

The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Ohio Statehouse, a large neoclassical building with a prominent portico supported by tall columns. An American flag flies on a tall pole in front of the building. The sky is clear and blue. On the left side of the image, there is a dark blue vertical band with a white geometric pattern of interlocking hexagons.

WELCOME TO THE

2025 Ohio Employment Law & Legislative Conference

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Ohio

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Renaissance Hotel | Columbus, OH

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MARGARET W. WONG
& ASSOC. CO., LPA
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



MARTIN BROWNE
MARTIN, BROWNE, HULL & HARPER PLL

Welcome!

To the 2025 Ohio SHRM State Council's Annual Employment Law + Legislative Conference!

The **2025 Ohio SHRM State Council's annual Employment Law + Legislative Conference** is finally here, and we're thrilled that you decided to join us. You'll have the opportunity to obtain up-to-the-minute intelligence and meet with key policymakers. Our schedule is complete, and you'll find it both in this program and on the conference app.

Thank you to our over 20 speakers including Ohio Senate and House Members and key policymakers. We value your expertise and commitment to serving our industry.

Highlights of our schedule include:

- Full programming from 1pm to 5pm on Tuesday
- Tonight's Legislative Reception
- Full programming from 8am to 4pm which includes a tour of the Ohio Statehouse

The conference has been pre-approved for 14.5 SHRM Professional Development Credits (PDCs) and an equal number of recertification credits from the HR Certification Institute. Further, 11.0 of those credits should be eligible for CLE.

This program contains the schedule and information on our speakers and your conference recertification information will be sent to you – by email – shortly after the completion of the conference.

Thank you again for attending the **2025 Ohio SHRM State Council's annual Employment Law + Legislative Conference**. Please remember to complete the session surveys (using the conference app) and to tweet about your experience using **#OHSHRMLEG**



CECILIA VOCKE

MS, SHRM-SCP, SPHR
Director, Ohio SHRM State Council

Cecilia A. Vocke



TONY FIORE *Tony Fiore*

Director, Government Affairs
Attorney, Kegler, Brown Hill + Ritter



LYNN KERNYA *Lynn Kernya*

Director, Human Resources
City of Avon Lake

WELCOME from the OHIO SHRM STATE COUNCIL!

Thank you for attending the **2025 Ohio SHRM State Council's annual Employment Law + Legislative Conference**. This event is organized around legislative advocacy efforts and provides opportunities to both learn and influence workplace policies and regulations at all levels of government. It is also an opportunity to network with your peers and stay on top of topics and trends.

The Ohio SHRM State Council is a non-profit organization and an affiliate of The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the world's largest HR Professional society with over 300,000 members in more than 165 countries.

Our membership is made up of volunteer leaders who are elected or appointed to The Council and includes local SHRM affiliated chapters in our state. The Council is dedicated to leading, educating, and inspiring thousands of HR professionals in our states.

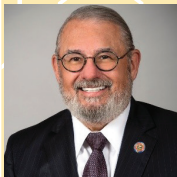
We also serve to make an impact on our local communities by giving back and making HR visible by participating in community events and activities. Visit the Council website ohioshrm.org for more information.

Of course, we couldn't plan and execute the conference without the efforts of Tony Fiore and Lynn Kernya. Thank you for your hard work and expertise in planning a top-notch event.

Thank you again for attending the **2025 Ohio SHRM State Council's annual Employment Law + Legislative Conference**. We hope that you will take away ideas with real-world applications while directly engaging with policymakers.

