

# Ohio Republican Party endorses Vivek Ramaswamy for governor a year before 2026 primary

*Entrepreneur and former presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy won the Ohio Republican Party's endorsement a year before the 2026 primary*

**By Jessie Balmert**  
**Columbus Dispatch**

Entrepreneur and former presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy won the Ohio Republican Party's endorsement a year before the 2026 primary in a closed-door meeting on May 9.

Ramaswamy secured votes from at least two-thirds of the Ohio Republican Party's governing body to move forward with an endorsement – no small task this far ahead of the primary.

But Ramaswamy, an Evendale native and Upper Arlington resident, [had already secured key endorsements from President Donald Trump](#), Republican congressmen and state leaders. Donald Trump Jr. urged Republicans to stand with his father and endorse Ramaswamy despite a tradition of waiting.

The endorsement underscores Trump's power in the Ohio GOP and the waning influence of Gov. Mike DeWine, who tried to delay the vote.

"Let it be heard here that we support President Donald Trump, and we support Vivek Ramaswamy for governor," Ohio Republican Party Chairman Alex Triantafilou said.

The day before the meeting, Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel announced he was considering a bid, saying in a statement that he [had not ruled out a run for governor](#). But the move by the former Ohio State football coach wasn't enough to shake up the vote. No one nominated Tressel for the endorsement on May 9.

After scoring the endorsement, Ramaswamy quickly pivoted to talking about the November 2026 election, saying Republicans needed to expand the base Trump won by double digits in Ohio in 2024.

He said the endorsement spoke to “unprecedented unity” within the party. Only 13 Republicans voted against endorsing a candidate. Then, Ramaswamy won the final nod, 60-3.

“The way we’re running this campaign is really not about left versus right. It is about up versus down and we in Ohio choose up,” Ramaswamy said.

## **Ohio AG Dave Yost will consult with supporters on path forward**

Ramaswamy faces Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost and Morgan County resident Heather Hill in the Republican primary to replace DeWine, who cannot run again because of term limits.

Yost, in a statement, said he would “take a few days to consult with key supporters about the path forward — but the people of Ohio deserve a choice, not a premature coronation of an untested candidate.”

The winner of that primary will face the Democratic Party pick. Former Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Amy Acton is the sole Democrat in the race, though [former U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan](#) is reportedly considering a bid. Ryan was the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate in 2022. He lost to JD Vance, who is now vice president.

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, who is running for state auditor, argued that Republicans had to unite behind Ramaswamy now before a potentially challenging political year. “He is clearly the strongest candidate.”

## **Ohio Republican Party endorses Jon Husted for U.S. Senate**

The Ohio Republican Party's governing body also endorsed Sen. Jon Husted. The former lieutenant governor, who recently won President Donald Trump's endorsement, has no primary or Democratic challengers to date.

"When Republicans in Ohio unite, we win. This early and overwhelming support is a critical step on the road to victory," Husted said.

## **A contentious history of Ohio GOP endorsements**

The Ohio Republican Party's endorsement is a prize for the winner, but it is nearly always met with existential angst within a minority of the party's leadership. For those Republicans, coronating a candidate before GOP voters hit the polls is at odds with the populist message the party has embraced under President Donald Trump.

In 2016, [some Republicans railed against endorsing then-Gov. John Kasich for president](#), two months before the Ohio primary. Tea party activist Tom Zawistowski called the state central committee frauds, adding that "a real Republican state party would stay neutral."

In 2018, then-Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor sarcastically compared the Ohio Republican Party's endorsement meeting to her primary challenger Mike DeWine's living room. "The only thing missing is the ice cream and maybe a cookbook," [she said at the time](#).

DeWine won the party's endorsement in 2018 and again in 2022. But [the 2022 endorsement meeting was more contentious](#) as DeWine's team sought to woo Republican faithful [infuriated by the governor's approach to the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

The GOP primary three months later reflected that division as DeWine won a plurality, but not a majority, of Republican votes in a four-way race.

During the May 9 meeting, the debate about whether and who to endorse for Ohio governor took place in executive session, behind closed doors. Triantafilou said a public debate would empower their opponents.

"We think that public debate would help the Democrats, and we're here to elect Republicans," Triantafilou said.