DUANE MORRIS
GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

State of Ohio Policy Update

Weekly Government Affairs Report

Katie DeLand, Ohio Director

Week in Review

Monday, September 21, 2026

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General Andy Wilson announced Monday that James Cyphers will serve as the new executive director of the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA). "Jim is a proven leader with the knowledge and experience to guide OPOTA forward," Wilson said in a prepared statement. "Under his leadership, OPOTA will continue to set the standard for excellence in law enforcement training." A candidate for the OPOTA executive director position is recommended by the attorney general to the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission, whose members then vote to appoint the leader of the training academy.

The Ohio Attorney General's Office announced honorees from the 2026 Law Enforcement Training Symposium (LETS) held in Dayton -- a first. Hosted by the AG's Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA), the annual conference reinforced Ohio's new standard for law enforcement training that equips officers with tools and knowledge needed to serve communities effectively. Held Sunday-Tuesday, Sept. 13-15, LETS featured over 50 workshops led by experts from Ohio and beyond.

FY28-29 BUDGET

Budget submissions for the FY28-29 biennium from the smaller state agencies are due in less than a month under guidance released Tuesday from the Office of Budget and Management (OBM). OBM released its typical guidance documents while noting the fact that major decisions on how the requests translate into the executive proposal will be determined by the next administration. Under the guidance released Tuesday, due dates for budget submissions are as follows:
- Tuesday, Oct. 13: Requests due for licensing boards and commissions
- Friday, Oct. 23: Requests due for small to mid-size agencies
- Friday, Oct. 30: Requests due for cabinet agencies, executive agencies, legislative, judicial and statewide elected agencies

DISASTERS

The Controlling Board Monday approved several requests to provide disaster relief and pay for costs related to damage caused by the August storms, including a late addition added by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to spend $500,000 on individual assistance for families affected by the storms.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/URBAN REVITALIZATION

The Columbus Partnership announced that Corrine Burger, interim CEO since June, will get the permanent appointment to the role. Burger had a 34-year career with JPMorganChase and predecessor Bank One.
After Ohio was recognized over the summer as the "top state for business" by CNBC, the Columbus Metropolitan Club Wednesday brought together state, business and higher education leaders for a conversation focused on sustaining that economic momentum through workforce development. Moderated by WBNS-10 TV's Angela An, the panel discussion, "Building the Workforce behind the American Dream," featured Sen. Kyle Koehler (R-Springfield); David Harrison, president of Columbus State Community College; Sandra Rodriguez-Toledo, vice president of site operations for Amgen Ohio; and David White, vice president of talent strategy at One Columbus.

EDUCATION

The discipline, confidence, teamwork and other life skills that a child can learn through sports can often translate to the skills needed for success in life's other pursuits, according to a collection of Northeast Ohio educators at the City Club of Cleveland on Friday. But cultivating sports talent can often seem more straightforward than cultivating those skills in other walks of life. Under the monthly America 250-Ohio theme of "Ohio Plays: Sports & Wellness," educators discussed how proper access to education, coaching and other resources can prepare Ohio's kids for success, not just in athletics, but in the other kinds of competition today's students may face in the future, both in Ohio and on the global stage. Dr. Andrew McRae, CEO of Breakthrough Public Schools in Cleveland, said his public charter school system believes in the unbound capabilities of all kids and has committed to creating a baseline for all students to explore the opportunities around them in Cleveland and beyond, including building an alumni support network to expose current students to opportunities they may not learn of elsewhere.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OSHAA) announced this month that it was distributing over $1 million to its 815 member schools as part of the association's Athletic Enrichment Fund. OSHAA has sent $1,250 to each member high school's athletic department to assist with the costs of equipment, uniforms, game transportation, officials, and improving student sportsmanship and adult fan behavior.

The State Board of Education (SBOE) discussed Monday tweaks to an interim license for prospective teachers who've passed an educator preparation program (EPP) but haven't quite reached the cut score on the content knowledge exam, as well as parallel licenses for principals and school counselors.

