification for drug overdose deaths related to fentanyl. The bill also removes the requirement in current law for prosecutors to prove that a person in possession of schedule III, IV, or V drugs knew the drugs contained fentanyl in order for the offender to be convicted of possession of fentanyl. OPAA supports this legislation.

4) House Bill 372 (Murder of First Responder – Penalties). The bill specifies that the penalty for aggravated murder for an adult offender is death or life without the possibility of parole if the victim is a peace officer, prosecutor, first responder, or military member. The act is named the Larry Henderson Act. OPAA supports this legislation.

5) House Bill 667 (GPS Monitoring/Warrant Requirements). The bill requires that certain warrants be entered into LEADS and NCIC within 48 hours, requires active GPS monitoring of offenders released from prison, expands the exceptions to TCAP to address repeat offenders and offenders on PRC, and modifies how offenders on PRC are sentenced for the commission of a new felony while on PRC. OPAA supports this legislation.

6) House Bill 338 (Correctional Institutions). Among other things, the bill increases the penalty for assaulting or causing the death of specified victims at state or local correctional institutions and make changes to department of rehabilitation and correction policies and procedures. The legislation is a response to the murder of corrections officer Andy Lansing at Ross Correctional Institution in December 2024. OPAA supports the legislation.

7) House Bill 36/House Bill 72/Senate Bill 133/Senate Bill 134 (Death Penalty). House Bill 36 enacts an alternative method of execution, nitrogen hypoxia, and reenacts confidentiality for entities that provide lethal injection drugs to the state. House bill 72, Senate Bill 133, and Senate Bill 134 all abolish the death penalty. OPAA supports legislative efforts that will help end the moratorium on the death penalty in Ohio. OPAA opposes legislation to abolish the death penalty.

8) House Bill 5 (Repeat Weapons Offenders). Creates a repeat offender classification and gun specification, increases the penalties for other firearm specifications and for repeat weapons under disability offenses, reduces the penalty for most first-time weapons under disability offenses from an F3 to an F4, broadens the scope of relief from firearms disability, and requires courts to provide notice of eligibility for record sealing to certain offenders. OPAA supports the provisions of the bill that increase penalties for weapons offenses. OPAA opposes the provisions of the bill that reduce first- time weapons under disability offenses to an F4 and the changes to the timelines for record expungement.

9) House Bill 647 (Child Care Fraud). Revises the law governing publicly funded child-care. The legislation also requires the Attorney General, under certain circumstances, to investigate any criminal or civil violation of the child-care law or the law governing the publicly funded child-care program and, when there is cause to prosecute a criminal violation or pursue a civil remedy, authorizes the following to do so – a prosecuting attorney or, if the prosecuting attorney declines, the Attorney General. OPAA is opposed to this provision granting the attorney general springing jurisdiction to prosecute these cases.

10) House Bill 689 (Modernize Fingerprint, Disposition Reporting). Clarifies when fingerprints and other identifying information must be collected upon arrest or at other stages of the criminal justice process and requires electronic submission of identifying information and case summaries in the form and manner prescribed by BCI. Requires a prosecutor to notify the law enforcement agency that referred a case that no charges are being brought under two circumstances (1) when no arrest is made, a case is taken directly to a grand jury for indictment and no charges are brought, and (2) when an arrest has been made and no indictment is returned, bill of information filed, or charges filed. OPAA is seeking an amendment to provide immunity for failure to comply with this provision.

Spring 2026 Enactments with Effective Dates – 136th General Assembly

House Bill 31 (Record Parole Board Hearings) *Effective September 7, 2026* requires electronic recordings to be made of certain parole board hearings and makes the recordings a public record. The bill also restores public access to information in an institutional summary report and provides prosecutors with access to inmate health care records when an inmate seeks judicial release or parole for health reasons.

House Bill 492 (Traffic Offense – Failure to Provide ID) *Effective October 6, 2026* requires drivers and passengers to disclose their name, address, and date of birth to a peace officer on request during a traffic stop. The bill also expands the prohibition against interfering with arrest to all motor-vehicle related laws.

House Bill 20 (Harassing Emergency Service Responders) *Effective October 6, 2026* modifies the offense of obstructing official business when the victim is an emergency service responder. The bill increases the penalty for someone who, after receiving a warning, approaches or remains within 15 feet of an emergency service responder who is engaged in official duties and impedes or interferes with the emergency service responder or threatens them with harm.

House Bill 533 (Vehicular Homicide – Vehicles) *Effective October 6, 2026* adds under-speed vehicles, motorized bicycles or mopeds, motor-driven cycles or motor scooters, and all-purpose vehicles within the list of vehicles for vehicular homicide and vehicular assault.

House Bill 210 (Catalytic Converters) *Effective October 6, 2026* establishes new requirements regarding the sale and acquisition of used catalytic converters and modifies the offenses of theft and receiving stolen property to address catalytic converter thefts.

Senate Bill 315 (Medicaid Fraud) *Effective October 6, 2026* makes a variety of changes to Ohio's Medicaid program in response to recent allegations of fraud. Among other things, the bill modifies the penalties for Medicaid fraud, specifies that Medicaid fraud constitutes corrupt activity, grants the AG subpoena authority in Medicaid fraud investigations, and grants the Auditor of State subpoena authority.

House Bill 251 (UAV Law Enforcement Use) *Effective October 6, 2026* establishes requirements related to the use and purchase of an unmanned aerial vehicle by law enforcement and other public entities.

