

Ohio could raise vehicle registration, title fees to help fund state Highway Patrol

By **Jake Zuckerman**
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COLUMBUS, Ohio – The current version of the state’s two-year operating budget proposal would raise motor vehicle registration fees by \$10 and title fees by \$3 to fund the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Ohio Department of Public Safety Director Andy Wilson told lawmakers last week that the highway patrol relies mostly on driver’s license, vehicle registration and title fee revenue to operate. He said those fees (for non-electric vehicles) were last raised in 2003. While some local governments have added supplemental fees for their own issues, for the highway patrol, revenue hasn’t changed since then. Cars, fuel and other costs have only increased since.

“If we don’t address our looming funding crisis for the patrol in this budget, the Ohio State Highway Patrol will look very different at the end of the biennium than it does today. And that difference will put Ohio citizens in danger,” he said.

Vehicle registration [currently costs](#) \$31 for noncommercial cars, but they are higher for trucks and for different classes of commercial vehicles. Those would increase by \$10 under the new proposal for the roughly 13 million cars registered in the state. Wilson said that new revenue would stay within Ohio State Highway Patrol coffers and not migrate over to the other various agencies within the Department of Public Safety like the BMV.

Title fees would increase from \$15 to \$18. That money, Wilson said, would go toward highway patrol operations like providing security at the Statehouse and other state buildings, providing a security detail for the governor, patrolling protests at the Statehouse, and providing security for special events like an upcoming NATO conference in Dayton.

Without the increased revenue, Wilson said the force would have to “drastically” limit the support the patrol offers on request for local police.

If vehicle registrations hold firm, the Ohio Department of Public Safety estimates the \$10 fee increase could bring in about \$130 million a year. The \$3 title fee increase could produce about \$16 million annually.

Gongwer News Service first reported on the proposed fee hike.

The budget will likely undergo heavy changes in both the House and Senate before it makes it back to Gov. Mike DeWine for approval.

The department budget is estimated to reach \$1.1 billion this fiscal year. It would increase to \$1.16 billion in fiscal year 2026 and to \$1.22 billion in 2027.

State Rep. Haraz Ghanbari, a Wood County Republican, said he thinks the fee increase would be a “heavy lift” politically. State Rep. Juanita Brent, a Cleveland Democrat, said the problem isn’t a funding shortfall but a [prioritization of private school voucher investments](#) over highway patrol.

“As you go back to your cabinet meeting ... I hope you will say, ‘Governor, we do not need ... a billion dollars for nonpublic schools. We need that to go to our public safety,’” she said.