English language arts proficiency rates rose statewide and across all student subgroups from the 2024-2025 academic year to 2025-2026, something Gov. Mike DeWine said Tuesday reflects the increased focus on literacy he has urged the past few years. DeWine and lawmakers have in recent years enacted requirements for school curriculum and teacher training programs to be aligned to what's known as the science of reading, a multi-faceted educational approach with a strong focus on phonics. The governor emphasized when speaking with reporters after an educational event Tuesday that the year being evaluated by the most recent report cards is the first in which science of reading initiatives were fully implemented.

The State Board of Education (SBOE) announced Wednesday it will receive an $8.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher and School Leader (TSL) grant program. The grant will go toward efforts to help district and charter schools address challenges related to recruitment, retention and effectiveness of licensed teachers, part of a three-year initiative called ELEVATE Ohio (Educator Leadership, Evaluation, Vision, Advancement, Talent and Excellence).

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) convened its regular public meeting Thursday morning, with officials providing updates on various projects underway throughout the state. DEW Director Stephen Dackin and DEW Chief Performance and Innovation Officer Chris Woolard recapped positive trends reflected in the state's school report cards released earlier this week. They highlighted increases in literacy and math proficiency rates as well as student attendance and workforce readiness demonstration.

A familiar face was the new face on Thursday at the meeting of the Broadcast Educational Media Commission (BEMC), as former legislator and Ohio Department of Higher Education Chancellor Randy Gardner attended his first BEMC meeting as commissioner since his appointment by Gov. Mike DeWine this summer. Gardner said he has a passion for BEMC's work, and with 33 years of experience between chambers in the Ohio Legislature, he offered his assistance to reach out to the General Assembly on relevant issues.

ELECTIONS 2026

Republican secretary of state candidate Robert Sprague said he'd accepted an invitation from Spectrum News for a debate. However, Democratic secretary of state candidate Allison Russo said she would be willing to debate provided Sprague is willing to admit Donald Trump lost the 2020 election.

Litigation filed Monday in the Ohio Supreme Court seeks to revive an argument overridden recently by Secretary of State Frank LaRose regarding Republicans' candidate for the 89th House District, Caleb Stidham. A Port Clinton resident filed the lawsuit to argue that district Republicans should have convened a public rather than closed-door meeting when they selected Stidham to replace Rep. D.J. Swearingen (R-Huron) as

the candidate.

U.S. Sen. Jon Husted's (R-OH) campaign has parted ways with its political director after reports surfaced of the staffer's use of social media. The Washington Post reported last week that Stephen Woytek, the 25-year old political director of the campaign hired in August, had once used a photo of SS soldiers as his Facebook profile photo and had added to a public playlist of songs celebrating Rhodesia, a White-minority ruled African nation that is now Zimbabwe that has been celebrated by White supremacists.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose recently broke a tie vote in favor of keeping former state senator and now Judge Nathan Manning on the November ballot to retain his current seat on the Ninth District Court of Appeals after his candidacy was challenged. Manning won the Republican nomination for the 52nd House District in May, but in July accepted an appointment from Gov. Mike DeWine to the Ninth District Court of Appeals, resigning his Senate seat and withdrawing from the ballot. In late August, a protest against Manning's candidacy was filed by Summit County Democratic Party Chair Mark Derrig with the Summit County Board of Elections, arguing that because Manning had won a primary election, he is ineligible to be nominated to run for a different seat in the November election.

Soon after LaRose broke the tie vote in favor of Manning's candidacy, Derrig filed a lawsuit in the Ohio Supreme Court to renew his challenge.

A day after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to lift a lower-court order blocking a new U.S. Postal Service rule addressing ballots sent and returned by mail, President Donald Trump slammed the decision and criticized justices, particularly those that he had appointed to the Court. The Court denied the emergency appeal Monday evening after a federal judge had blocked the rule. The Court last month overturned a ruling from the same judge blocking the rule, which stemmed from a March executive order signed by Trump, with the high court stating the challenge had come too early before the rule had been promulgated. After the U.S. Postal Service issued the rule, several states refiled their challenge, leading to the latest block on the rule.