Senate Bill 262 (Standard Form Construction Contracts) *Effective September 17, 2026* a public authority or other party to a construction contract to note variations from industry standard form by strikethrough and underline or by cross reference to supplemental conditions.

Notable Legislation

HB1 **PROPERTY PROTECTION ACT** (KING A, KLOPFENSTEIN R) To modify the law that prohibits certain governments, businesses, and individuals from acquiring certain real property and to name this act the Ohio Property Protection Act.

Position: Amend
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-1

HB3 **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY ACT** (WILLIS B, THOMAS C) To address school bus safety, to designate this act as the School Bus Safety Act, and to make an appropriation.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-3

HB5 **REPEAT OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION, PENALTIES** (WILLIAMS J, WILLIS B) To enact the Repeat Offender Act to create a repeat offender classification, to create and modify certain firearm specifications, to increase the penalties for certain firearm offenses and specifications, to broaden the scope of relief from firearms disability, and to modify the Sealing and Expungement Law.

Position: Amend
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-5

HB36 **EXECUTION METHODS-ADD NITROGEN HYPOXIA** (STEWART B, PLUMMER P) To add nitrogen hypoxia as a method of execution and to prohibit the disclosure of execution identifying information.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-36

HB47 INCREASE HUMAN TRAFFICKING PENALTIES (WILLIAMS J, SANTUCCI N) To enact the Human Trafficking Prevention Act to increase the penalty for human trafficking of a minor or person with a developmental disability, kidnapping, and abduction.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-47

HB58 RECOVERY HOUSING, ADDICTION SERVICES (PIZZULLI J, JARRELLS D) To require state certification of recovery housing residences, to establish additional duties regarding services offered by community addiction services providers, and to create the Ohio Recovery Housing Task Force.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-58

HB72 LETHAL INJECTION DRUG PROHIBITIONS (SCHMIDT J, MATHEWS A) To prohibit public funding for and insurance coverage of the use of lethal injection drugs in nontherapeutic abortions and assisting suicide, to abolish the death penalty, and to modify the number of jurors that may be challenged in cases where a defendant may be sentenced to life imprisonment.

Position: Oppose
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-72

HB86 LAW CHANGES-TAX FORECLOSURE, LAND REUTILIZATION (DEMETRIOU S) To make changes to the law relating to tax foreclosures and county land reutilization corporations, and to name this act the Gus Frangos Act.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-86

HB88 DRUG TRAFFICKING PENALTIES, FENTANYL AWARENESS (ABRAMS C, PLUMMER P) To modify penalties for drug trafficking and possession, to require schools and institutions of higher education to incorporate instruction and policies on fentanyl awareness and abuse prevention, and to designate the month of August as "Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Month."

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-88

HB90 SET LEGAL ANTI-SEMITISM DEFINITION (SCHMIDT J, PIZZULLI J) To define antisemitism for the purpose of investigations and proceedings in courts and state agencies and for state employee anti-bias training.

Position: Amend
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-90

HB102 SEX OFFENDER RESIDENCY LIMITS (KLOPFENSTEIN R, WILLIAMS J) To prohibit a sex offender or a child-victim offender from residing within 2,000 feet of the residence of the victim and from loitering within 1,000 feet of the residence of the victim.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-102

HB132 MOVE OVER DUTY-STATIONARY VEHICLES (CRAIG M, MILLER M) To increase penalties for failing to slow down or change lanes when approaching specified stationary vehicles, to increase penalties for vehicular homicide and vehicular assault resulting from that offense, and to name this act Philip Wigal's Law.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-132

HB168 OFFENSE REQUIREMENTS-CRIMINAL CHILD ENTICEMENT (WILLIAMS J, BRENNAN S) To require that a person act with a sexual motivation or an unlawful purpose to commit the offense of criminal child enticement.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-168

HB203 INCREASED PENALTIES-SCHOOL ZONES (HALL T, WILLIAMS J) To increase penalties for vehicular assault and vehicular homicide within an active school zone, to allow a court to impose doubled fines for specified traffic violations in portions of an active school zone, and to name this act Aspen Runnels' Law.

Position: Amend
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-203

HB211 SENTENCING CONSIDERATION-PRIMARY CARETAKERS (HUMPHREY L, WILLIAMS J) To require a court to consider an offender's status as a primary caretaker of a child in determining whether the offender is amenable to a community control sanction or to intervention in lieu of conviction.

Position: Oppose
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-211

HB217 MISSING PERSONS REPORTING REQUIREMENTS (COCKLEY C, RITTER K) To enact Andy Chapman's Act to require law enforcement agencies to enter information relating to a report of a missing person in the national missing and unidentified persons system (NamUs).

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-217

HB249 LAW CHANGES-INDECENT EXPOSURE (KING A, WILLIAMS J) To enact the Indecent Exposure Modernization Act.

Position: Oppose
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-249

HB252 OFFENSE MODIFICATIONS-BURGLARY, TRESPASS (CLICK G, BIRD A) To modify the offenses of burglary, aggravated burglary, breaking and entering, and trespass in a habitation when a person is present or likely to be present.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-252

HB260 RELATIVE TO COURTS, COURT PROCEDURES (ODIOSO M, MATHEWS A) Relative to courts and court procedures.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-260

HB296 DELAY FINANCIAL SANCTIONS AFTER RELEASE (MILLER M) To delay financial sanctions for one hundred eighty days after an offender's release from prison or completion of transitional control.

