

Ohio Republican Party endorses all 2024 federal and state GOP candidates -- except House Speaker Jason Stephens

By Jeremy Pelzer
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COLUMBUS, Ohio—The Ohio Republican Party has endorsed every GOP nominee for federal and state office this year, with one conspicuous exception: Ohio House Speaker Jason Stephens.

The snub won't have any effect on Stephens' reelection chances, as the Lawrence County Republican is running unopposed this year. But it illustrates how many Ohio Republicans remain upset with Stephens more than 18 months after he was elected speaker with the help of Democratic votes over state Rep. Derek Merrin, the Toledo-area Republican backed by a majority of House Republicans.

The Ohio Republican Party's State Central Committee, during its Aug. 16 meeting, was about to vote on a resolution to endorse the entire slate of GOP federal and state-level nominees for the Nov. 5 election. But a committee member motioned to amend the list to specifically exclude Stephens, according to Ohio GOP Chair Alex Triantafilou. That motion passed with "a strong majority of the vote," then the committee passed the amended resolution, Triantafilou said in an interview.

Triantafilou declined to comment further about the last-minute exclusion of Stephens.

It's not the first time the state party's central committee has expressed its displeasure with Stephens. Last year, the committee [voted to censure the speaker](#) and the 21 other House Republicans who supported him, and in January [the committee refused to give primary endorsements](#) to House GOP incumbents seen as being too close to Stephens and his political team.

The list of party endorsees for the general election includes all federal and state-level Republican candidates, including U.S. Sen. JD Vance of Cincinnati for vice president, Bernie Moreno of Cleveland for U.S. Senate, and all congressional and (almost) all legislative nominees -- including those who were previously singled out for their support of Stephens. Ohio GOP central committee members also voted unanimously to oppose Issue 1, a proposed redistricting reform constitutional amendment.

Stephens political spokesman Jared Borg declined comment Tuesday on the state party endorsement snub, as did state Rep. Ron Ferguson, the Jefferson County Republican who's been a vocal critic of Stephens.

Even though Stephens is all but guaranteed of winning a third House term this fall, it remains to be seen whether he will remain House speaker next session. That's because Ohio Senate President Matt Huffman, a Lima Republican who's running for a House seat this year because he's term-limited in the Senate, [has been preparing to challenge Stephens for the speaker's gavel.](#)