

Vivek Ramaswamy to launch Ohio gubernatorial bid in mid-February, taps JD Vance's political advisors

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—Republican Vivek Ramaswamy plans to join the rapidly accelerating 2026 Ohio governor's race in mid-February and is building up a campaign apparatus that includes several key members of now-Vice President JD Vance's political team, sources say.

Ramaswamy, a 39-year-old biotech entrepreneur from suburban Columbus who shot to national prominence when he ran for president last year, will join [Attorney General Dave Yost](#) and [Treasurer Robert Sprague](#) as the major GOP hopefuls looking to succeed term-limited Gov. Mike DeWine.

Ramaswamy's run for governor, [while talked about for more than a year](#), has particularly been expected since he belatedly popped up earlier this month as President Donald Trump's reported favorite to be appointed to Vance's open U.S. Senate seat. [DeWine instead appointed his lieutenant governor, Jon Husted](#).

Since that time, Ramaswamy has assembled a political team with close ties to Vance, [Trump's political heir](#) and Ramaswamy's friend since they attended Yale Law School together. That includes Jai Chabria, a veteran Ohio campaign strategist who worked for Vance's 2022 U.S. Senate campaign, according to three sources with knowledge of Ramaswamy's plans.

Ramaswamy intends to roll out his campaign sometime in mid-February, though exact details of the announcement are still being worked out, sources said.

The Plain Dealer/cleveland.com has reached out to a Ramaswamy spokeswoman to officially confirm the announcement timing and campaign hires, which were [first reported by NBC News](#).

While he hasn't run for office in Ohio before, Ramaswamy will begin the race with good name ID built up from his presidential run and frequent media appearances, as well as a likely ability to capitalize on that name recognition to raise money.

And if Trump decides to endorse Ramaswamy, as he did for Vance, now-U.S. Sen. Bernie Moreno, and DeWine in their most recent campaigns, [that could make him a heavy favorite](#).

However, it remains to be seen whether Ramaswamy can capitalize on his celebrity to beat Yost and Sprague, each of whom have spent years campaigning and building personal relationships around the state.

“Vivek is someone (voters) saw on Fox News – someone they liked what he was saying, but they don’t have any kind of personal relationship with him,” said Barry Bennett, a longtime Ohio Republican political strategist, [in an interview](#) earlier this month. “And that’s what he’s got to do in two years if he wants to win.”

Besides Yost and Sprague, [Heather Hill](#), a Morgan County businessowner and former county school board member, has also entered the GOP gubernatorial primary race, though she’s considered a longshot. The only Democrat to enter the race so far [is Dr. Amy Acton](#), a former state health director.

Ramaswamy has been one of Trump’s biggest cheerleaders, backing many of the president’s proposals -- such as deporting millions of immigrants living in the country illegally and [ending birthright citizenship](#).

However, Ramaswamy has been [more of a free-trade advocate than Trump has](#), and his social-media comments last month in defense of a federal program to give immigration visas to highly skilled workers [drew a sharp backlash](#) from some Trump supporters.

He has also [opposed continued military support for Ukraine](#), [proposed raising the voting age to 25](#) except for those who serve in the military or pass a written test, suggested [giving every Taiwanese family an AR-15](#) to deter an invasion from mainland China, and [called for the complete elimination](#) of the FBI, U.S. Department of Education, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

He [suggested](#) that the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol was an “inside job,” [claimed falsely](#) that the 2020 presidential election was stolen by “big tech,” and [asserted](#) that Democrats are intentionally trying to replace white Americans with minorities.

Ramaswamy has spoken much more about his stances on federal policies than Ohio-centric issues he would have to focus on as governor.

Speaking at an Ohio Chamber of Commerce event last November, Ramaswamy said vaguely that while current state leaders have, overall, “done a great job of getting the state to where it is,” the question now on his mind is what can be done to take both America and Ohio “to the next level, to make us the best version of who we can possibly be?”

Born in Cincinnati to immigrants from India, Ramaswamy graduated from Harvard University with a bachelor’s degree in biology, then from Yale Law School in 2013.

After college, he founded pharmaceutical company Roivant Sciences and co-founded an “anti-woke” investment firm Strive Asset Management, among other things. His current net worth was close to \$1 billion as of last year, [according to Forbes](#).

Last year, [Strive Asset Management moved from Central Ohio to Texas](#).

Ramaswamy, at the Ohio chamber’s event in November, said the move was made by the company’s CEO, Matt Cole, because Texas was more “business-friendly” than Ohio.