Position: Oppose
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-296

HB314 RESTRICT DISRUPTIVE RECORD REQUESTS (ISAACSOHN D, RAY S) To restrict harassing or disruptive public records requests and permit private contractors to respond to voluminous public records requests.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-314

HB331 RECLASSIFICATION-FIREARM MUFFLERS, SUPPRESSORS (DEETER K, FISCHER T) To remove firearm mufflers and suppressors from the classification of dangerous ordnance.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-331

HB338 INCREASED PENALTIES-CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION ASSAULTS (JOHNSON M, PLUMMER P) To enact Andy's Law to increase the penalty for assaulting or causing the death of specified victims at state or local correctional institutions and to make changes to department of rehabilitation and correction policies and procedures.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-338

HB343 EXPAND OFFENSE-BREAKING, ENTERING (LORENZ B) To expand the offense of breaking and entering to include vehicles and to increase penalties for criminal damaging or endangering.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-343

HB345 INCREASED PENALTIES-VOYEURISM (LARE J) To increase the penalties for voyeurism.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-345

HB346 CHILD ABUSE MANDATORY REPORTING (KISHMAN M, WILLIAMS J) To enact V.J.'s Law to require mandatory reporters of child abuse or neglect to report to both a peace officer and the public children services agency.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-346

HB372 INCREASED PENALTY-MURDER OF FIRST RESPONDERS, MILITARY (ABRAMS C, PLUMMER P) To enact the Larry Henderson Act to specify that the penalty for aggravated murder for an adult offender is death or life without the possibility of parole if the victim is a peace officer, prosecutor, first responder, or military member.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-372

HB382 SAFEGUARD FIREARM RIGHTS (FISCHER T) To enact the Second Amendment Protection Act to safeguard the right to keep and bear arms.

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-382

HB459 CREATE OFFENSE-MOVING, REMOVING HUMAN REMAINS (GROSS J, WILLIAMS J) To enact Katelyn's Law to create an offense and specification related to moving or removing human remains, to provide that the offense has no statute of limitations, and to modify the offense of abuse of a corpse.

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-459

HB478 OFFENSE CREATION-JURY TAMPERING (THOMAS D, SYNENBERG E) To create the offense of jury tampering and to include a public servant in the offense of intimidation of an attorney, victim, witness, or public servant in a criminal case.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-478

HB495 LAW CHANGES-CONCEALED WEAPONS (GROSS J, WILLIAMS J) To enact the Freedom to Carry Act to rename a concealed handgun license a concealed weapons license and to allow a concealed weapons licensee to carry a concealed deadly weapon other than an exclusive deadly weapon.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-495

HB507 PROHIBIT RECEIVING PROSTITUTION PROCEEDS (NEWMAN J, JOHN M) To prohibit a person from receiving proceeds of prostitution.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-507

HB519 PROHIBIT POSSESSING DEVICE-VEHICLE THEFT (WHITE A) To prohibit possession of an electronic device under circumstances indicating an intent to commit a theft offense that involves a motor vehicle.

Position: Undetermined
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-519

HB528 MANDATORY SENTENCE-FORCIBLE RAPE (WILLIAMS J) To require a seven year mandatory minimum prison term for forcible rape and to expand the definition of sexual conduct to include anilingus.

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-528

HB532 REQUIRE IMMEDIATE CHILD CUSTODY ACTIONS (MILLER K) To require a public children services agency to take immediate custody of specified children who cannot be released to a parent, guardian, or custodian.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-532

HB565 RECORDS EXEMPTION-GRAND JURY (JARRELLS D, ODIOSO M) To exempt from disclosure under Public Records Law, the name and address of a grand juror and the signature of a grand-jury foreperson, and to name this act the Grand Jury Privacy and Protection Act.

Position: Support

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-565

HB647 LAW CHANGE-PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE (PLUMMER P, YOUNG T) To revise the law governing the publicly funded child care program.

Position: Oppose

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-647

HB654 PENALTY INCREASE-CORPSE ABUSE (DEETER K, MANNING G) To enact Amanda Dean's Law to increase the penalties for abuse of a corpse.

Position: Support

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-654

HB667 GPS MONITORING, WARRANT REQUIREMENTS (ABRAMS C) To enact the Reagan Tokes and Patrick Heringer Act to require certain warrants to be entered into LEADS, to require GPS monitoring of offenders released from prison, and to modify T-CAP requirements.

Position: Support

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-667

HB677 CUSTODY INTERFERENCE, MISSING CHILD ALERTS (SYNENBERG E, ABRAMS C) To enact the Kelsey Smith Act to modify the law governing interference with custody, to require wireless service providers to provide call location information to law enforcement in certain emergency situations, and to create an endangered missing child alert.

Position: Support

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-677

HB689 MODERNIZE FINGERPRINT, DISPOSITION REPORTING (WHITE A) To amend Section 221.40 of H.B. 96 of the 136th General Assembly, as subsequently amended, to align and modernize fingerprinting and disposition reporting, and to allow disclosure of information related to actions to determine paternity.

Position: Amend

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-689

HB728 JUVENILE DELINQUENCY INFORMAL HEARING, DISMISSALS ELIMINATION (ODIOSO M, PLUMMER P) To eliminate informal hearings and dismissals in the best interest of the child in certain juvenile delinquency cases.

Position: Support

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-728

HB786 PROHIBIT ARTIFICIAL MINOR DEPICTION-OBSCENITY (KLOPFENSTEIN R, WILLIAMS J) To prohibit use of an artificially generated depiction of a minor for obscene purposes.

Position: Support

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-786

HB830 ESTABLISH VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION GRANT (LARE J, BREWER D) To establish the violent crime reduction grant program.

