

Ohio Treasurer Robert Sprague exits 2026 governor's race, backs Vivek Ramaswamy

By **Jeremy Pelzer**
Cleveland.com

COLUMBUS, Ohio—State Treasurer Robert Sprague announced Wednesday that he is abandoning his plans to run for Ohio governor in 2026, and that he'll instead endorse fellow Republican Vivek Ramaswamy.

Sprague, a 52-year-old resident of Findlay, in Northwest Ohio, will instead run next year for Ohio secretary of state, he announced in a release.

Sprague, who [told The Plain Dealer/cleveland.com last month](#) that he had planned to launch a gubernatorial campaign "soon," didn't give a reason for altering his plans in [a video posted on X](#). However, Sprague was widely expected to be an underdog in the GOP gubernatorial primary race, behind Ramaswamy and Attorney General Dave Yost.

Sprague will be the second Republican to run for secretary of state next year, after ex-state lawmaker Niraj Antani of suburban Dayton.

The offices of governor and secretary of state will each be open in 2026, as the Republicans currently holding those seats -- Gov. Mike DeWine and Secretary of State Frank LaRose -- will each be term-limited.

In his video, Sprague said he would back Ramaswamy – [who's expected to roll out his campaign later this month](#) -- for governor "because I support his intellect, his drive, (and) the outsider mentality that he has in trying to reform our state and move us forward in treading a new direction for all of us."

Sprague is the first major Republican in Ohio to endorse Ramaswamy for governor. Ramaswamy, the 39-year-old biotech entrepreneur from suburban Columbus who ran for president in 2024, recently got supportive tweets from Republican U.S. Sens. [Rick Scott of Florida](#), [Mike Lee of Utah](#), and [Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee](#).

Jai Chabria, senior strategist and general consultant for Ramaswamy's campaign, said that Sprague's announcement is "the tip of the iceberg" and that a lot more Ohio endorsements are going to be rolled out in the coming days.

"There's a groundswell of support that's coming," Chabria said. "So it's going to be a very, very robust campaign."

Sprague's decision leaves Yost, who [launched his gubernatorial campaign last month](#), as Ramaswamy's only major GOP opponent for governor.

The winner of the May 2026 Republican primaries for Ohio governor and secretary of state are each expected to be the favorite in the state's November general election, given Ohio's rightward lean in recent years.

The only Democrat to enter the governor's race so far [is Dr. Amy Acton, a former state health director](#). Bryan Hambley, a cancer doctor from Warren County, is the only Democrat so far to announce a run for secretary of state.

In his release, Sprague praised LaRose for the job he's done as secretary of state.

"I will continue to ensure that our elections are fair, the results are trusted, and our right to vote is protected," Sprague said in a statement. "I look forward to working with President Trump, the Administration, and the Ohio General Assembly to these ends."

Antani's campaign, asked for comment on Sprague's announcement, released a statement from political director, Seth Camick, praising Antani's work in the legislature to ban ballot drop boxes and require citizenship verification prior to voter registration.

"Senator Antani is the pro-Trump warrior Ohio conservative voters need as their next Secretary of State," Camick said. "He looks forward to working hard to gain the support of the voters and win in 2026."