Legislative Branch Organization

New Legislative Staff Training

Ohio Legislative Service Commission

About this Course

- In this course, you will learn about the organization of the Ohio General Assembly, its leadership structure, and its staff.
- If your employer is tracking your course completion, be sure to click on the course completion link at the end of the course.
- Additional resources in *A Guidebook for Ohio Legislators* (PDF):
  - Chapter 2: The Legislative Branch (PDF)
  - Chapter 4: Organizing the General Assembly (PDF)
  - Chapter 9: Staff Services Available to the General Assembly (PDF)

Structure of the General Assembly

- The 132 member Ohio General Assembly is a bicameral (two-house) legislature composed of:
  - The House of Representatives, made up of 99 representatives; and
  - The Senate, made up of 33 senators.
- Each legislator represents a different district in the state.



General Assembly Districts

- Each House district has about 119,186 residents. (11,799,448 Ohio residents ÷ 99 representatives)
- Each Senate district has about 357,559 residents. (11,799,448 Ohio residents ÷ 33 senators)
  - Each Senate district is made up of three adjacent House districts.
- See House Members by District
- See Senate Members by District

General Assembly Redistricting

- General Assembly district boundaries are redrawn every 10 years (in years ending in "1"), as provided in Article XI of the Ohio Constitution.
- The Ohio Redistricting Commission is responsible for drawing those districts.
- Boundaries are redrawn based on updated population data from the U.S. Census and according to other constitutional standards.
- At times, districts also must be redrawn partway through a decade under constitutional or court-ordered procedures.



Ohio Senate Districts
2024-2032



Ohio House Districts
2024-2032

Congressional Redistricting

- Similarly, Ohio's congressional district boundaries are redrawn every 10 years, as provided in Article XIX of the Ohio Constitution, based on updated population data and other constitutional standards.
- In some circumstances, districts must be redrawn partway through a decade. Ohio adopted a new congressional district map in 2025.
- The General Assembly is responsible for adopting congressional district maps in the form of a bill.
- If the General Assembly does not meet the applicable deadlines to do so, the Ohio Redistricting Commission must draw the districts.
- For details about Ohio's General Assembly and congressional redistricting processes, see LSC's *Members Brief,* "Redistricting in Ohio" (PDF).



Congressional Districts
2026-2032

District Maps



Election of Representatives

- Members of the House of Representatives serve two-year terms.
- Elections are held in all 99 House districts in November of every even-numbered year.



Election of Senators

- Members of the Senate serve four-year terms.
- In every even-numbered year, elections are held in about half the Senate districts.
- All 16 even-numbered districts hold elections at once, then all 17 odd-numbered districts hold elections two years later.



Filling Vacancies

- When a House seat becomes vacant during a term, the vacancy is filled by appointment. The members of the House who are members of the same political party as the former member select a person to fill the vacancy.
- When a Senate seat becomes vacant during the first 20 months of the term, a special election is held to fill the vacancy.
- When a Senate seat becomes vacant later in the term, the vacancy is filled by appointment in the same manner as a House vacancy.

Term Limits

Under the Ohio Constitution:

- Representatives are limited to four successive two-year terms in the House (eight consecutive years).
- Senators are limited to two successive four-year terms in the Senate (eight consecutive years).
- After a person reaches the term limit for an office, the person must wait four years before running for that office again.
- A person who reaches the term limit in one house of the General Assembly may switch to the other house without waiting four years.

Appointees and Term Limits

- A member's term limit period for an office only begins when the member is **elected** to that office.
- If a member is appointed to fill a vacancy for a partial term before being elected to that office, the partial term does not count against the member's term limit.
- As a result, some members serve more than eight years in an office before they are term limited.

Biennial Sessions

- Each General Assembly meets for a two-year period (known as a biennium) that begins in January of an odd-numbered year and ends in December of the next year.
- A representative serves for one biennium, while a senator serves for two biennia.
- Each General Assembly is referred to by a number, beginning with the first General Assembly that convened when Ohio became a state in 1803. (Before 1852, sessions were annual.)

132nd General Assembly	133rd General Assembly	134th General Assembly	135th General Assembly	136th General Assembly
2017-2018	2019-2020	2021-2022	2023-2024	2025-2026

Adjournment Sine Die

- A particular General Assembly ends when the legislature adjourns *sine die*, without a day being set for meeting again – typically in December of an even-numbered year.
- Bills not enacted by the end of the General Assembly "die" — they do not become law.
- A bill that dies may be reintroduced during a future General Assembly, but it must start again at the beginning of the legislative process.

