



Winners and losers from college football week one

SPORTS, 1B

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Vivek Ramaswamy greets supporters while stopping for a funnel cake at the Ohio State Fair on Aug. 5. ADAM CAIRNS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

‘THE ECONOMY SUCKS’

How affordability woes could shape Ohio election

Haley BeMiller, Jessie Balmert and Derek Kreider State Bureau | USA TODAY NETWORK

Stephanie Muñoz donates plasma twice a week to bring in extra money for her family. • The 30-year-old Pickerington mother stays at home with her two children, so she doesn’t have to worry about the high cost of child-care. But even with her husband working two jobs, they feel the squeeze. Muñoz said she researches budget-friendly meals online and started shopping at Dollar Tree to find cheaper snacks. • “There’s definitely anxiety sometimes when you see the big change in the prices of apples, or sometimes we see it in just the chicken alone,” Muñoz told the statehouse bureau while her family enjoyed the Ohio State Fair.

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Sherrod Brown speaks to supporters during a campaign stop in Plain Township on Aug. 11. KEVIN WHITLOCK/MASSILLON INDEPENDENT



U.S. Sen. Jon Husted, R-Ohio, speaks to supporters during an event in Westlake in May. ANDREW DOLPH/AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

ELECTIONS 2026 GOVERNORS RACE

Ohioans not likely to see candidates debate

Laura A. Bischoff Enquirer Statehouse Bureau | USA TODAY NETWORK

In the race for Ohio governor, it seems unlikely that voters will see Democrat Amy Acton and Republican Vivek Ramaswamy debate.

Ramaswamy announced Sept. 2 that he had accepted debate invitations from CNN and WLWT, an NBC local affiliate in Cincinnati.

“I challenge Amy Acton to join me on the debate stage so voters can make a well-informed choice in November,” said Ramaswamy in a press release.

Hours later, Acton’s campaign issued a statement that boiled down to a hard no.

Acton campaign manager Phil Stein said in a written statement that Ramaswamy is a “scam artist” who spreads lies about Acton and her family.

“Ramaswamy and his billionaire buddies have spent more than \$50 million on disgusting, inaccurate attack ads that have been condemned as the ‘most vile and repulsive lies’ Ohio has ever seen,” Stein’s statement said.

The 2026 race has been jammed with attacks and accusations.

Republican groups have accused Acton of being “unstable” and abusing alcohol and prescription medication. An ad from pro-Ramaswamy super PAC, V-PAC: Victors, Not Victims, ends with the line: “Amy Acton. Drinking. Drugs. Disaster. Disqualifying.”

Acton and fellow Democrats say that’s not true, and Republicans are attempting to smear her for what amounted to a private verbal disagreement between Acton and her husband in 2019.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Governors Association-backed Ohioans for Lower Costs launched an ad calling Ramaswamy a “conman” and “huckster” on Aug. 19. The DGA-backed ad accuses Ramaswamy of peddling a drug to Alzheimer’s patients that didn’t work, but the drug in question was never marketed to patients.

Generally, the major party candidates debate at least once when it’s race for an open seat in the Ohio governor’s office. Republicans John Kasich and Mike DeWine skipped debating their challengers when running for second terms. Both cruised to reelection.

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Acton



Ramaswamy

OSU President Bellamkonda gets raise, bonus after six months

Sheridan Hendrix Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

Less than six months on the job, Ohio State University President Ravi Bellamkonda will start his first full academic year with a raise and bonus.

Ohio State’s Board of Trustees approved a 3% raise, totaling \$42,000, and a \$420,000 performance award, which equates to 30% of his base salary, during its full public board meeting Sept. 3.

Bellamkonda’s new base salary now totals \$1,442,000.

Board Chair Jeff Kaplan praised Bellamkonda in his performance review as “instrumental” to Ohio State, first in his role as executive vice president and pro-

vost, and now as president. “You have made a strong transition into the presidency over the past few months,” Kaplan wrote. “Along the way, you have developed a deep understanding of this institution, and you have articulated a compelling vision of where it can, and must, go. You are moving with urgency to propel the university forward while building an infrastructure that can sustain that progress over time. The Board is deeply appreciative of your instincts, your judgment and the enthusiasm you bring to your work and this university.” Bellamkonda was named the university’s 18th president in March, mere days after former President

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Students walk across campus past the statue of William Oxley Thompson for the first day of class at Ohio State University on Aug. 25, 2026. ADAM CAIRNS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

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