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Speakers



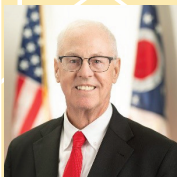
The Honorable Jamie Callender

State Representative Jamie Callender is currently serving his eight term in the Ohio House of Representatives having previously served in the Ohio House between 1997 and 2004. He represents the 57th House District, which includes much of eastern Lake County as well as Kirtland, Kirtland Hills, and Waite Hill. In addition to being chair of the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review, a committee he has chaired since returning to the legislature in 2019, Callender also serves on the House Finance and Judiciary committees as well as representing Ohio on the Great Lakes Commission



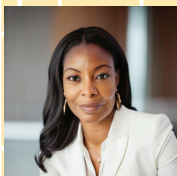
Rick Carfagna

Rick serves as Senior Vice President of Government Affairs for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. In this position, he is responsible for leading the Chamber's legislative team and overseeing the Chamber's public policy agenda. Carfagna formerly served three terms in the Ohio House of Representatives, representing the eastern half of Delaware County and all of Knox County. His tenure included a role in House leadership as Assistant Majority Floor Leader, where he helped develop and implement the majority caucus' policy agenda. He also spent time as Chair of the House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education and as Vice-Chair of the House Public Utilities Committee. He also had measures enacted that combat human trafficking, stabilize mental health emergencies, provide customer protections to parents of children in daycare, and provide greater access to, and emphasis on, computer science offerings in K-12 education.



Stephen Dackin

Preparing students for success means understanding the connections between the classroom, real-world experiences, and the knowledge, skills, and opportunities needed for a bright future. With more than 40 years working in multiple educational settings, Stephen D. Dackin has amassed extensive experience in state education policy, instructional leadership, postsecondary education, and workforce readiness.



Emily Dickens

Emily M. Dickens is Chief of Staff, Head of Government Affairs, and Corporate Secretary for SHRM. An executive team member, Dickens is responsible for implementing the CEO's vision, corporate communications, corporate governance, global policy, government affairs, and the organization's real property.



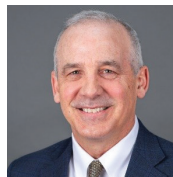
Brendan Feheley

In nearly two decades of practice, Brendan has established himself as one of the foremost employment law attorneys in Ohio. He works closely with HR professionals to manage their daily operations, with in-house counsel to adapt and protect workforce policy frameworks, and with business owners to create and sustain people-focused strategies that help their businesses flourish.



Tony Fiore

Tony has been advocating for the interests of the business community for two decades, with a particular passion for working with businesses on legislative issues and with trade associations that breed industry synergy and drive economic growth. A lobbyist, innovator, and visionary leader, he founded the firm's 50-State Lobbying Compliance practice, devoted to working with business executives and in-house lobbyist teams to remain compliant with their regulatory and lobbying registration obligations nationwide.



House Speaker Matt Huffman

State Representative Matt Huffman proudly serves the 78th Ohio House District and resides in Lima. At the beginning of the 136th General Assembly, he was unanimously elected Speaker of the Ohio House after previously serving as Senate President in the 135th General Assembly. He is the first elected official in modern history to preside over both the Ohio Senate and the Ohio House of Representatives on the same day.



The Honorable Stephen Huffman

Senator Huffman is serving his second term in the Ohio Senate, representing the people of the 5th Senate District, which includes all of Miami and Preble counties in addition to portions of Butler, Darke and Montgomery counties. He joins the Senate after two terms in the Ohio House from 2015-2018. He also was elected and served as Miami County Coroner from 2012-2015.



The Honorable Latyna Humphrey

Representative Latyna M. Humphrey was born in Columbus, Ohio and attended Columbus East High School. She earned an Associate of Arts degree from Columbus State Community College and attended Franklin University and sought a Bachelor of Science in applied psychology from Franklin University.



Denise Johnson

Denise Johnson, Administrative Law Judge, Ohio Civil Rights Commission - Denise M. Johnson has held the position of Chief Administrative Law Judge for the Ohio Civil Rights Commission since May of 2005. The Ohio Civil Rights Commission enforces Ohio's anti-discrimination laws, charged with the responsibility of eliminating discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, credit, and discrimination against the disabled by an educational institution. Ms. Johnson received her law degree from Capital University Law School. She is a member of the Ohio bar and has been licensed to practice in federal court. The positions that she has held during her legal career include the following: In-house Counsel for Huntington National Bank, Chief of the Civil Rights Section of the Attorney General's Office, Staff Attorney for the Attorney General's Office in both the Civil Rights and the Charitable Foundations Sections. Ms. Johnson has conducted numerous trainings for private and public sector employers on employment discrimination law. She is a member of the Ohio State Bar Association.