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Amy Acton Tuesday said she would not invest or possess individual stocks at governor. "I will not allow special interests, corporations or billionaires to buy my state. I am calling on Vivek Ramaswamy to sell his individual stock and commit to not investing in data centers," said Acton in a statement. I do not own any individual stocks, and as governor I pledge to not invest in or possess individual stocks. Meanwhile, Vivek Ramaswamy has personally invested millions of dollars in data centers. If elected, he would continue to sell Ohio out. Ohioans deserve a governor who cares about making their lives better, not a billionaire who is only out for himself."

In the wake of the Ohio State Medical Association PAC endorsement of Republican gubernatorial nominee Vivek Ramaswamy, the campaign of Democratic nominee Amy Acton released an open letter signed by more than 1,000 physicians who support her. The effort, organized by Doctors for Dr. Amy Acton, said that the Ramaswamy endorsement was made by the PAC board acting under its independent authority and was not a vote of Ohio physicians or the group's membership as a whole.

A new poll released Wednesday by the Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Democracy and Public Policy Network gives slight leads to the Democrats in the Ohio governor and U.S. Senate races. In the governor's race, Democratic nominee Amy Acton leads Republican nominee Vivek Ramaswamy 48 percent to 45 percent, while U.S. Senate Democratic nominee Sherrod Brown leads U.S. Sen Jon Husted (R-OH) by the same 48 to 45 percent spread. Asked who they think will win, regardless of their own preferences, a majority said Ramaswamy will beat Acton (62 to 36 percent), and Husted will beat Brown (53 to 45 percent).

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Amy Acton outraised Republican Vivek Ramaswamy in August, according to campaign finance reports filed earlier this month, though Ramaswamy maintains a large cash advantage over Acton. The reports, the second of three additional monthly reports required to be filed by statewide candidates, showed Republicans in other races with a fundraising and cash advantage over their Democratic opponents. The reports did not show any spending.

Republican attorney general nominee Keith Faber Wednesday announced a plan to create a Public Integrity and Anti-Corruption Task Force focused on investigating corruption, prosecuting corrupt officials, and

recovering stolen taxpayer money. "Public office is a public trust, and no one should be above the law," Faber said. "If you steal from Ohio taxpayers, abuse your position, or put personal profit ahead of the people you serve, we will follow the money, build the case, and hold you accountable."

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Amy Acton Thursday said she supports a three-year moratorium on wastewater injection wells in Washington County. Acton's statement comes after the Statehouse News Bureau had reported that earlier this year the owners of four injection wells had voluntarily stopped their operations in the county at the request of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), which said the wells were suspected to be affecting nearby oil and gas wells.

The following endorsements were made over the week:
- NFIB Ohio PAC endorsed Mark Campbell, Christina Hagan, Cliff Winkel and Caleb Stidham for the Ohio House.
- The Ohio State Medical Association PAC endorsed Vivek Ramaswamy for governor.
- The campaign of Democratic attorney general nominee John Kulewicz announced the endorsement of the Columbus/Central Ohio Building & Construction Trades Council.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

The Office of Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) has been an independent state agency and residential customers' primary legal advocate to state regulators for five decades and celebrated its 50th birthday with government leaders, stakeholders, well-wishers and all five agency heads past and present. OCC spoke to *Hannah News* ahead of its Golden Anniversary on Tuesday, Sept. 15, when the statutory agency marked its creation in SB94 of the 111th General Assembly. The legislation was adopted by a bicameral Democratic majority under the late House Speaker Vern Riffe (D) and late Senate President Oliver Ocasek (D) to address mounting concerns over rising energy prices; signed by the late Republican Gov. James Rhodes; and made effective Sept. 1, 1976 in R.C. 4911.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) Thursday issued an order authorizing the change in control of AES Ohio. Upon closing of the transaction, AES Ohio will be jointly owned by Global Instructure Partners (a part of Blackrock, Inc.), EQT AB, Qatar Investment Authority, and California Public Employees' Retirement System. Astrid Holdings will retain its current 30 percent share of AES Ohio.

