

Jim Tressel, former Ohio State football coach, says he's considering run for governor

The news came one day before the Ohio Republican Party is set to endorse in the 2026 governor's race to replace Mike DeWine.

**By Jessie Balmert
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Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel, best known for leading Ohio State University football to a national championship, is considering a run for Ohio governor.

The news came one day before the [Ohio Republican Party is set to endorse](#) in the 2026 governor's race to replace Mike DeWine. Entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, who grew up near Cincinnati and lives in Upper Arlington, has already scored a coveted endorsement from President Donald Trump and is seeking the party's nomination, which requires support from two-thirds of members.

Tressel had been mum about his political future since [DeWine picked him to replace now-Sen. Jon Husted in February](#). He [told the statehouse bureau on April 17](#) that he hadn't thought about running for governor. That changed with a statement on May 8.

"What has been a surprise, and it has been humbling, is how many people are encouraging me to run for Governor," Tressel said in a statement, first reported by [NBC News](#) and obtained by the statehouse bureau. "I have not decided yet, but when I became lieutenant governor in February, (Tressel's wife) Ellen told me that it seemed like God had more work for me to do, and she was right."

"While I have not ruled out a run for Governor – and there will be a time in the future for those conversations – for now, I will remain focused on helping Ohioans get off the sidelines and into our workforce so they can reach their full potential," he said.

Tressel, 72, of Medina, was Ohio State University's head football coach from 2001 to 2010, leading the team to a national championship. He

later served as Youngstown State University president from 2014 to 2023.

If Tressel enters the race, he would face Ramaswamy, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost and Morgan County's Heather Hill. DeWine has urged members of the Ohio Republican Party to delay their endorsement.

Asked about Tressel's position, Yost said he welcomes competing ideas and policies. "It will sharpen me and my opponents, and ultimately, the people of Ohio will win."

Yost will forgo the Ohio GOP meeting on May 9 to attend the funeral of retired [Hamilton County law enforcement officer Larry Henderson, who was killed on May 2.](#)

"I believe this is the right thing to do (regardless of whether it is politically wise) and have so chosen my course," Yost said.