

Attorney General Dave Yost drops out of Ohio governor's race

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Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost ended his campaign for governor May 16, leaving entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy with a clearer path in the Republican primary.

Yost, 68, of Columbus, worked his way up from Delaware County elected office to state auditor and attorney general. But his campaign ultimately wasn't a match for Ramaswamy's [endorsement from President Donald Trump](#) or his celebrity-like status as an "anti-woke" crusader.

Yost's announcement came one week after the Ohio Republican Party [endorsed Ramaswamy](#) despite efforts by the attorney general and Gov. Mike DeWine to stop the vote.

In a letter to supporters, Yost conceded that "a steep climb to the nomination for governor has become a vertical cliff."

"Columbus needs re-engineering, not demolition," he wrote. "Sherrod Brown and the risky progressive ideas of his party will unwind all of the good that the last 15 years of Republican leadership has brought. This is a time to protect Ohio, not a time for a family squabble."

Ramaswamy officially [announced his bid](#) to replace term-limited DeWine on Feb. 24. That same day, Trump and billionaire Elon Musk backed the 39-year-old Upper Arlington resident's bid.

Yost argued publicly that Republicans shouldn't coronate a candidate one year before the May 2026 primary. But he also saw the writing on the wall: He lobbied the Trump administration for an appointment in exchange for dropping out, only to reject their offer of ambassador to Cyprus, [NOTUS reported](#).

"Congratulations to Dave on running a thoughtful campaign," Ramaswamy said in a statement. "He has served Ohio with great

dedication, and I am confident he will continue to play an important role in shaping the future of our state and our nation."

A spokesperson for Yost declined to say whether he'll endorse Ramaswamy.

Who's running for Ohio governor?

Yost's exit marks another twist in a tumultuous governor's race. DeWine's chosen successor, Jon Husted, instead [took a U.S. Senate appointment](#) to replace Vice President JD Vance. Ohio Treasurer Robert Sprague, who considered a run for governor, dropped out of the race to run for secretary of state, which oversees elections.

Former local school board member Heather Hill, of Morgan County, is running for governor as a Republican, but she is a little-known alternative to Ramaswamy's internet fame.

There's still one person who could trip up Ramaswamy's primary bid: Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel.

The former Ohio State University football coach, who took over as DeWine's No. 2 in February, said he's [considering a bid](#) for Ohio governor. Tressel issued a statement the day before the GOP endorsement meeting, but it didn't convince party members to postpone their decision.

Former Ohio Department of Health director Amy Acton is currently the only Democrat [running for governor](#). Former Congressman Tim Ryan is weighing whether to enter the race, and Brown hasn't ruled out a run for governor or U.S. Senate in 2026.

"Vivek Ramaswamy would starve our public schools of funding and make our kids less safe, gut earned benefits our seniors rely on, and supports a chaotic tariff and economic policy that will raise prices for Ohioans," Acton said in a statement. "As governor I'll fight for Ohioans who are struggling due to decades of billionaire special interests like Vivek running our state."