ENVIRONMENT

Almost 400 projects have been completed as part of Gov. Mike DeWine's H2Ohio Initiative to protect and improve water quality statewide following ribbon cuttings at two projects in the Lake Erie watershed this month. At the end of FY26, 378 total H2Ohio projects had been completed, though that number has increased since the summer

GAMING/GAMBLING

The Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC) met Wednesday morning, with Interim Executive Director Andromeda Morrison offering updates on the next budget cycle and a completed FY26 annual report.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Rep. Sharon Ray (R-Wadsworth) resigned from her 66th House District seat to be sworn in as Medina County recorder. She had previously announced she would not seek another term this year.

A challenge to Rep. Ismail Mohamed's (D-Columbus) voter registration was dismissed Monday after both sides stipulated that Mohamed had updated his voter registration to show a new address, but the attorney behind the complaint said he will be filing a new one. The *Columbus Dispatch* reported on the challenge to Mohamed's residency on Saturday. While he represents Ohio House District 3 in Franklin County, the challenge claimed he now lives in the city of Delaware. The newspaper, citing records from the Delaware

County Auditor's Office, reported Mohamed is receiving a homeowner occupancy credit for the Delaware home, which was purchased in October 2025.

GOVERNOR

Gov. Mike DeWine and Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel on Monday signed a proclamation declaring Friday, Sept. 25, 2026, as Dolly Parton Day to honor the late singer's life, legacy and generosity. Parton died on Aug. 25, 2026 of cancer. Ohio will join several other jurisdictions, including the Borough of Manhattan, the city of New Orleans, and several counties in Parton's native Eastern Tennessee to honor Parton on Sept. 25 (9/25), paying homage to the movie "9 to 5," in which she starred and for which she wrote the title song.

GREAT LAKES

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) has opened applications for the newest round of awards from the Lake Erie Grant Program, supporting projects to protect and improve environmental issues in the Lake Erie watershed. The Lake Erie Grant Program is powered by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help strengthen communities and fuel longterm environmental and economic resilience across the Lake Erie region, according to OLEC. Applications are due in this round of Lake Erie Grant Program funding by Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2026. Information about the grant application form, requesting an application, and submitting an application can be found HERE.

***HANNAH NEWS* RACES TO WATCH**

Seeking a second term since his return to the Statehouse, Rep. Mike Dovilla (R-Berea) said his experience as well as a key leadership role in the Ohio House is important for his district, county and region. Dovilla won the 17th House District in 2024 in an open seat, returning to the General Assembly after serving from 2011 to 2016. This time, he faces registered nurse and Olmstead City Councilwoman Megan Coy, who said she is concerned about health issues for the district and the state. The district, which covers the southwestern portion of Cuyahoga County, has a Republican lean. The Ohio Manufacturers Association (OMA) lists the district political index at 52.20 percent Republican lean, while Dave's Redistricting App gives it a 53.47 percent Republican lean. Dovilla defeated Democrat Jessica Sutherland in 2024 with 54.57 percent of the vote. President Donald Trump defeated Kamala Harris with 53.24 percent of the vote, while Gov. Mike DeWine carried 61.42 percent of the district in 2022.

It will take more than district realignment for Rep. Jim Thomas (R-Canton) or Democrat challenger Krista Allison to prevail this November in a 49th District House rematch after he beat her in a close race two years ago. Thomas has incumbency and Allison, the benefit of hindsight as they approach the General Election reboot in a district still +2.6 percent Republican following his 2022 win over former Rep. Thomas West (D-Canton), a three-term veteran who succumbed to redistricting.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The state recorded an infant mortality rate of 6.6 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2024, reflecting the lowest rate in a decade, Groundwork Ohio Managing Director of Policy Caitlin Feasby said Tuesday during a webinar that highlighted the state's progress while drawing attention to disparities that remain in regard to maternal and infant health. Held in part to recognize National Infant Mortality Awareness Month, the virtual conversation brought together infant and maternal health leaders representing Lucas, Montgomery, Franklin and Cuyahoga counties to discuss insights and recommendations developed through Ohio's Partner for Change initiative.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Ohio State University (OSU) Moritz College of Law and other university services will move into downtown Columbus, moving students, staff and faculty close to the city's legal, policy, civic and cultural crossroads, the university announced Monday.

