

Licking Valley boys basketball off and running under new coach Hinger

SPORTS, 13A

DUNKIN'S DIAMONDS
INDIAN MOUND MALL
NEWARK/HEATH

The Advocate

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2026 | NEWARK, OHIO | NEWARKADVOCATE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

SENATE BILL 113



Last year, Ohio lawmakers banned diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education. Now, the Ohio Senate is targeting DEI in K-12 schools. DORAL CHENOWETH/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Measure inches closer to approval

Ohio Senate OKs DEI ban for K-12 public schools

Jessie Balmert State Bureau | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Ohio Senate approved a ban on diversity, equity and inclusion in K-12 public schools, despite opponents' concerns about its sweeping changes.

Senate Bill 113, which passed the Ohio Senate, 21-10, would outlaw the use of diversity, equity and inclusion in Ohio's public schools' training and job descriptions. Schools also could not create a DEI office or department.

The proposal comes after state lawmakers banned diversity, equity and inclusion on college campuses last year, shuttering LGBTQ and women's centers and ending scholarships that benefited minority students. "These practices should not be in our educational institutions," said Sen. Jerry Cirino, R-Kirtland, who championed the higher education overhaul, Senate Bill 1.

Sen. Andrew Brenner, R-Delaware, said goal of the bill banning DEI is to get politics out of education.

"I question whether institutional programs that categorize individuals by race, ethnicity, sex and other characteristics actually bring us closer together," Brenner said before the Nov. 18 vote. "Government should not decide an individual's opportunities based on which demographic category they belong to, and government should not be promoting the ideology of redistribution of wealth."

Opponents said the bill is "frustratingly vague" about what qualifies as DEI and could lead schools to be "overly compliant in self-censoring protected speech and activities," Melissa Cropper, president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers, told lawmakers.

More than 500 people signed onto a letter opposing the changes, which they fear could harm any student treated differently than their peers. They expressed concerns that it could harm students with individualized education programs or those with allergies or disabilities.

"A rushed, broad ban on diversity, equity, and inclusion will have disastrous negative effects on countless Ohio children," according to the letter, spearheaded by Honesty for Ohio Education.

Before the vote, lawmakers added language to

See DEI BAN, Page 2A

Grocery costs gobbling up your cash for Thanksgiving

We checked food market prices to see what families will be spending

Samantha Hendrickson
Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

Grocery costs rose again in 2026. What does that mean for a Thanksgiving dinner in central Ohio?

Extreme weather, the high price of diesel fuel impacted by the war in Iran and other transportation and energy factors in the global food market are contributing to steady increases in food prices. Since January 2020, the cost of groceries overall has gone up 31% and doesn't appear to be going down any time soon.

The American Farm Bureau Federation reports that a Thanksgiving meal for 10 people will cost an average of $58.63 per person in 2026. That's up $3.45 from the $55.18 per person in 2025. It's the first increase since 2022, when the federation reported an average of $64.05 per person.

Some grocery chains are offering Thanksgiving deals as non-holiday expenses have squeezed Americans' wallets. The Dispatch compared online prices for popular and generic brands of Thanksgiving foods at four grocery chains in central Ohio: Giant Eagle, Kroger, Walmart and Meijer.

In 2025, The Dispatch covered Aldi prices, but decided to swap the more limited grocery chain for Meijer after readers questioned Meijer's absence.

Compared to 2025, some staples stayed relatively the same or even dropped at previously covered stores. But the most dramatic increases were among

See GROCERY COSTS, Page 6A



Terrence Hill and Christina Kay of Grandview pick out a frozen turkey for Thanksgiving at Grandview Yard Market District in Columbus on Nov. 18. Customers across the U.S. face higher food prices this holiday. KYLE ROBERTSON/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

State refers former election official for prosecution

Anna Lynn Winfrey
Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK



Leneghan

The Ohio Secretary of State's office has referred alleged violations of election law by a former Delaware County Board of Elections member for criminal prosecution.

Republican Melanie Leneghan, a former county elections board member and a former GOP state committee woman, has been accused of voting illegally and false voter registration.

Leneghan has not responded to a request for comment.

A spokesperson from the Delaware County Prosecutor's Office said that the case has been referred to the Ohio Attorney General's Office of Special Prosecutions.

The case is the only one from Delaware County among over a dozen alleged election law violations announced Nov. 16 by the Secretary of State's office, with penalties ranging from fines to criminal prosecution.

Leneghan, who owns two homes in South Carolina, previously told The Dispatch that she spends time in South Carolina and Ohio for work, but maintained she lived locally the majority of the time.

The Delaware County Board of Elections, on a party-line vote in April, canceled Leneghan's voter registration and candidacy for reelection to Ohio Republican Party State Central Committee. She appealed that to the Ohio Supreme Court, which unanimously rejected her case in May.

Leneghan's voting eligibility was first challenged after Velva Dunn, a Delaware County Republican Party Central Committee member, alleged Feb. 20 that Leneghan lives in South Carolina.

Leneghan sold her home in Powell in January 2025, but later updated her voter registration to the Galena home of Catherine Nelson, a close friend. Leneghan was listed as a co-owner of the home with Nelson as of March 12.

Anna Lynn Winfrey is a reporter for the Columbus Dispatch. She can be reached at awinfrey@dispatch.com .

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. 283
Subscribe 877-424-0208
©2026 **$3.00**
0 40901 50602 7