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-HB-830

SB4 ESTABLISH ELECTION INTEGRITY UNIT (GAVARONE T) To establish the Election Integrity Unit in the Office of the Secretary of State and to modify the law governing the prosecution of Election Law violations.

Position: Oppose

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-4

SB55 CHANGE OVI LAWS-MARIHUANA (MANNING N) To change the laws pertaining to operating a vehicle or watercraft while under the influence of marihuana and the admissibility of evidence for purposes of OVI statutes.

Position: Amend

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-55

SB61 RELATIVE TO COURTS, COURT PROCEDURES (GAVARONE T, MANNING N) Relative to courts and court procedures.

Position: Monitor

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-61

SB87 **DEFINE ANTI-SEMITISM, EXPAND ETHNIC INTIMIDATION** (JOHNSON T) To define antisemitism for specific purposes and to expand the offense of ethnic intimidation to include the offenses of riot and aggravated riot committed by reason of the race, color, religion, or national origin of another person or group of persons.

Position: Amend
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-87

SB88 **OHIO PROPERTY PROTECTION ACT** (JOHNSON T) To modify the law that prohibits certain governments, businesses, and individuals from acquiring certain real property and to name this act the Ohio Property Protection Act.

Position: Amend
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-88

SB102 **LAW CHANGES-FORECLOSURES, LAND REUTILIZATION** (PATTON T) To make changes to the law relating to tax foreclosures and county land reutilization corporations, and to name this act the Gus Frangos Act.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-102

SB133 **ABOLISH DEATH PENALTY, COURT CHANGES** (ANTONIO N, HUFFMAN S) To abolish the death penalty and to modify the number of jurors that may be challenged in cases where a defendant may be sentenced to life imprisonment.

Position: Oppose
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-133

SB134 **ABOLISH DEATH PENALTY, PROHIBIT LETHAL INJECTION DRUGS** (ANTONIO N, HUFFMAN S) To abolish the death penalty, to modify the number of jurors that may be challenged in cases where a defendant may be sentenced to life imprisonment, and to prohibit public funding for the use of lethal injection drugs in nontherapeutic abortions, assisting suicide, and executing a death sentence.

Position: Oppose
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-134

SB135 **CONCERNING REAL PROPERTY FORECLOSURES, ESTATE SALES** (BRENNER A) Relating to real property foreclosures and estate sales.

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-135

SB163 **VARIOUS REGULATIONS-ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** (BLESSING III L, JOHNSON T) To require AI-generated products to have a watermark, to prohibit simulated child pornography, and to prohibit identity fraud using a replica of a person.

Position: Support
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-163

SB214 **REMOVE DANGEROUS CLASSIFICATION-FIREARM MUFFLERS, SUPPRESSORS** (KOEHLER K) To remove firearm mufflers and suppressors from the classification of dangerous ordnance.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-214

SB225 **EXPAND ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM** (MANCHESTER S) To expand the Address Confidentiality Program, to exempt judges' and prosecutors' addresses from disclosure, and to make related changes to the Election Law.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-225

SB303 **ALLOW HANDGUN PURCHASE-18-21 YEAR OLDS** (JOHNSON T) To allow a person who is between eighteen and twenty-one years old to receive or purchase a handgun from a federally licensed firearms dealer.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-303

SB321 **CARRYING OF FIREARMS-SPECIAL POLICE OFFICERS** (SCHAFFER T) Regarding the carrying of firearms by certain special police officers.

Position: Monitor
State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-321

SB392 **CONCEALED WEAPONS-POSSESSION, TRANSPORTATION** (CUTRONA A, JOHNSON T) To enact the Freedom to Carry Act to rename a concealed handgun license a concealed weapons license, to allow a concealed weapons licensee to carry a concealed deadly weapon other than an exclusive deadly weapon, and to allow the possession or transportation of a loaded firearm while in a motor vehicle or vessel.

Position: Oppose

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-392

SB393 **SEXUAL OFFENSES-JUVENILES** (TIMKEN J, MANNING N) To make changes to various sexually oriented offenses involving juvenile victims.

Position: Support

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-393

SB413 **TRANSPORT FIREARM-MOTOR VEHICLE** (SCHAFFER T) To modify the circumstances in which a person may transport a firearm in a motor vehicle.

Position: Monitor

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-413

SB425 **GRANT PROGRAM-VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION** (MANNING N) To establish the violent crime reduction grant program.

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-425

SB432 **MODIFY OFFENSE-ABUSE OF CORPSE** (MANNING N) To modify the offense of abuse of a corpse.

Position: Support

State Bill Page: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA136-SB-432

New and Noteworthy

by Steven Taylor, OPAA Legal Research and Staff Counsel

Merit Decisions of Interest Since 5/1/26

State v. Barnes, 2026-Ohio-2750. The Court (7-0) held that the victim could not pursue a delayed appeal from the trial court's judgment refusing to order restitution. (Decided 7-22-26; Victim's appeal from Cuyahoga County)

State v. Lash, 2026-Ohio-2746. The Court (6-1) held that the trial court complied with the statutory requirement that it provide its reasons for denying an application for postconviction DNA testing when the trial court indicated that the defense had failed to demonstrate outcome determination. (Decided 7-21-26; State's appeal, Cuyahoga County)

State v. Reillo, 2026-Ohio-2701. The Court (7-0) reaffirmed the narrow limits that are applicable to appellate manifest-weight review and held that the victim's delayed disclosure and purported inconsistencies did not warrant manifest-weight reversal. (Decided 7-17-26; State's appeal, Cuyahoga County)

