

# Jim Tressel swiftly confirmed as Ohio's new lieutenant governor

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—Jim Tressel, a former Ohio State University football coach and university administrator, won quick confirmation from state lawmakers on Wednesday as Ohio's 67th lieutenant governor.

Tressel, a 72-year-old Medina Republican, was confirmed by the Ohio Senate and House two days after [Gov. Mike DeWine nominated him](#) to finish the final 22 months of Jon Husted's term as lieutenant governor. Husted left the job last month when [DeWine appointed him to now-Vice President JD Vance's U.S. Senate seat](#).

Tressel is best known for his 10 years as the head football coach of the Ohio State Buckeyes, winning at least a share of six Big Ten titles and a national championship in 2002.

However, [Tressel resigned from Ohio State in 2011](#) after the [NCAA accused him of lying and withholding information from NCAA and school officials](#) that, for years, many of his players sold or traded sports memorabilia to a tattoo parlor owner in violation of NCAA rules.

His post-football career has mostly focused on higher education. He was an administrator at the University of Akron and president of Youngstown State University, where [he served from 2014 to 2023](#).

The Ohio lieutenant governor's most widely known duty is to [become governor](#) if the sitting governor dies, resigns, or is removed from office.

Lieutenant governors traditionally are also given control over a state department or agency. DeWine told reporters Monday that he and Tressel were still working on what role Tressel will play within his administration.

The Ohio Senate voted 31-1 to confirm Tressel's nomination, with the lone "no" vote coming from Democratic state Sen. Beth Liston of suburban Columbus. The Ohio House followed suit about an hour later by a 68-27 vote.

House Speaker Matt Huffman, speaking with reporters Wednesday prior to the confirmation vote, called Tressel “the right man for the job.”

Huffman, a Lima Republican, pointed to Tressel’s experience as a state university president with managing employees, working with state lawmakers and raising money. He also called Tressel a “master” of communicating with the public while he was Ohio State’s head football coach.

“I think the detail that he’s presented through the years about how to solve the runaway spending problem in higher education, the runaway debt and all that -- that’s a pretty good preparation for what they’ll be doing as lieutenant governor,” Huffman said.

State senators from both sides of the aisle also expressed support for Tressel, touting his accomplishments on the football field and subsequent work with higher education and workforce development.

State Sen. Al Cutrona, a Mahoning County Republican and Youngstown State University graduate, lauded Tressel’s work as university president to “transform” his alma mater and the Mahoning Valley.

“He’s done more in his role as president of YSU than any elected official, present or past,” Cutrona said.

However, some legislative Democrats opposed Tressel, citing his involvement in passing a 2015 law allowing the state to take control over school districts with low standardized test scores, [including in Youngstown, East Cleveland, and Lorain](#).

“This academic distress commission that Jim came up with is not effective. It’s not working. It’s not making our school districts even better,” said state Rep. Juanita Brent, a Cleveland Democrat. “We’ve seen where his alliances are, and it’s not with our public schools.”

House Minority Leader Allison Russo of suburban Columbus said her fellow House Democrats were also concerned that lawmakers held no public hearings on Tressel’s nomination before voting to confirm him.

“He hasn’t been forced to put out there, where does he stand on some of these issues?” said Russo, who herself met with Tressel privately ahead of Wednesday’s vote. “And so, we will find out.”