

DeWine's 2025 State of the State hits familiar themes, including school cell-phone ban, stadium-funding plan

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—Gov. Mike DeWine laid out a number of policy proposals and administration initiatives during his 2025 State of the State address on Wednesday.

Very little of it was new.

During his 71-minute speech at the Ohio Statehouse, DeWine outlined plans to put [newly appointed Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel in charge of initiatives](#) to promote physical fitness in schools and to coordinate with business and higher-education leaders to fill in-demand jobs.

He also announced [new K-12 social studies initiatives to encourage reading and writing skills](#), as well as a new directive to state education officials to find ways to help students develop practical life skills, such as making a personal budget, knowing basic first aid, and how to prepare simple meals.

But most of DeWine's address focused either on things his administration has already done, or proposals that he has already laid out.

DeWine turned early on in the speech to touting Ohio's recent successes in helping residents get new or better jobs.

He listed major economic-development projects around the state – including the highly publicized ([but repeatedly delayed](#)) work on a \$28 billion Intel computer-chip manufacturing plant outside Columbus.

He said removing barriers for Ohioans to find jobs “remains both our greatest opportunity and our most significant challenge,” noting work his administration has already done to help residents with disabilities, drug-addiction issues, and those with a prison record.

“Ohio is doing more than any other state in the union to prepare for job growth,” DeWine said. “We are prepared for the future.”

The governor also touted several policy initiatives he previously laid out in his state budget plan, including his proposal to double the state’s tax on sports-gambling to pay for stadium projects like a proposed new Cleveland Browns covered stadium in suburban Brook Park.

It’s an idea that has received [a lukewarm reception among lawmakers](#) -- reflected in the mild applause it drew on Wednesday -- and it might soon be replaced by [the Browns’ proposal to issue \\$600 million in state-backed bonds](#).

Other previously unveiled budget proposals brought up by DeWine on Wednesday include [creating a \\$1,000-per-year state income-tax credit](#) for parents of young children and offering school districts money to return driver’s education programs to high schools.

DeWine also [repeated his call to ban cell phones](#) in K-12 schools – [an idea he first backed last year](#). He said schools that have prevented students from using phones during school hours have had “profound” results in increasing attendance and making them more engaged in class.

DeWine, 78, concluded his address with a couple of familiar themes: establishing a bright future for Ohioans' grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In a nod to Tressel, a former Ohio State University football coach, DeWine used a sports metaphor.

“We have the playbook. We have the team,” the governor said. “And now, together -- let’s go win!”

Legislative reaction

After DeWine’s speech, Republican legislative leaders offered polite praise for the many of the governor’s proposals.

“I wouldn’t say there was anything I would deem a nonstarter,” said Senate President Rob McColley, a Northwest Ohio Republican. “We will take a look at any of the proposals the governor puts forward.”

However, their response was tempered by skepticism over some of DeWine’s budget plan, such as his proposed \$1,000-per-year child tax credit.

“I don’t think an income-tax credit, for many Ohioans, is the way to go,” said House Speaker Matt Huffman, a Lima Republican.

Legislative Democrats, meanwhile, were more effusive in their praise. When DeWine turned in his speech to topics like the child tax credit and assisting former prison inmates in finding work, some Democratic lawmakers vocally cheered from their seats.

Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio, a Lakewood Democrat, told reporters that such “hooting and hollering” reflects her party’s support for DeWine’s “pro-family” policies.

However, Antonio and House Minority Leader Allison Russo, a Columbus-area Democrat, also chided DeWine for not spending more time on issues such as the state’s housing crisis and rising property-tax bills.

They also criticized President Donald Trump’s opposition to the federal subsidies for the Intel project, and the DeWine administration’s [renewed effort to create work requirements for Medicaid coverage in Ohio](#).

“There’s a lot that we and the governor...agree on,” Antonio said. “It’s the ‘how we do it’ that probably we don’t agree on.”