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Republican Think Tank Leader Matt Mayer Says He's Running for Ohio Governor in 2026

By Laura Bischoff



officeholders such as Lt. Gov. Jon Husted and Attorney General Dave Yost. Gov. Mike DeWine cannot run again because of term limits.

Mayer holds a bachelor's degree from University of Dayton and law degree from Ohio State University.

Matt Mayer would be the first to tell you that he's a data and policy nerd and he doesn't like Ohio's numbers.

Outside the Columbus and Cincinnati areas, the job losses over the past two decades have been staggering and rural areas have seen an exodus of residents in the past 10 years. Mayer stabs his finger at color maps and charts and says "I'm just fed up. Things have got to change."

Mayer, 51, of Dublin, decided he's the guy to make the changes. A Republican, Mayer is announcing that he's running for [Ohio governor in 2026](#).

Mayer ran the Buckeye Institute for two years and currently heads [Opportunity Ohio](#) – two conservative-leaning think tanks.

He pledges to focus on nearly two dozen agenda items, that he says will improve Ohio's trajectory.

What does he want to do? Make Ohio a right-to-work state, ramp up regulatory reforms, freeze state spending, eliminate the state income tax, get rid of JobsOhio, put a 20-year limit on holding all state offices, and cut the pay of the governor and lawmakers and replace it with a pay-for-performance system.

If Mayer stays in the race, he may face well-known Republican