

Ohio Marine Trades Association  
and Government Advantage Group

# LEGISLATIVE REPORT

NOVEMBER 2025



## **Military Discounts at Parks – Passes Senate**

Legislation from Senator Tom Patton, [Senate Bill 223](#), would require the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft Chief to create a discount program offering reduced rates on state park services and rentals for veterans and active-duty service members. Under the bill the discount would be at least 25%.

The discount would not apply to merchandise purchases. Services discounted could include dock rentals and fees. This bill is supported by veteran's groups. It unanimously passed the Ohio Senate on October 22, 2025, and will now be considered by the Ohio House. During testimony before the House Natural Resources Committee, the sponsor indicated ODNR has estimated a budget impact of about \$585,000.

## **Constitutional Amendment Proposal**

Senator Steve Huffman has proposed [Senate Joint Resolution 8](#) to make hunting and fishing a Constitutional right in Ohio. SJR 8 would start the process of going to the ballot. Legislators cannot solely change the State Constitution. However, they can pass a resolution to take an issue directly to the ballot for a citizen vote. SJR 8 is being considered by the Senate General Government Committee. A sponsor hearing was held on November 4, 2025. Representatives Ron Ferguson and Nick Santucci are sponsoring a companion measure in the House, [House Joint Resolution 1](#). Hearing have not been held on HJR 1 since March.

## **Congressional Redistricting**

On October 31, 2025, Ohio's bipartisan Redistricting Commission unanimously approved a compromise congressional map for the 2026, 2028, and 2030 elections, The new boundaries provide Republicans with a modest advantage shifting the current 10-5 split to a projected 12-3 by making Democratic held seats in Cincinnati (Rep. Greg Landsman) and Toledo (Rep. Marcy Kaptur) more competitive for the GOP, while bolstering the Akron district for Rep. Emilia Sykes.

## **SJR 8 (Huffman) – 2nd Hearing (Proponent Testimony)**

The joint resolution proposes adding a new Section 23 to Article I of the Ohio Constitution to establish a constitutional right to hunt and fish. If passed by the legislature, the issue would need to be placed on the ballot for a vote by all Ohioans.

Proponents testified that the amendment would:

- Protect and preserve Ohioans' traditional right to hunt and fish by placing it in the state's highest law.
- Ensure continued access to outdoor recreation and support wildlife/habitat conservation.
- Allow Ohio voters to permanently safeguard these activities.

Proponents at the hearing included the NRA, American Sportfishing Association, the Midwestern States Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and others.

## **Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced a milestone for the H2Ohio program: a record 2.5 million acres of farmland are now enrolled statewide, including more than 2 million acres (over 50% of all cropland) in northwest Ohio's Western Lake Erie Basin.**

Key points:

- 95% of previous participants re-enrolled or expanded their acreage.
- 16% growth in new producers, with nearly 300 first-time enrollees.
- Farmers are estimated to be preventing ~550,000 pounds of phosphorus from entering waterways this year through voluntary best management practices.

Launched in 2019, H2Ohio is a science-driven initiative that pays farmers incentives to adopt proven conservation practices that reduce nutrient runoff, improve soil health, and help prevent harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie and other Ohio waters. Participation requires a Voluntary Nutrient Management Plan developed with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Governor DeWine and ODA Director Brian Baldrige praised Ohio farmers—especially in northwest Ohio—for their strong, ongoing commitment, calling the 2.5 million-acre benchmark “proof that farmers are invested in the health of our water and soil.”

## **Long Stalled Marijuana Law Changes Move Forward**

The Ohio Senate had passed [Senate Bill 56](#) in February, 2025 that makes changes to the recreational marijuana law passed by voters in 2023. The bill as passed by the Senate did things such as modifying THC limits and the number of plants that can be “home grown”. The bill also tightened provisions regarding public use.

The House considered the bill for some time. They had intended to pass legislation prior to the summer recess, however, negotiations between the House and the Senate reached a stalemate. This stalemate was not only regarding marijuana provisions, but how to incorporate law changes regarding consumable hemp products. On October 8, 2026, the Governor issues an emergency order essentially banning hemp products in the state. While the order has not ultimately gone into effect because of court challenge, the House did reengage in negotiations on the topic. They passed their version of legislation on October 22, 2025.

The Senate chose not to concur on the House changes, setting up a conference committee on the issue. One of the last matters to be tackled, late into the evening of November 19th, was for the conference committee to accept a final version. The House then approved the conference report, however, the Senate had already adjourned. They plan to act on the conference report on December 9th.

Regarding marijuana public use, SB 56 generally prohibits public smoking or vaping of marijuana and only allows the use on privately owned real property that is used primarily for residential purposes. Regarding hemp, the bill generally bans products in line with language enacted by the federal government in the bill to end the government shutdown. The bill does treat hemp beverages differently and allows the sale limited hemp beverages through the end of 2026.

## Youth Employment Bill Sent to Governor

Senator Tim Schaffer's legislation regarding youth employment, [Senate Bill 50](#), would allow those under 16 to be employed after 7pm during school year. It would state that with a parent or guardian's permission, those under 16 could work until 9pm. SB 50 passed the Ohio Senate by a vote of 24-9 and passed the Ohio House by a vote of 60-30. Proponents include the NFIB Ohio and the Ohio Restaurant and Hospitality Alliance. The bill has been delivered to the Governor for signature.

## 2026 Minimum Wage

Because of a voter passed initiative several years ago, Ohio's minimum wage is adjusted annual based on inflation. In 2026, the minimum wage increases to \$11 per hour for non-tipped employees and \$5.50 per hour for tipped workers.