



Senior-laden Heath squad roll into state tournament with momentum

SPORTS, 1B

"The finest quality jewelry, thoughtfully chosen, at the best price"
-Julie Pyne
President



DUNKIN'S DIAMONDS

The Advocate

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026 | NEWARK, OHIO | NEWARKADVOCATE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

OSU sets record in research spending

Grows expenditures despite federal cuts

Sheridan Hendrix
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

Despite the Trump administration's dramatic cuts to federal research dollars last spring, Ohio State University reported record-breaking research and development expenditures in fiscal year 2025.

Ohio State Provost Ravi Bellamkonda and John Horack, executive vice president for research, innovation and knowledge, announced the news dur-

ing the Ohio State Board of Trustees' quarterly Academic Affairs and Student Life committee meeting Feb. 19.

The university grew research expenditures from \$1.582 billion in fiscal year 2024 to \$1.68 billion in fiscal year 2025, which runs from July 1 to June 30 each year. That's about a 6% increase, or about \$50 spent per second on research, according to Horack.

Ohio State President Ted Carter called the figure an "extraordinary

See SPENDING, Page 2A



Ohio State professor John Horack, who is the Neil Armstrong Chair in Aerospace Policy at the university, explains the Starlab research project at the university on Aug. 15, 2024.

ADAM CAIRNS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

DeWine: Epstein and Wexner an 'old story'

Haley BeMiller
State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

Gov. Mike DeWine said he doesn't see an issue with Les Wexner's name appearing on buildings across Columbus despite the Ohio billionaire's ties to child sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

DeWine's Feb. 19 comments during an event with Politico came one day after Wexner testified before a U.S. House committee about his ties to Epstein. The disgraced financier, who died by suicide while facing charges of child sex trafficking, was a longtime friend and financial adviser to Wexner.

Wexner has not been charged with a crime and said he severed ties with Epstein in 2007. DeWine said there's currently no evidence Wexner did anything wrong and called his relationship with Epstein an "old story."

"He has been a prominent member of the community, done many, many things," DeWine told Politico at its governors summit in Washington, D.C. "The Wexner Medical Center not only has his name on it, but he's put a significant amount of money into it and leadership there. Barring some new information of something that he has done illegal, I don't see that as a problem."

Wexner is facing increased scrutiny over his ties to Epstein after documents released by the Department of Justice referred to him as a "co-conspirator." Several Ohio elected officials who received campaign contributions from Wexner have donated them to charity, but DeWine has not said publicly whether he will follow suit.

Meanwhile, Ohio State University received nearly 300 requests this month to remove Wexner's name from campus buildings. Ohio State President Ted Carter said university officials are monitoring the situation but need to let the U.S. House continue with its investigation.

Rep. Dave Min, D-California, said Wexner's influence on the community was apparent as soon as he landed in Ohio for the deposition.

"When I got off the plane, I saw Wexner's name all over the place," Min said during a Feb. 18 news conference. "His name is on buildings, it's on medical centers. You immediately realize when you come to Columbus what a powerful individual this is."

Columbus Dispatch reporters Sheridan Hendrix and Bethany Bruner contributed.

State government reporter Haley BeMiller can be reached at hbeMiller@usatodayco.com or @haleybemiller on X.



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's political struggles are connected to Peter Mandelson, former ambassador to the United States and a friend of Jeffery Epstein's. Mandelson was fired in September 2025. CARL COURT VIA REUTERS FILE

Epstein controversy could sink Starmer

Ambassador fired over ties to former financier

Terry Collins
USA TODAY

With a series of resignations in his Cabinet linked to another batch of documents related to Jeffrey Epstein being released, U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer is under fire, even though he never knew the convicted sex offender, experts say.

"His position is extremely fragile,"

Brendan O'Leary, political science chair at the University of Pennsylvania, told USA TODAY about Starmer, whose Labour Party won in a landslide victory in 2024 that ended 14 years of Conservative party rule. "The prime minister is definitely looking over his shoulder."

Although Starmer is not named in any of the Epstein files, his political struggles are connected to Peter Mandelson, a friend of Epstein's, as the am-

bassador to the United States. Mandelson was fired as ambassador in September 2025 after further details of his relationship with Epstein emerged.

More details of Mandelson's ties to the disgraced late financier became public when the latest round of documents from the Justice Department revealed Mandelson corresponded with Epstein after the financier became a registered sex offender in 2009.

See STARMER, Page 5A



Inside the new 26-story University Hospital, a wall notes the name of the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

DORAL CHENOWETH/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to newarkadvocate.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 206 | No. 55
Subscribe 877-424-0208
©2026 \$2.00

