

LEGALLY Speaking

VOLUME 49 | ISSUE 6

DATA CENTER TAX BREAK PAUSED

Legislators face rising pressure around data centers in Ohio.

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OHIO AG RESIGNS

DeWine appoints Andy Wilson as AG replacement in advance of general elections this November.

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CJIS NEGOTIATION SENT TO MEDIATION BY SCO

The Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) is the county's joint effort to combine the databases of four courts into a single, searchable website. It is an invaluable tool used by the judicial system, law enforcement, and the public alike. Recently, the future maintenance of the site has been uncertain as the county commissioners negotiate a new contract, leading to disputes among the commissioners and county judges.

CJIS was formed through grants awarded to the Commissioners in 1996. It was originally built and maintained by the Stark County Clerk of Courts with



support from the county's IT department, including county employee Chris Yates. When Yates left the county in 2009, he formed Yates Consulting and entered into his first contract with the Stark County

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CLE

Divorces with Domestic/Family Violence

Thursday, June 4, 2026
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM
Ohio Means Jobs Summit County
1040 Tallmadge Ave
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Free
2 hrs General Conduct, 0.5 hrs Professionalism

Register: <https://communitylegalaidsservicesinc-bloom.kindful.com/e/divorces-with-domesticfamily-violence-thursday>

Summertime Technology - AI & Cybersecurity

Wednesday, June 17, 2026
12:00 - 1:00 PM

Webinar
\$30
1 hr

Register: <https://starkctybar.com/event/the-summertime-technology-luncheon-webinar-series-session-1-ai-cybersecurity/>

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Commissioners. These contracts included the hosting and maintenance of CJIS and have continued to be renewed over the years, with the most recent contract taking effect on November 8, 2023.

During the term of the most recent contract, in July 2024, CJIS experienced a data breach. This data breach became the catalyst for the county's IT department to create a Third-Party Vendor Management Policy, which was later adopted by the County Data Board. This policy outlines minimum security requirements for all vendors and contractors that store, handle, or manage county data.

This policy is now the primary point of contention preventing the renewal of the contract with Yates Consulting. Yates disagrees with some of the requirements of the Third-Party Vendor Management Policy and has requested exceptions to portions of it. The County Data Board has maintained that Yates Consulting must comply with the policy. While negotiations continued, the contract with Yates Consulting, which expired in November 2025, was extended three times.

The most recent deadline for reaching an agreement was May 1, 2026. After continued unsuccessful negotiations, the contract was allowed to expire on that date, with no further extension offered. At its May 6, 2026 meeting, the Board officially recognized the expiration of the contract and issued a demand for the

return of county property, passwords, and operational control of the CJIS system. The resolution states that the goal is for this transition to occur without disrupting CJIS operations.

The following day, May 7, 2026, the judges of the Stark County Court of Common Pleas General Division and Family Division, the Alliance Municipal Court, the Canton Municipal Court, and the Massillon Municipal Court issued a Miscellaneous Journal Entry titled "In Re: Order Staying May 6, 2026 Resolution Regarding CJIS." This order reversed the demand to return county property and effectively extended the contract until an agreement could be reached. It also referenced an extension deadline that had been offered to Yates Consulting by the Clerk of Courts but was not approved by the Board. The judges stated that CJIS is necessary for the operation of their courts and should continue uninterrupted while contract negotiations continue.

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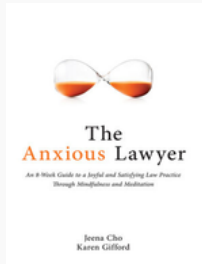


Find the Supreme Court of Ohio Case Announcement Here:

<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/Clerk/ecms/#/caseinfo/2026/0597>

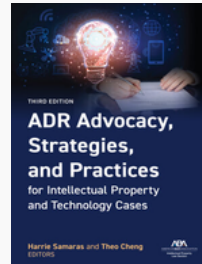
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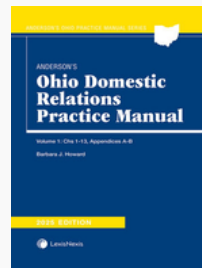
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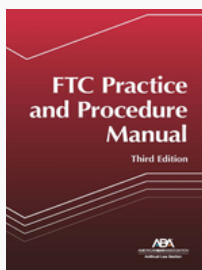
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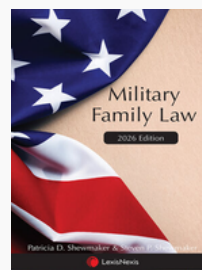
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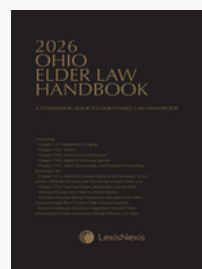
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AG YOST RESIGNS, ANDY WILSON APPOINTED

Attorney General Dave Yost announced in early May that he will resign as Ohio's Attorney General effective June 7, 2026. He is leaving to take a position with Alliance Defending Freedom, a Christian conservative legal organization. This move comes after an unsuccessful attempt to gain support of the Republican Party in his bid for Ohio governor, which he ended late last year.