State v. Khalif, 2026-Ohio-2689. The Court (6-1) reaffirmed *State v. Pelfrey*, 2007-Ohio-256, and its conclusion that a verdict form indicating that a defendant is "guilty as charged" is insufficient to comply with R.C. 2945.75(A)(2) as to additional-element crimes. But the Court also concluded that the defense has a duty to timely object if it is contending that the "as charged" language is noncompliant. The Court also reaffirmed *State v. Miree*, 2024-Ohio-5714, which held that the "Stand Your Ground" amendment to R.C. 2901.09, which limits the duty to retreat from a threat before acting in self-defense, does not apply retroactively to offenses committed prior to the 4-6-21 effective date of the amendment. (Decided 7-16-26; State's appeal and defendant's cross-appeal, Franklin County)

State v. King, 2026-Ohio-2656. The Court (4-3) overruled *State ex. rel. Yates v. Montgomery Cty. Court of Appeals*, 32 Ohio St.3d 30 (1987), and held that a post-guilty-verdict granting of a judgment of acquittal is not a "final verdict" and falls within the broad "any other decision" language in R.C. 2945.67(A) allowing the prosecution to appeal by leave. (Decided 7-14-26; State's appeal, Cuyahoga County)

State v. Polizzi, 2026-Ohio-2588. The Court (7-0) upheld the 29+ years aggregate consecutive sentences, with the five-justice majority concluding that appellate review under R.C. 2953.08(G)(2) does not call for consideration of the number of consecutive sentences or their aggregate length in determining whether the consecutive-sentence findings under R.C. 2929.14(C)(4) are supported by the record. (Decided 7-10-26; Lake County)

State v. Rodriguez, 2026-Ohio-2573. The Court (6-1) rejected complaints about "carbon-copy" counts, concluding that the combination of the indictment, bill of particulars, and the evidence presented, along with the prosecution's closing argument, all served to differentiate the counts so that the case did not violate any due-process or double-jeopardy protection. (Decided 7-9-26; State's appeal, Hamilton County)

State v. Mathis, 2026-Ohio-2269. The Court (6-1) held that, when a traffic stop is supported by reasonable suspicion on two grounds, and when suspicion is allayed as to just the second of those grounds, the stop may be continued on the basis of the first ground while the suspicion related to that first ground persists. (Decided 6-18-26; State's appeal, Cuyahoga County)

State v. Turner, 2026-Ohio-1996. The Court (5-2) overruled *State v. Smith*, 2022-Ohio-274, and overruled *State v. Burns*, 2022-Ohio-4606, to the extent *Burns* relied on *Smith*. The adult court has broad statutory authority under R.C. 2151.23(H) to hear and determine charges indicted by the grand jury arising from the same criminal episode as other charge(s) that were bound over by the juvenile court, even including those charge(s) from the same criminal episode that were not individually bound over because the juvenile court had expressly declined to find probable cause. (Decided 6-3-26; State's appeal, Cuyahoga County)

State v. Heffley, 2026-Ohio-1990. The Court (6-1) concluded that the applicant was eligible to receive relief from disability under R.C. 2923.14 related to his single F-4 domestic violence conviction, even though there was a parallel federal disability related to the same conviction. The applicant was not "otherwise prohibited by law" from possessing a firearm since a federal disability owing to the same state-law conviction would not qualify as an "otherwise" bar, especially given that federal and state law both recognize that the granting of relief from the state-law disability would have the effect of removing the federal disability too. (Decided 6-2-26; State's appeal, Allen County)

State v. Fraley, 2026-Ohio-1964. The Court (5-1-1) concluded that the filing of a transcript in support of an application to reopen does not trigger the post-conviction deadline related to the need to pursue post-conviction relief within 365 days after the trial transcript was filed in the court of appeals in the direct appeal of the judgment of conviction. (Decided 5-29-26; Butler County)

State v. Bissell, 2026-Ohio-1965. The Court (7-0) held that the appellate court erred in reversing the convictions for failure to comply with an order or direction of a police officer and for felony murder predicated on felonious assault. There was sufficient evidence of "knowingly" as to serious physical harm for the predicate felonious assault in a case in which the defendant hit the plainly-visible first-responder pedestrian in an active highway accident scene. The Court also found the evidence to be sufficient on failure to comply, concluding that the strategically-placed flashing cruisers blocking particular lanes of travel constituted a lawful direction of traffic by a police officer. (Decided 5-29-26; State's appeal, Cuyahoga County)

In re P.M.S., 2026-Ohio-1543. The Court (7-0) upheld the sufficiency of the evidence supporting the juvenile's delinquency adjudication for forcible rape. (Decided 5-1-26; Warren County)

Newly-Accepted Criminal Law Cases Since 5/1/26

26-547 *State v. Coleman* Whether the court of appeals invaded the Ohio Supreme Court's exclusive constitutional authority to regulate the practice of law and to discipline attorneys when it sanctioned the defendant's appellate counsel in various ways for making completely-false assertions as to what the prosecutor had argued in closing argument. (Ashtabula County)

26-294 *State v. Thompson* Whether the space under the carpet near the center gear shift in a vehicle is a hidden compartment for purposes of a charge under R.C. 2923.241 when there was evidence that there had been a pulling back of the carpet to conceal drugs thereunder. (State's appeal; Portage County)

26-357 *State v. Krouse* Whether a trial court imposing a community-control sentence is required to notify the defendant that any prison sentence imposed for a violation of community control might be run consecutively to another prison sentence the defendant is serving from another court in order to reserve the ability to impose the community-control-violation prison sanction consecutively to the other court's prison sentence. (State's appeal; Union County)