In a survey released this summer by Scioto Analysis, 11 out of 14 state economists agreed that consolidating the number of Ohio universities would reduce long-term economic output in the state. The point of

agreement follows comments made earlier this year by Republican gubernatorial candidate Vivek Ramaswamy proposing that the consolidation of some of the state's public colleges and universities would improve higher education.

Ohio State University (OSU) should leverage its access-mission roots and its size to become the leading public institution in the nation, President Ravi Bellamkonda said Thursday in his first "State of the University" address since being elevated to the presidency. 'We will become the finest public university in the country, and that should be our goal, because our mission demands it," he said.

JUDICIAL

The Supreme Court of Ohio unanimously agreed Monday that it cannot order the Sandusky County Board of Elections to remove a suspended judge seeking reelection from the Nov. 3 general election ballot. In a per curiam opinion, the Supreme Court ruled that the board of elections correctly decided that under state law it could not permit a protest to the candidacy of Sandusky County Common Pleas Court Judge Jon Ickes. His opponent for the office filed a protest in August after Ickes won the Republican primary election in May. The Court also noted that the board, on its own, could not have considered removing Ickes from the ballot if the board found he was no longer qualified to hold office.

The Ohio Supreme Court announced Monday that judges, attorneys, law students and former mock trial competitors can now volunteer for the Scarlet & Gray Invitational organized by Ohio State University's (OSU) Mock Trial Club, which historically draws teams from around the Midwest. The judge registration form is HERE.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Sharon Kennedy marked "Constitution Day" and the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence Thursday in her fourth "State of the Judiciary" address to the Ohio Judicial Conference (OJC) by reflecting on two of its signers from opposite sides of the aisle who restored their relationship after years of political and personal acrimony. Celebrating its own 50th anniversary, OJC continued the tradition of hosting the "State of the Judiciary" at its fall meeting in the state capital, where Justices R. Patrick DeWine, Joe Deters, Dan Hawkins and Megan Shanahan joined the chief and former Justice Paul Pfeifer, OJC executive director, to welcome appellate, common pleas and municipal judges from across the state for the annual address.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) will once again bid safe travels to thousands of Ohio natives heading south for the winter during the third annual Headlands Birding Festival from Friday, Sept. 18-Sunday, Sept. 20, 2026 at Headlands Beach State Park and surrounding areas. The three-day event celebrates the journey of more than 350 bird species that are native to the Headlands/Mentor Marsh Region as they begin the sojourn to their winter homes, some as far away as South America.

OHIO HISTORY

In line with America 250-Ohio's theme for September, "Ohio Plays: Sports and Wellness," the commission has sponsored a series of events to celebrate the state's contributions to sports history and encourage Ohioans to stay active. The full list of September sports and wellness events can be found HERE.

PEOPLE

Four Ohioans -- Denise York, Les Wexner, Mike Brown and August Troendle -- and their families were in the recent "Forbes 400" list identifying the richest Americans via direct interviews and Forbes' review of financial documents and filings.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The debate over public mass surveillance is ratcheting up this week as a bipartisan group of lawmakers put forward legislation halting state and local government use of cameras propagated by Flock Group, Inc. and others. Attorney General Andy Wilson followed Wednesday with a public statement backing state and local