Several days later, Governor Mike DeWine announced his decision to appoint Andy Wilson as Ohio's next Attorney General. Wilson is currently serving as the director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. He has experience as a county prosecutor, as well as serving on DeWine's Governor's Warrant Task Force. Wilson will assume the role of Attorney General in early June.



DEWINE PAUSES DATA CENTER TAX BREAK

Data centers have become a significant topic of discussion in Ohio in recent months. Across the state, residents, local officials, businesses, and policymakers have debated the potential benefits and impacts of data center development. A grassroots organization is currently working to place a statewide data center ban on the ballot, while state officials continue to evaluate Ohio's approach to attracting technology investment.



One reason Ohio has remained attractive to data center developers is a sales tax exemption available to qualifying facilities. To receive the exemption, data centers must make capital investments of at least \$100 million over a three-year period. When the exemption was created, it was projected to cost the state approximately \$136 million. Recent reporting, however, estimates its actual cost may be closer to \$1.6 billion. Following questions about the exemption's fiscal impact, Governor Mike DeWine announced a temporary pause on new applications for the tax exemption.

The exemption has faced legislative review before. In 2025, the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation that would have ended the exemption, but Governor DeWine vetoed the bill and efforts to override the veto were unsuccessful.

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On May 13, 2026, a Complaint for Writ of Prohibition was filed by the Stark County Commissioners with the Ohio Supreme Court. In the filing, Stark County Prosecutor Kyle Stone, representing the Commissioners, asked the Court to prohibit enforcement of the Miscellaneous Journal Entry. The Commissioners requested permission to proceed with the transition of CJIS back to county control and asked the Court to prohibit further journal entries intended to achieve the same result.

The case was referred to mediation by the Court on May 19, 2026, pursuant to Rule 19.01. All filing deadlines were stayed, and the Court will not rule until mediation has concluded.

Currently, CJIS continues to be maintained by Yates Consulting and is operating as normal while the parties work through court ordered mediation. It is clear that both parties have an interest in the continued operation of CJIS. We will provide updates as information regarding the mediation becomes available.

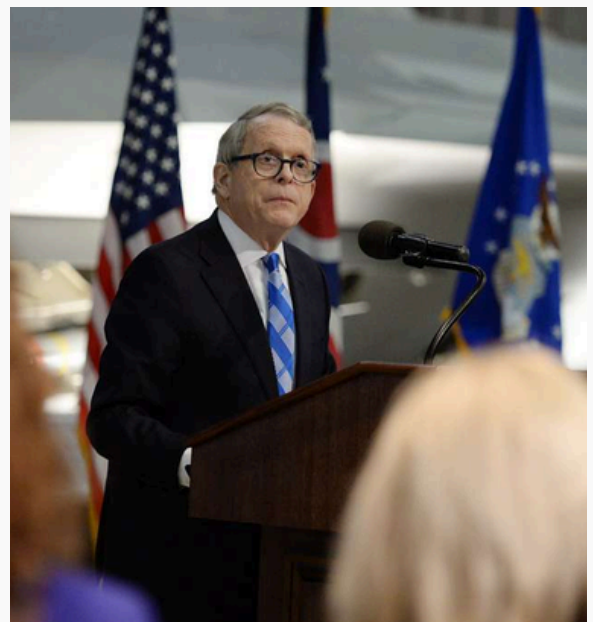
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DeWine has stated that the pause is intended to give state officials and lawmakers time to evaluate the impact of data center growth while preserving Ohio's ability to attract future technology investments. The pause applies only to new applications for the tax exemption. Existing exemptions remain in place, and the Governor has stated that the action is not a ban on data centers. Developers must still comply with local zoning regulations, land-use restrictions, utility requirements, and other local approvals.

Readers interested in learning more about existing data center development can explore the database maintained by [Data Center Map Research](#). According to the site's methodology, the database has been compiled since 2007 using operator submissions, external databases, manual research, and user contributions. While no comprehensive registry of all data centers exists, the resource can provide a useful

starting point for identifying facilities operating in Stark County and surrounding areas.

The Law Library maintains historical and current city and township ordinances and offers access to Westlaw and Lexis for research on zoning, land use, economic development incentives, and other related legal issues.



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