26-456 *State v. Dejournett* Whether the odor of burnt marijuana, on its own, is insufficient to establish probable cause for the police to search a vehicle under the automobile exception to the Fourth Amendment's warrant requirement. (Summit County)

Recent and Upcoming Oral Arguments

25-1215 *State v. Smith* In a case in which the sex offender registered the name of his employer in the county where the employer was located but did not register in every county in which he performed regular work, whether the concept of registering the "place of

employment address" is void for vagueness because the statute does not define the concept. (Geauga County) (Argument on 6-9-26)

25-1430 *State v. Jackson* Whether the sentencing court's explanation sufficiently rebutted the presumption of vindictiveness that applied to the increased sentence it was imposing after a retrial. (State's appeal; Lake County) (Argument on 6-9-26)

25-1277 *State v. Morrell* (1) Whether it is violative of *State v. Hand*, 2016-Ohio-5504, to use the defendant's prior serious-youthful-offender juvenile adjudication for F-1 aggravated robbery for sentence-enhancement purposes in relation to the sentencing on the defendant's current adult offense of F-2 child endangering; (2) Whether *Hand* should be overruled. (State's appeal; Muskingum County) (Argument on 6-30-26)

24-1043 *State v. Singh* Death Penalty case (Butler County) (Argument on 8-4-26)

25-1348/1370 *State v. Talbert* Whether a trial court possesses the authority at a sentencing hearing to disapprove or foreclose a defendant's participation in any ODRC transitional control program. (State's appeals; Trumbull County) (Argument on 8-4-26)

25-1384 *Akron v. Stone* (1) Whether a defendant's agreeing to a hearing on the government's request for forfeiture operates as a waiver of a defense challenge to the trial court's authority to order the forfeiture; (2) Whether a five-member court of appeals' local rule limiting en banc consideration to decisions decided by a two-to-one vote of a three-member panel is inconsistent with App.R. 26(A)(2)(a) and therefore unconstitutional. (Arising from Summit County) (Argument on 8-5-26)

25-1439 *State v. Wahl* Whether the "maximum prison term or term of imprisonment that the defendant or person could have received" as used in R.C. 2945.401(J)(1)(b) for determining the final termination of commitment includes the maximum prison term imposed under the Reagan Tokes Act indefinite-sentencing scheme. (Wood County) (Argument on 8-5-26)

Keep an Eye Out for These Cases Awaiting Decision

23-891 *State v. Brinkman* Death Penalty case (Cuyahoga County) (Argument on 8-19-25)

24-1187/1301 *State v. Simmons* Whether evidence of force in the nature of manipulating a sleeping victim's clothing to facilitate sexual conduct with the victim is sufficient by itself to establish forcible rape in violation of R.C. 2907.02(A)(2), or whether said evidence is insufficient because the force did not compel the victim to submit to the sexual conduct in question. (State's appeals; Montgomery County) (Argument on 9-16-25)

24-1050 *State v. Striblin* Whether the Fifth District erred in sustaining the defendant's facial constitutional challenge on Second Amendment grounds after the defendant's no contest plea to a charge under R.C. 2923.121(A) for illegal possession of a firearm on a liquor permit premises. (State's appeal; Muskingum County) (Argument on 10-8-25)

25-93 *State v. Thoen* (1) Whether jeopardy attaches when a trial court unconditionally accepts a defendant's guilty plea; (2) When the trial court erroneously accepted the defendant's guilty plea, whether there was a manifest necessity for the prosecution to dismiss the bill of information and to indict the case when any such error could be resolved by restoring the parties to their pre-plea positions. (Knox County) (Argument on 11-18-25)

24-1715 *State v. Bradley* Whether plain error occurred when the trial court failed to instruct on transferred self-defense but the jury was otherwise instructed on self-defense without defense objection. (State's appeal; Belmont County) (Argument on 11-19-25)

25-952/962 *State v. Burrell* Whether a trial court's order amending a domestic-violence charge to delete a degree-raising prior-conviction element amounts to a dismissal of part of the indictment so that the State can immediately appeal as of right under R.C. 2945.67(A). (State's appeals; Muskingum County) (Argument on 3-25-26)

25-670 *State v. Holliman* Whether a defendant found guilty of one-year and three-year firearm specifications can be sentenced by the trial court to only the one-year firearm term when the prosecutor objects and would elect the three-year firearm term instead. (State's appeal; Cuyahoga County) (Argument on 4-14-26)

25-643 *State v. Lebron-Novas* (1) Whether the trial court's decision upholding the traffic stop and denying the motion to suppress must be affirmed when the dash cam video provided sufficient evidence to show the follow-too-close traffic violation, even despite the supposed inconsistencies in the trooper's testimony as to what the video showed; (2) Whether the trial court's error in relying on the trooper's supposed inconsistencies should have resulted in a limited remand for the trial court to deliberate again on whether there was reasonable suspicion to support the stop, instead of a remand requiring the outright granting of the motion to suppress. (State's appeal; Erie County) (Argument on 4-15-26)

25-912 *State v. Barton* Whether the drug dog's brief three-second instinctual intrusion of its head into the open driver's side window of a lawfully stopped vehicle before the dog alerted constituted a Fourth Amendment violation. (Hamilton County) (Argument on 4-15-26)

Ohio Attorney General Opinions

provided by Ohio Attorney General Andy Wilson's website at **https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Legal/Opinions**

2026-008

Requested by: Vinton County Prosecuting Attorney

A township may levy an additional excise lodging tax under R.C. 5739.08(B) by a resolution increasing the rate imposed by a prior

resolution adopted under R.C. 5739.08. The resolution need not identify the statutory authority upon which it relies, is not invalid merely because it identifies a specific establishment to which the tax may apply and remains enforceable even if the taxing authority elects not to adopt written regulations governing the administration and allocation of the tax. For purposes of levying an excise lodging tax under R.C. 5739.08, a township may apply the definition of "hotel" in R.C. 5739.01(M) or adopt an alternative definition authorized by R.C. 5739.091 that includes establishments with fewer than five guest rooms.