**Rob McColley**

Senator Rob McColley was unanimously elected President of the Ohio Senate in January of 2025, and will preside over the Upper Chamber during the 136th General Assembly. President McColley began serving in Senate after being appointed in December 2017. He represents the 1st Senate District, which includes Defiance, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Fulton, Paulding, Putnam, Van Wert, and Williams counties, as well as part of Logan county. He was elected by his Senate colleagues to serve as Senate Majority Floor Leader for the 135th General Assembly.

**Lynn Kernya**

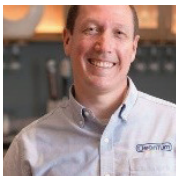
Lynn Kernya is the Human Resources Director for the City of Avon Lake, where she leads with a deep passion for enhancing employee experience while ensuring full legal compliance across all areas. She brings a strategic and hands-on approach to advising executives on HR and compliance initiatives. Her experience spans union and non-union environments and a variety of industries, providing the versatility to lead effectively in diverse organizational settings. Lynn also enjoys consulting for her clients through her own LLC, Kernya & Associates, and she teaches graduate classes at Baldwin-Wallace University. Lynn holds her BA and MBA from Baldwin-Wallace and her Juris Doctorate from Cleveland Marshall College of Law. She resides in Medina with her son John, her partner Scott, and their 22 pets.

**Jade Robinson**

Ms. Robinson is an associate in Eastman & Smith's Labor & Employment and Workers' Compensation Practice Groups. Ms. Robinson went to the University of Cincinnati for law school wherein she was a fellow at the Nathaniel R. Jones Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice where her focus was corporate diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

**Vernise Robinson**

Vernise Robinson serves as the Workforce Development Administrator for the Ohio Central School System within the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Ms. Robinson's responsibilities are establishing partnerships with employers, working with incarcerated individuals and the creation of their resumes as well as creating workforce opportunity.

**Josh Rush**

John Rush, Founder/CEO, Clean Turn - John Rush the Founder & CEO of CleanTurn, Third Way Coffee House, 180 Demo and Rush Real Estate Holdings. John is a social entrepreneur with a distinct focus on changing the paradigm of how we think about the relationship between business and the social sector. After serving as a Sergeant in the US Marine Corps, John devoted his career on building small businesses designed to provide supportive employment and housing for individuals with significant barriers to employment. Generating over \$20m in economic impact and creating over 5,000 supportive employment opportunities, John and the teams he has been a part of have demonstrated the business and social service sectors do not need to operate in silos.

**Kevin Shimp**

Kevin Shimp focuses his practice on government affairs at the Ohio Statehouse with a particular emphasis on technology, education, and business issues including insurance law, workers' compensation, and employment law. In addition, Kevin advocates for policy changes before the Governor's Office and state executive agencies, assists clients facing regulatory enforcement actions, and provides association management services to small and mid-size trade organizations.

**Cecilia Vocke**

Cecilia Vocke is a seasoned Human Resources leader with over 30 years of experience in HR leadership roles. Known for her customer-focused approach and deep industry expertise, Cecilia is a trusted business partner and strategic problem solver to the clients and organizations she serves.

**Lance Watkins**

Lance has worked in the Ohio workers' compensation industry for 32 years. He began in 1993 with third party administration for state-funded employers, and was involved in underwriting, group rating, claims management, and both claim and policy/administrative hearings before the Industrial Commission and BWC Adjudicating Committee.

**Scott Weisand**

Scott has over 38 years' experience in the field of workers' compensation, including claims management, hearing representation, account management, sales and multiple areas of leadership. Scott has been with Sedgwick for over 13 years in sales and sales leadership.

