



# OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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## Chamber Leads Conversations on Labor, Workforce, and Education at Annual Ohio SHRM Conference



The Ohio Chamber again played a prominent role in this year's annual Ohio SHRM Employment Law and Legislative Conference in downtown Columbus. The Ohio SHRM State Council is a non-profit organization and an affiliate of The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the world's largest HR Professional society with over 300,000 members in more than 165

countries. For nearly seven decades, the Society has been the leading provider of resources serving the needs of HR professionals and advancing the practice of human resource management.

Kevin Shimp, the Chamber's outside counsel and an Associate Attorney at Dickinson Wright PLLC, provided an hourlong discussion titled **"Statehouse Update: Employment Law Bills Pending in Ohio**

**Statehouse."** Shimp's presentation provided an overview of the recent employment law bills introduced and passed at the Ohio Statehouse. This included bills regarding increasing the minimum wage, new employer surcharges for unemployment, new causes of actions for employees, non-compete bans, and employer designations.

Chamber SVP of Government Affairs Rick Carfagna led the conversation on **"Education Policy Changes at the State + Federal Level – What Impact Will They Have on Connecting Ohio's Workforce to Employers?"** Carfagna provided an economic snapshot of the state before conducting a fireside chat with Director Stephen Dackin of the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW). Dackin covered a multitude of topics, including:

- President Trump's executive order directing the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education and its potential impact on Ohio's educational systems from K-12 to higher education
- Ohio's recent shift toward implementation of what is known as the "Science of Reading" in all K-12 schools
- Governor DeWine's "Ohio's Workforce Playbook" initiative, led by Lt. Governor Jim Tressel, which involves an examination of the needs and circumstances of Ohio's various regions and then sets a course of action to retain existing talent, recruit new talent to Ohio, and rally Ohio's existing workforce to greater productivity
- Other State of the State initiatives announced by the Governor include a proposed ban on cell phone use, a greater focus on social studies and history, integrating career planning into graduation planning, emphasizing the development of practical life skills, and putting driver's education back into Ohio's high schools
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## Chamber Shares Child Care Perspectives at National Head Start Conference



The Ohio Chamber joined other state partners to speak on Ohio's child care crisis last week at the National Head Start Association's (NHSA) Annual Conference and Expo at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. The event is the largest national conference devoted to all things Head Start, which creates programs that serve as critical providers of state child care coverage. The conference brings the Head Start community together for a week of sharing knowledge, networking with peers, and celebrating achievements.

Celebrating 60 years of results in 2025, NHSA is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization that is the voice for more than 750,000 children, 250,000 staff, and 1,500 Head Start grant recipients in the United States.

Ohio Chamber SVP of Government Affairs Rick Carfagna joined a panel conversation with Lynanne Gutierrez, President & CEO of Groundwork Ohio, and Stephanie Keinath, Executive Vice President of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, on the state of Ohio's child care system and its impact on state workforce. Bob Bissen, NHSA's Senior Director of Government Affairs, led a discussion on the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's recent findings in its "*Untapped Potential: Ohio*" financial study for Ohio.

As Carfagna explained, the study found that the direct financial impact to Ohio of insufficient child care coverage is **\$5.48 billion annually**. This number includes \$1.52 billion in missed annual tax revenue and \$3.97 billion in child care-related employee turnover and absenteeism costs to Ohio employers. 70% of Ohio parents of young children missed work or class at least once in the past three months for child care reasons, and 33% of parents that experienced disruptions to their employment in the past year reported leaving the workforce as a direct result of child care issues. Finally, in 75% of states, child care now costs more than in-state university tuition.

The panelists also discussed the overall state of child care and early learning in Ohio, as well as the business and economic impact of the crisis in the Dayton region. The conference then concluded with breakout sessions and other panel discussions sharing data and best practices for attendees to take back to their respective states and communities.

## **Internet Gaming Bills Introduced in the House and Senate**

On May 14, SB 197 was introduced and had its first hearing in the new Senate Select Committee on Gaming. The bill sponsor is Senator Nathan Manning, and the bill would legalize internet gambling, permit internet lottery and online wagering on horse racing, and make various other changes to gambling laws. On May 20, HB 298 was introduced and had its first hearing in the House Finance Committee. The bill is sponsored by Representatives Brian Stewart and Marilyn John and focuses on legalizing internet gambling in Ohio. Both bills are actively receiving testimony.

## **Opposition to HB 199, UTVs on Public Roadways**

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce joined Honda, Nationwide, OMA, and others in opposition to HB 199. HB 199 would allow utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) on public roads, creating unsafe conditions that could increase liability for UTV manufacturers and dealers. The vast majority of UTVs lack essential safety features required for on-road vehicles, such as full doors, windshields, airbags, road-ready lighting, and high-pressure tires. Furthermore, HB 199 requires design changes to UTVs in Ohio that conflict with industry standards and which could also increase liability for Ohio businesses.

## **House Passes HCR 6 Supporting America 250-Ohio**

On May 21, the Ohio House unanimously passed House Concurrent Resolution 6, which recognizes and encourages the important work of the America 250-Ohio Commission. The Ohio Chamber of Commerce supports this resolution and the work of the Ohio Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial (also known as the America 250-Ohio Commission) in celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary. The work of the America 250-Ohio Commission is already underway and will continue to grow as we approach the landmark anniversary in 2026. It includes heritage tree plantings, Ohio Goes to the Movies, Trails and Tales, and more, and it engages all 88 Ohio counties. The results will connect citizens, educate students, encourage visitors, and help create a sense of place for Ohio, the Heart of It All, as a great place to visit, live and work.