2026-007

Requested by: Delaware County Prosecuting Attorney

Pursuant to R.C. 3375.22, if a county library district board was established before September 30, 2025, trustees appointed to a new term on or after that date are entitled to serve four year terms. The transitional staggering of terms "at the first appointment" applies only when a new county library district board is created. The statute's reference to seven-year terms for subsequent appointments is a scrivener's error, should not be given effect, and instead must be read as four years.

2026-006

Requested by: Trumbull County Prosecuting Attorney

R.C. 121.221 permits the board of directors and the solid-waste management policy committee of a joint solid-waste district to conduct their meetings or hearings virtually, except when the meetings or hearings involve a vote to approve a major nonroutine expenditure, a significant hiring decision, or a purpose to propose, approve, or vote on a tax issue or increase.

2026-005

Requested by: Lawrence County Prosecuting Attorney

A municipality may, pursuant to its home-rule authority, contribute revenue from its income tax to a county to further economic development, provided the municipality's legislative authority determines that the expenditure serves a public municipal purpose, the income tax was enacted for the general benefit of the municipality, and the expenditure aligns with such purpose. A county may receive such funds under R.C. 9.20 subject to compliance with all statutory requirements.

2026-004

Requested by: Lucas County Prosecuting Attorney

County investment policies must "ensure the best and safest return." R.C. 135.341(C). Investment decisions may not have a primary purpose of influencing any environmental, social, personal, or ideological policy. R.C. 135.35(O). These requirements govern decisions whether to divest from the sovereign debt of a foreign nation otherwise eligible for investment. R.C. 135.35(A)(10). County commissioners lack authority to remove investment authority from a county treasurer who declines to follow an ultra vires investment policy.

OPAA Member Accomplishments

Carroll County Prosecutor Completes U.S. Army War College Program

Carroll County Prosecuting Attorney Steven D. Barnett recently completed the United States Army War College's National Security Seminar held May 31st through June 4th at the historic Carlisle Barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, headquarters of the United States Army War College.

The seminar is an invitation only program that brings together civilian leaders from diverse backgrounds from across the United States and immerses them in an environment with Army War College students to examine current national security strategy and policy issues and their relationship with civilian control of the military. About 160 civilian leaders from across the United States attended the seminar, now in its 71st year.

Students at the college, lieutenant colonels and colonels with about twenty years of military service from branches of the military and select civilian federal employees, attend the college's ten month residence program to complete a graduate degree. According to the Army, graduates earn a graduate masters degree in strategic studies, becoming skilled problem solvers, often becoming worldwide leaders who actively engage in discourse about the role of ground forces in national security objectives. By the time they leave Carlisle Barracks, graduates are prepared for service in a joint, inter-agency, intergovernmental, and multinational national security community.

The program emphasizes strategic leadership development, argumentation, and research to equip accomplished officers and civilians with the ability to apply history, practice, communication, and theory to complex strategic issues. That mission is supported by the efforts of the other institutions located at Carlisle Barracks, including the Center for Strategic Leadership, the Strategic Studies Institute, the

Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, and the Army Heritage and Education Center. Through this collaboration in pursuit of strategic knowledge, graduates go on to become adaptable, innovative, and highly skilled leaders in the United States and abroad.

The National Security Seminar is the capstone event of the curriculum that enhances student learning by incorporating civilian perspectives from a cross-section of the United States into the seminar discussion. Invited guests, like Prosecutor Barnett, came from a broad range of occupations, geographic regions, and age groups, including a mayor from the State of Hawaii, numerous current and retired college professors, and even clergy. The program fosters the free and frank exchange of ideas.

"Each day, we heard from one or two four-star generals that were theatre or combatant commanders responsible for a part of the world, who outlined the challenges being faced by the U.S. Army by adversaries of our country," Barnett said. "I learned that we have the best and brightest people in the United States Army trying to solve problems and strategically plan for the challenges faced by evolving changes in technology on the battlefields and how the Army must adapt to changes in warfighting. The United States has learned a lot from the war in Ukraine and the recent conflict with Iran," Barnett added.

The program also included talks from a retired United States Ambassador and the issues involved with China's claims to the South China Sea and how the United States Army is strategically problem-solving in the Pacific and Polar regions in response.

Barnett said many of the War College students in his seminar were current officers about the same age and time in service in the Army. Those students, upon graduation, will return to assignments in the force and will end up likely promoted to general officers who will be the next generation of Army leadership.

"My student mentor was a civilian, who was involved in the Army logistics, and he was headed back to his assignment in that field," Barnett said. Others will complete at least two more years of service and retire from the Army. "One colonel in our seminar was a 20-plus year combat veteran, and he planned plan to leave the Army in two years and become a better father and husband. I was very impressed with his story and his combat experiences, but he bluntly told us he declined general officer promotion." Three other students in the seminar were military officers from Israel, Uruguay, and South Korea.

Prosecutor Barnett was nominated for the program by Lou Tobin, Executive Director of the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association. "We nominated Steve because this was a great opportunity for him to learn from other leaders from across the country and our military about how to develop and implement strategies that promote the public good. We also knew that with Steve's background in law enforcement and local government he would make his own valuable contributions to the seminar.

