

Lake County treasurer Michael Zuren makes underdog run for Ohio treasurer

By **Jeremy Pelzer**
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COLUMBUS, Ohio—As state-level Ohio Republicans jockey to switch positions on the 2026 ballot, another, less-known GOP official has also joined the fray: Lake County Treasurer Michael Zuren.

The 57-year-old Concord resident is one of four Republicans who have filed so far to run for state treasurer next year, when incumbent Treasurer Robert Sprague is term-limited.

The others include ex-lawmaker Niraj Antani of suburban Dayton, state Sen. Kristina Roegner of Hudson, and ex-state Rep. [Jay Edwards](#) of Athens County, though the latter said last week he might end up running for a different, unspecified office.

Of the four, Zuren is the only one who has served as an elected treasurer; Lake County voters reelected him last November to a second four-year term. He previously served as an Eastlake city council member for four years.

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.

In an interview, Zuren didn't propose any revolutionary changes to how the state treasurer's office should be run. He said he would take the same approach to state finances as he has with Lake County's investment portfolio: "using everything in the investment bucket" to maximize the return on state investments, thus reducing the need for money from taxes.

"I would only invest in triple-A rated (investments), but I would look at what the market's demanding and see which investment tool would give the greatest return," Zuren said.

Zuren also said that, if elected, he would continue his philanthropic work, noting he's helped organize programs that have held about 175 free birthday parties for special-

needs children, handed out 35,000 free lunches to underprivileged children, and given thousands of coats and other winter clothing items to kids who need them. He also teaches a finance investment course at Lakeland Community College and has offered free financial and anti-identity theft courses to seniors and students.

“We’re all here to serve the public, and any way that we could do that, I think, would be part of the job,” Zuren said.

While Zuren said his primary rivals are “fantastic” and “all very well-qualified,” he thinks he’s “a different type of candidate” given his experience serving as a county treasurer, rather than his opponents’ legislative backgrounds.

However, Zuren has an uphill battle in the GOP primary race for state treasurer, which currently is the most crowded primary of any 2026 statewide race in Ohio for either major party.

To raise his profile around the state, Zuren said he’s crisscrossing the state to attend county Republican Party fundraising dinners, and that he has a busy campaigning schedule planned for this summer.

“I’m probably going to just be running from county to county and just trying to be out there and involved all summer long (in) as many places as I can go,” he said.

Many GOP candidates for statewide races next year have been [pushing Ohio Republican Party leaders to issue primary endorsements early next month](#). Zuren said while he’s talked to every Ohio GOP state central committee member, he hasn’t asked them to give him a state party endorsement in the treasurer’s race.

“Maybe they can make a better decision (about endorsements) in the fall,” he said, “because I think there’s four really good candidates that are running, and we all have something different to offer.”