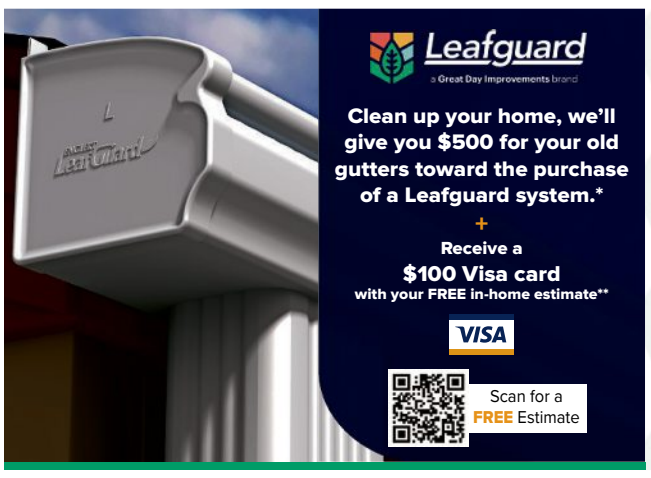

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Public pensions had large returns in 2025

Laura A. Bischoff
State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ohio's five public pension systems collectively made more than $26 billion on investments in 2025, according to preliminary data.

The robust returns boosted the combined holdings to $284.3 billion.

The five systems, which serve 1.16 million Ohio workers and retirees, are funded through a combination of employer and employee contributions and returns on investments.

Here is a breakdown of the pension systems' investment performance in 2025:

Ohio Public Employees Retirement System: 14.72% on its pension fund and 16.4% on its health care fund. Total gains were $17.1 billion, bringing the combined portfolio to $129.5 billion.

State Teachers Retirement System: 14.6%, up $9.45 billion. Total portfolio is $105.7 billion.

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund: 17.92%, up $2.54 billion. Total portfolio is $21.16 billion.

School Employees Retirement System: 15.18%, up $3.04 billion. Total portfolio is $21.96 billion.

Ohio State Highway Patrol Retirement System: 12.1%, up $93 million. Total portfolio is $1.24 billion.

The 2025 numbers, which are unaudited and subject to change, mark the third consecutive year of investment gains. The positive years come after big losses in 2022.

The funds each have their specific mix of investment assets: stocks, bonds, real estate and alternative investments.

The mix is determined by each system's board.

See PENSIONS, Page 2A

In one of his first interviews since becoming Ohio State's president, Ravi Bellamkonda discusses this whirlwind semester. He spoke with the Columbus Dispatch, The Lantern and Columbus Business First on May 1 in his meeting room at University Square South. DORAL CHENOWETH/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

'I'll do my best to keep the flag flying'

OSU's new president sees path beyond controversies

Sheridan Hendrix
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ravi Bellamkonda is well aware that his recent promotion from Ohio State University's provost to president was unexpected, to say the least.

Bellamkonda was appointed to the role on March 12, just four days after his predecessor and former boss, Ted Carter, resigned under inauspicious circumstances. After just over two years on the job, an unnamed source told Ohio State's Board of Trustees that Carter was having an "inappropriate relationship" with "someone seeking public resources to support her personal business." Carter abruptly resigned after admitting to trustees about the affair.

Since Bellamkonda took over the presidency, Ohio State released its internal investigation into Carter's relationship with military podcaster Krisanthe Vlachos, which found that Carter "betrayed" the university and "put his own interests and those of Vlachos before the university's interests," according to the report.

Bellamkonda said he intends to focus on plans that Ohio State already has in place, as opposed to developing entirely new initiatives.

The new president has seen the latest news, that Carter tried to get Vlachos hired at his previous post as president of the University of Nebraska, and the New York Times' takeout on the university's trials under the headline "A Football School Striving to Be More Keeps Dropping the Ball."

See OSU PRESIDENT, Page 2A

Ohioans can still get abortion pill by mail, for now

Jessie Balmert
State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ohioans can obtain a common abortion pill by mail through at least May 11, but the future of access to mifepristone remains precarious.

On May 4, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a one-week pause on a nationwide ban on obtaining the abortion drug mifepristone by mail. The court could extend the reprieve.

The ruling came after the conservative 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reinstated a U.S. Food and Drug Administration requirement that the drug only be dispensed in person.

Drug makers Danco Laboratories and GenBioPro appealed that May 1 decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, which issued the one-week pause.

These rulings underscore the instability of abortion access even in states like Ohio that voted to protect it.

Kellie Copeland, executive director of Abortion Forward, condemned the abortion restrictions.

"The actions by one federal court in Louisiana are both a drastic overreach impacting patients far outside their jurisdiction and an unacceptable blockade against people in need of options," said Copeland, who advocated for the 2023 abortion rights amendment. "An abortion ban anywhere impacts access everywhere."

In contrast, the Center for Christian Virtue's Peter Range said the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals got the decision right.

"There is decisive public support from both Republicans and Democrats that support medical safeguards for women and the 5th Circuit decision protects women and babies both in Louisiana and nationwide," said Range, the organization's senior fellow for strategic initiatives.

What does the mifepristone decision mean for Ohio?

The Louisiana court's ruling would have blocked pregnant patients from obtaining mifepristone, a drug commonly used to end an early pregnancy,

See ABORTION PILL, Page 2A

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