



THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

SERVING OHIO AND KENTUCKY SINCE 1841

MONDAY, MAY 25, 2026 | CINCINNATI.COM | PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Bill to ban under-18 marriage blocked

Some in Ohio GOP block closing exception for 17

Laura A. Bischoff
Ohio State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

Some Republican state senators blocked a bill to close a loophole that lets 17-year-olds marry, which means Ohio might remain among states that permit child marriage.

“All I know is some people in the Republican caucus think it’s OK to have child marriage,” said state Sen. Bill DeMora, D-Columbus, who is co-sponsoring the bill with Sen. Bill Blessing, R-Colerain Twp.

The bill calls for raising the marriage age to 18 and older for all parties.

Last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee planned to vote on Senate Bill 341 but senators pulled it off the agenda, along with other pending bills. This week, SB341 isn’t on the agenda.

Blessing declined to comment but the bill came off the committee voting agenda after Republican senators held a private caucus meeting.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Nathan Manning, R-North Ridgeville, said advocates will meet with senators to explain why changing the law is needed.

Senate President Rob McColley, who is running for lieutenant governor with Republican Vivek Ramaswamy, said even straightforward issues sometimes need further exploration. “We’ve still got time left in this legislative session.”

Fraidy Reiss, founder of Unchained At Last, a national organization seeking to end forced and child marriage, said she doesn’t know who in the senate is holding up a bill that had no opposition and would end an abusive practice that harms children.

“It is shameful. It is a slap in the face to girls in Ohio,” she said.

Why does Ohio allow child marriage?

In 2019, following an investigation by the Dayton Daily News, Ohio

See **MARRIAGE**, Page 5A

MEMORIAL DAY 2026



Volunteers install hundreds of flags at Arlington Memorial Gardens in Springfield Twp., Ohio, on May 21.

HONORING VETERANS at Arlington Memorial Gardens

Volunteers with Operation Ramp It Up gathered at Arlington Memorial Gardens in Springfield Township on Thursday, May 21, to install 1,000 U.S. flags for the 11th annual Memorial Day display. More photos online at Cincinnati.com; search “flags.”



Ashley Davis, of Operation Ramp It Up, added dedications to flags.



Each flag is adorned with a dedication to a veteran. PHOTOS BY SAM GREENE/THE ENQUIRER

Operation Desert Storm veteran, Jonathan Vandivier II, carries a flag to be installed.

Ohio justices to decide on unpaid COVID jobless aid

Jessie Balmert
Enquirer Statehouse Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

The COVID-19 pandemic peaked years ago, but some Ohioans are still fighting for unemployment benefits they say Gov. Mike DeWine cut too soon. During the pandemic, Congress ap-

proved additional money for unemployment benefits. This extra \$300 per week was set to expire in September 2021. However, DeWine removed Ohio from the program about 10 weeks early to encourage people to get back to work.

A group of Ohioans on unemployment assistance sued, arguing they were entitled to nearly \$900 million in

benefits because DeWine decided to cut them off early.

In the years since, the legal case has wound its way through multiple appeals. In 2023, Ohio lawmakers changed state law to make it clear that the governor can withdraw from federal programs before their end date.

On May 20, attorneys will again make

their case before the Ohio Supreme Court. The justices will decide whether DeWine must ask the federal government for the unpaid benefits.

Attorneys for the unemployed Ohioans argue that DeWine didn’t have the authority to end the federal benefits

See **JOBLESS AID**, Page 5A

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to cincinnati.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 186th | No. 38
Subscribe 800-876-4500
©2026 **\$3.49**
The Cincinnati Enquirer



0 40901 10101 7