deployment of automated monitoring devices and rejecting their reputation as "tools of surveillance." The legislation, HB1010 (Dean) defines "mass surveillance" as any "technology or device designed primarily to monitor, record, capture or analyze the movements, activities, associations or identifying characteristics of an individual in public spaces, including cameras, sensors, biometric identification systems, facial recognition systems and gait recognition systems." Wilson responded Wednesday in a 330-word statement on Flock camera use by law enforcement. "Law enforcement relies on technology, and Ohioans rely on law enforcement to leverage technology to society's benefit," he says.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Office of Criminal Justice Services announced $5 million in new grant funding for law enforcement body cameras. The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) opened the application period for the sixth round of the Body-Worn Camera Grant Program. Funded by the biennial budget, it has provided nearly $24 million to more than 400 local jurisdictions for equipment, video storage, editing software, public record management, maintenance, and associated expenses since its 2021 launch. The OCJS grant portal, found HERE, is accepting funding proposals through Thursday, Oct. 7 at 5 p.m.

Ohio Preparedness Month is upon us, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) says, making September the perfect time for public awareness, education and "essential strategies" to prepare for emergencies, disasters and other unforeseen circumstances. Preparedness Month, observed nationally and state by state, gives residents pause to consider their specific needs and how best to "Prepare Your Family," September's 2026 theme.

The DeWine administration honored 26 Ohioans for their service to the nation and their communities at the annual Ohio Patriot Awards Ceremony, held in recognition of the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, Pentagon and downed United Airlines Flight 93 in Shanksville, PA. The Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) recognized law enforcement, veterans, justice leaders and safety professionals at the ceremony.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary of State Frank LaRose Thursday announced the launch of several security-enhanced payment options for customers doing business with his office. LaRose said the new tools are being offered as part of a major payment modernization initiative announced in early 2026, allowing Ohioans to use the latest financial technology platforms to pay for fees and services with the secretary of state's office. The new system allows customers to pay using credit cards, Apple Pay, Google Pay, or cryptocurrency.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) met Thursday, hearing a report from OFCC Executive Director Joy Bledsoe on activity in August. Bledsoe said it was "a very busy month" with 40 OFCC contracts worth over $84 million in construction work across all agency programs. That brings them to 281 projects either in design or construction, representing nearly $5.05 billion in economic activity around Ohio.

TAXATION

County auditors said Wednesday they found a $39 million discrepancy between the property tax credits homeowners received under HB186 (Hoops-D. Thomas) and what school districts were reimbursed to offset the effects of those credits. They are urging the General Assembly to take emergency action on the issue in lame duck session. Rep. David Thomas (R-Jefferson), joint sponsor of HB186, told *Hannah News* he wants to address the issue. Discrepancies could have arisen from schools that had a levy drop off or otherwise lost revenue elsewhere, he said. "That should not have happened. We'll be looking at the language to clarify intent," he wrote.

TECHNOLOGY/AEROSPACE

Former U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan was named as one of 20 commissioners on the National Commission on AI and the Future of the American Workforce, co-chaired by former U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo and former U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan. The commission will examine how artificial intelligence is reshaping the American workforce and develop policy recommendations to help workers, businesses, and communities

navigate the economic changes ahead.

Gov. Mike DeWine said he'd like to see national and ideally international standards for AI safety after attending a ribbon cutting where artificial intelligence is being used to help students at LifeTown, a simulated city center designed by special education professionals to help students learn to navigate daily experiences from street safety to banking and consumer transactions. At LifeTown Columbus, DeWine was one of several speakers on the debut of Mia the AI Super Buddy. Mia converses with students with an approach called "mirror learning," where she tells the students about problems she's having, giving them the opportunity to tell her what they've learned about solving such problems. In a simulated conversation with a visiting student Tuesday, Mia said she was supposed to complete a book report but instead spent her time drawing, asking the student for advice on getting started with her school work.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Wednesday recommended the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission (OTIC) move away from a blend of electronic tolling and manual payments to fully electronic payments, saying a 2024 crash could have been avoided if the turnpike had done so previously. NTSB issued its report on the Aug. 15, 2024, crash at the Swanton Township Toll Plaza on the turnpike.

[Story originally published in The Hannah Report. Copyright 2026 Hannah News Service, Inc.]