

Ohio House and Senate Leadership Results

The unofficial leadership elections for Ohio's General Assembly were held in November, setting the stage for the upcoming legislative session. Lawmakers will formalize the leadership slate on January 6 after they are sworn in. In the Ohio House of Representatives, Republicans elected term-limited Senate President Matt Huffman as Speaker, with Rep. Gayle Manning serving as Speaker Pro Tempore and Rep. Phil Plummer as Assistant Speaker Pro Tempore. Rep. Marilyn John will take on the role of Majority Floor Leader, with Rep. Adam Bird as Assistant Majority Floor Leader. The team of Majority Whips includes Reps. Nick Santucci, Steve Demetriou, Josh Williams, and Riordan McClain.

In the Senate, Sen. Rob McColley will lead the upper chamber as President, joined by Sen. Bill Reineke as President Pro Tempore, Sen. Theresa Gavarone as Majority Floor Leader, and Sen. George Lang as Majority Whip.

On the Democratic side, Rep. Allison Russo will return as Minority Leader one final time, with Rep. Dontavius Jarrells serving as Assistant Minority Leader. Rep. Dani Isaacsohn was elected as Minority Whip and Rep. Michele Grim as Assistant Minority Whip. In the Senate, Sen. Nickie Antonio leads the Democratic caucus as Minority Leader, supported by Sen. Hearcel Craig as Assistant Minority Leader, Sen. Kent Smith as Minority Whip, and Sen. Beth Liston as Assistant Minority Whip.

Additionally, Brian Stewart and Jerry Cirino are the presumptive chairs to lead the Finance Committees in both chambers. While the committee assignments for education and higher education are still in progress, Sen. Andrew Brenner is expected to retain the gavel for the Senate Education Committee and Rep. Tom Young could also retain his gavel for the Higher Education Committee.

Lame Duck Activity

With just one week remaining in the 135th General Assembly, only a few bills affecting educator preparation programs, pre-service teachers, and higher education have seen activity. Those include:

- Senate Bill 104, which was signed into law on Nov. 26. While no litigation has surfaced yet, challenges are expected. Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court is hearing arguments related to a Tennessee law with similarities to Ohio's HB 68, which bans gender transitioning surgeries and services for minors and requires same-sex sports teams. Legal experts anticipate the Court will uphold the Tennessee law, which could directly impact SB 104's implementation and also HB 68.

- SB 208, which allows the preservice teaching permit to exist for one year, in addition to a three-year permit, is awaiting a Senate concurrence vote before heading to the governor's desk.

There still has been no action on SB 83 in lame duck, despite efforts from senators and House Republicans. House Speaker Jason Stephens has yet to relent in preventing the bill from being placed on the House's agenda for a final concurrence vote.

Budget Process

Preparations for Ohio's upcoming budget process are underway. The Office of Budget and Management and the Office of the Governor are currently reviewing state agency budget requests. Gov. DeWine will unveil his final operating budget proposal to the General Assembly on Feb. 3. The budget must be signed into law by June 30.