

# Ex-lawmaker Jay Edwards enters crowded GOP primary for Ohio treasurer in 2026

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—The Republican primary battle for Ohio treasurer in 2026 is becoming even more crowded, as ex-state Rep. Jay Edwards filed paperwork Friday to enter the race.

Edwards, an Athens County resident whose 2026 plans have been the subject of Statehouse rumors for months, is the fourth Republican to run for state treasurer, joining ex-lawmaker [Niraj Antani](#) of suburban Dayton, state Sen. [Kristina Roegner](#) of Hudson, and Lake County Treasurer [Michael Zuren](#).

Edwards submitted paperwork with the Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose's office on Friday to indicate he's running for treasurer, according to the office website. The Plain Dealer has reached out to Edwards for comment.

Ohio's state treasurer essentially serves as the state's banker, managing \$21.5 billion in state investments, collecting most of Ohio's taxes and fees, and safeguarding state money.

The current treasurer, Republican Robert Sprague of Findlay, is term-limited and [is running for secretary of state in 2026](#). So far, no Democrat has filed to run for the office next year.

Born and raised in Nelsonville, Edwards attended Ohio University on a football scholarship, playing linebacker and earning a bachelor's degree in mathematics.

In 2016, Edwards won a previously Democratic Ohio House seat, rising to become chair of the Ohio House Finance Committee in 2023 and 2024, a position that gave him significant power over state appropriations.

Especially as Finance Committee chair, Edwards was a prolific fundraiser, raising \$1.3 million by January 2024. While he spent or transferred a significant part of that money since then – including sending \$500,000 to the Ohio House GOP's campaign arm last year – he reported having about \$763,000 on hand as of Jan. 31.

Uncertainty over why Edwards raised so much money as he was preparing to leave the legislature has fueled speculation about his future political plans. Most recently, [his name was brought up](#) as a potential appointee by Gov. Mike DeWine to fill now-Vice President JD Vance's U.S. Senate seat. DeWine [chose his lieutenant governor, Jon Husted](#).

Edwards was also a trusted lieutenant and friend of then-House Speaker Larry Householder, a Perry County Republican [currently serving a 20-year federal prison sentence](#) for overseeing a \$60 million bribery scheme to pass House Bill 6, a 2019 energy law.

Edwards' name was brought up during Householder's trial – including during testimony about a 2019 dinner he accompanied Householder to [with two undercover FBI agents](#) posing as Cincinnati real-estate developers – but he was never accused of any wrongdoing.