Steve is one of the leaders of our Association and we are really proud that he was invited to this program to represent Ohio prosecutors," Tobin commented.

In addition to classroom components, the program included an in-depth tour of Gettysburg National Military Park, where War College professors led tours of the battlefield and the leadership lessons and decision-making that were made in one of the most important battles of the Civil War.

Participants were also treated to social events, including a sit-down dinner with a keynote speaker and a reception at the home of Army University's commander, Major General Trevor J. Bredenkamp at Carlisle Barracks.

Participants also got to see up close various weapons systems and heard from enlisted soldiers about the work they do in their specialties and perform the missions assigned to them. "The Army Heritage and Education Center is like the Army's archives, and they have a museum dedicated to the life of soldiers on the front lines," The program reinforced the sacrifice and duty of enlisted soldiers who have bear the brunt to execute the mission of the Army in any war," Barnett added.

"This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I am so honored to have had the chance to participate and bring the perspective an elected official and resident of rural Ohio to the table with the issues we discussed. We have outstanding, competent, and professional leaders coming up through the military. Our national defense is in good hands!" Barnett observed.

Founded in 1901, the U.S. Army War College seeks to "[n]ot promote war but preserve the peace by intelligent and adequate preparation to repel aggression. . ." according to its advocate for establishment, Secretary of War Elihu Root. After the Spanish-American War, Secretary Root saw the need for the Army general staff to plan and acquire more information to intellectually advance the Army and its role in the changing world at the time. That mission continues today.

Our thanks to Prosecutor Barnett for this article contribution

Root Hall, academic home of the U.S. Army War College, named for Secretary of War Elihu Root, who advocated for establishing the college in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War.

U.S. Army howitzer is displayed for National Security Seminar participants. The howitzer was one of many pieces of combat-ready equipment Seminar participants saw up close with the soldiers responsible for operating.

General Joseph Ryan, commander, U.S. Army Western Hemisphere Command finishes his presentation about The Army's role in homeland defense at the National Security Seminar at the U.S. Army War College.

Army War College professor, Col. Doug Douds, Ph.D.,USMC ret. (center, in red) an Army War College faculty member, discusses the Battle of Gettysburg with National Security Seminar participants during their staff ride tour of the battlefield.

OPAA Training

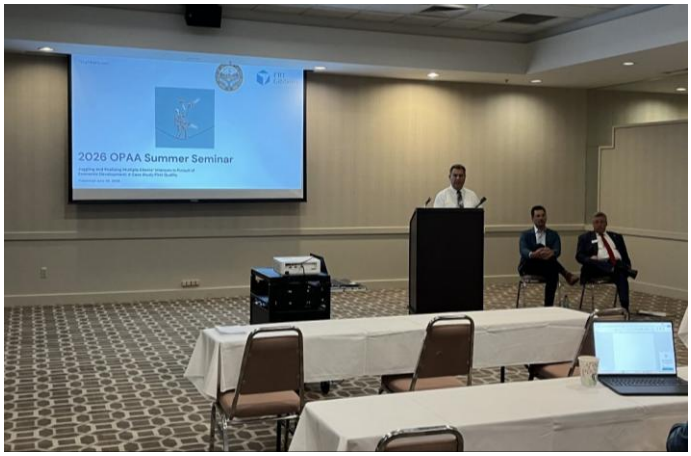
The OPAA Summer Training was held June 23rd and 24th in northern Ohio. We welcomed 116 attendees from 43 counties.

Operation Find Her group session on the Criminal side

Operation Find Her presenters Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Tiegs, USA retired and Ms. Candice Spangler, Strategic Advisor for Survivor Initiatives - Both of Skull Games

Travis Kling, Assistant Agent in Charge, ODPS talks about marijuana, hemp, and SB56.

Knox County Prosecutor McConville talks about county zoning issues on the Civil side



A look at the work involved by the county prosecutor and others to get a major manufacturing facility built in a county with Defiance County Prosecutor Morris Murray, Frank J. Reed Jr., Partner, and Donald L. Warner III, Partner, Partner, Both with FBT Gibbons, LLP

Dale Arnold, Director of Energy, Utility and Local Government Policy - Ohio Farm Bureau, talks data centers and other challenges to local government entities.

Jessica Toms, Drug Chemistry Manager, BCI, Office of Attorney General Dave Yost talks with the Criminal group about the lab specific side of marijuana, hemp, and SB56.

Jonathan J. Downes with Zashin & Rich discusses changes to civil service law along with the direction and increase in employment litigation.

Phil Bogdanoff speaking on drafting the Jeffrey Dahmer search warrant, search warrants in general, and the requirements of the Fourth Amendment.

Thanks to all that attended, trained, and provided for us!

2026 On-Demand CLE

OPAA Members has access to online self-study CLE webinars which have been approved for CLE credit in 2026. These are a great way to get CLE hours that fit your schedule with topics designed for Ohio prosecutors. We currently have 13.5 hours available including 5.5 hours of professional conduct credit! All have been approved by the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on Continuing Legal Education through 12/31/2026. Trainings are $60 and vary between 1 and 1.5 hours each. All are available at https://opaaclewebinars.ce21.com

2026 Training Dates

Fall Training - September 24th - 25th
Admin Professionals Training - October 15th
Annual Meeting- December 3-4

Locations and full information will be forwarded to the offices as available.

Your 2026 OPAA Officers

Executive and Legislative meeting dates are listed on our website

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