**Margaret Wong**

Margaret W. Wong, an award-winning practicing immigration lawyer, born in Hong Kong, is founder and managing partner of Margaret W. Wong & Associates, LLC, with offices in nine cities, including Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Nashville, New York, and Raleigh. Margaret W. Wong is celebrating her fortieth year and the beginning of her fifth decade in immigration and nationality law, and legal practice management.

**The Honorable Josh Williams**

State Representative Josh Williams is an incredible example of the power of persistence, hope, and determination. He went from a homeless high school dropout to an attorney, but there were a lot of challenges and obstacles along the way. After dropping out of high school, he went to work to support his young son. He was hurt on the job after falling 30 feet and was disabled for six years because of a serious back injury. Josh credited a change in his mindset as motivation to overcome his injury. He dedicated to stop looking at himself as a victim of his circumstances. Josh says his mindset went from "Why Me?" to "Why Not Me?"

**James Yates**

James B. Yates represents public and private sector employers in all facets of labor and employment law. He is a Society for Human Resource Management Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP). A member of Eastman & Smith, Mr. Yates's practice encompasses collective bargaining, general personnel planning and counseling, equal employment opportunity matters, workers' compensation and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

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Schedule

TUESDAY, MAY 20

11:00am	Registration Opens	All presentations will be on the 2 nd floor in Hayes D.
1:00pm	Welcome & Introduction	Lynn Kernya & Tony Fiore
1:05pm	Statehouse Update: Employment Law Bills Pending in Ohio Statehouse	Kevin Shimp
2:05pm	Securing an Efficient Workers' Comp Program	Scott Weisand, Lance Watkins
3:05pm - 3:15pm	Break	
3:15pm	Addressing Workforce Shortages Through Second Chance Hiring	The Honorable Josh Williams, The Honorable Latyna Humphrey, Vernise Robinsion, Josh Rush
4:15pm	Recreational Marijuana is Legal... But Changes May Be on the Horizon	The Honorable Jamie Callender, The Honorable Stephen Huffman, Cecilia Vocke, James Yates
5:30pm	Legislative Reception	

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21

7:00am	Registration Opens + Breakfast	All presentations will be on the 2 nd floor in Hayes D.
8:00am	Terminating with Tact: Legal Considerations for Management	Brendan Feheley
9:00am	Education Policy Changing at the State + Federal Level - What Impact Will They Have on Connecting Ohio's Workforce to Employers	Stephen Dackin, Rick Carfagna
10:00am - 10:10am	Break	
10:10am	What HR Professionals Need to Know About Immigration in 2025	Margaret Wong
11:10am	Employment Law Uniformity Act (ELUA): OCRC Intake & Investigative Process	Denise Johnson
12:10pm - 12:30pm	Lunch	
12:30pm	The State of DEI	Jade Robinson
1:30pm	Ohio Statehouse	The Honorable Rob McColley, The Honorable Matt Huffman
3:00pm	School House Rock: Civics, Policy, & Compliance for HR Professionals	Emily Dickens
4:00pm	Conference Concludes	

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All Aboard!



The HR Conference CruiseSM March 7-12 2026

Join Us!

The HR Conference CruiseSM will depart from Port Canaveral, FL from March 7-12 2026 on Royal Caribbean's *Explorer of the Seas*.

We will have **FOUR** pre-conference webinars and **TEN** onboard sessions.

Two ports of call:
Cozumel & Costa Maya,
Mexico.

DON'T miss out and
register **TODAY!**

SCHEDULED SPEAKERS



DIANE ALLEN



BLAKE BABCOCK



JULIE DEVELIN



JADE FERNANDEZ



JILL KOPANIS



CURTIS LEWIS



JAMES REID



DENEEN LESTER



CHAD SORENSON



BRUCE WALLER



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SAVE THE DATE!

2025 OHRC

September 24-26, 2025

Kalahari Resort, Sandusky, OH

**Announcing our
Confirmed Speakers:**

Val Grubb

Austin J. Franklin

Benjamin McCall

Register TODAY!

