

Ohio Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel says he's not thinking about running for governor in 2026

Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel joined Ohio Politics Explained podcast to discuss his new job, higher education and speculation about his future

By Haley BeMiller
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Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel is adamant about one thing: He hasn't thought about running for Ohio governor in 2026.

Tressel's future has been the topic of political gossip since Gov. Mike DeWine tapped him to [serve as lieutenant governor](#) for the remainder of DeWine's term. The former Ohio State University football coach replaced Jon Husted, who took over Vice President JD Vance's U.S. Senate seat in January.

Tressel said he's focused on his current job and not what comes next.

"I've tried to approach this like I did coaching, which was, hey, I was worried about today's practice and this week's game, and I wasn't going to worry about were we going to be the Big 10 champions or were we going to beat Michigan or were we going to win the national championship, but focus on the task at hand," he said in an interview.

Tressel joined the Ohio Politics Explained podcast to discuss his new role and how he plans to put his stamp on the lieutenant governor's office. He also defended a [controversial higher education law](#) that will eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion programs on college campuses; ban faculty strikes; and prohibit universities from taking positions on hot-button issues.

Tressel previously served as president of Youngstown State University. Faculty at Youngstown State have launched a long-shot effort to [repeal Senate Bill 1](#) at the ballot box, calling it "a solution looking for a problem."

"I think the intent is just to make sure that across all the spectrum, everyone feels comfortable about posing questions, asking questions, voicing how they feel," Tressel said. "I'm a little bit of an optimist that it may broaden our conversation and make sure that everyone does feel like they're learning."