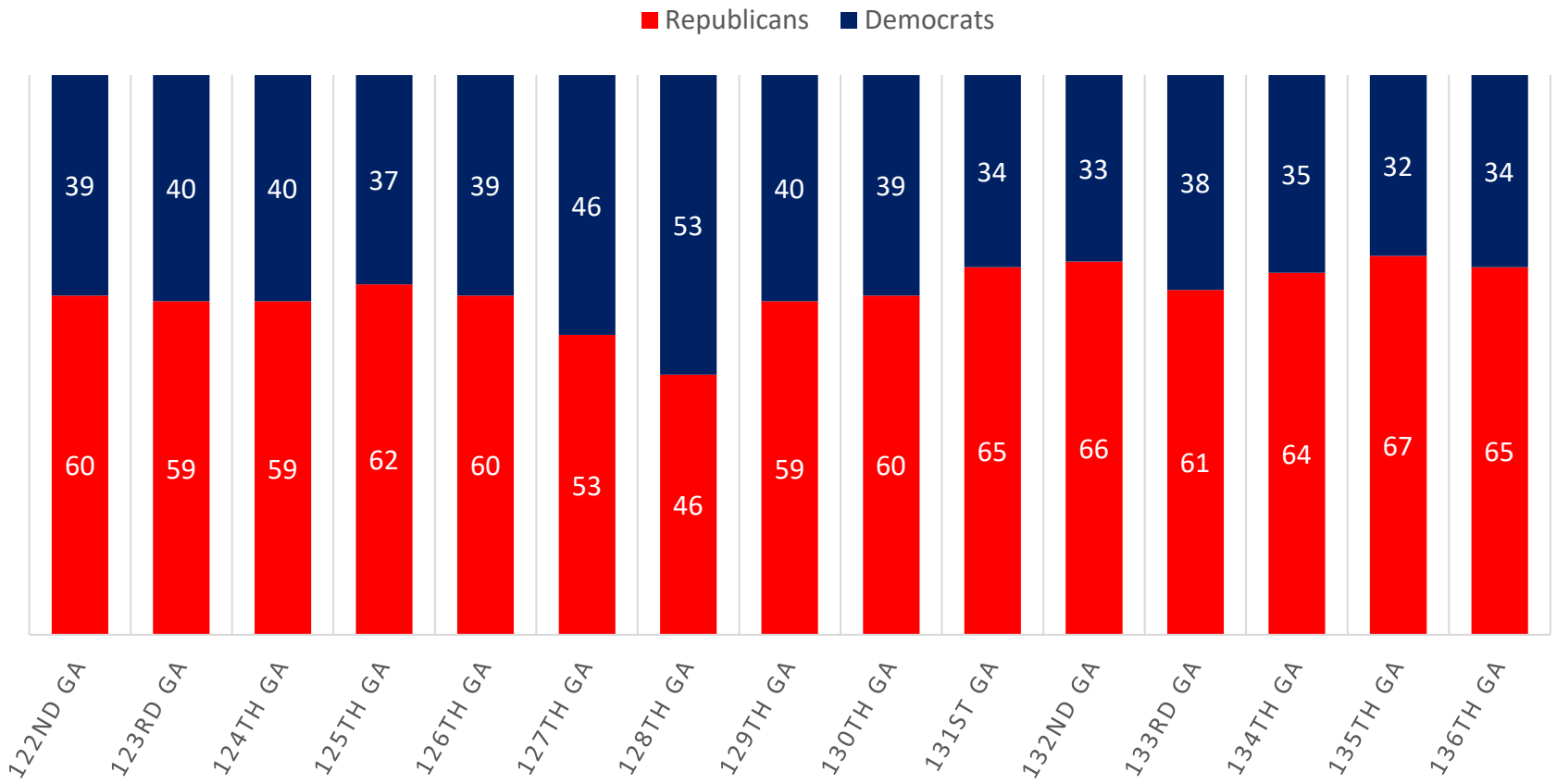
Special Sessions

- The Ohio Constitution also allows the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate (acting jointly) or the Governor to call a special session of the General Assembly by issuing a proclamation.
- During a special session, legislative work is limited to the purpose described in the proclamation.
- Special sessions are rare. The last special session occurred in 2024 and addressed certain elections and campaign finance issues.

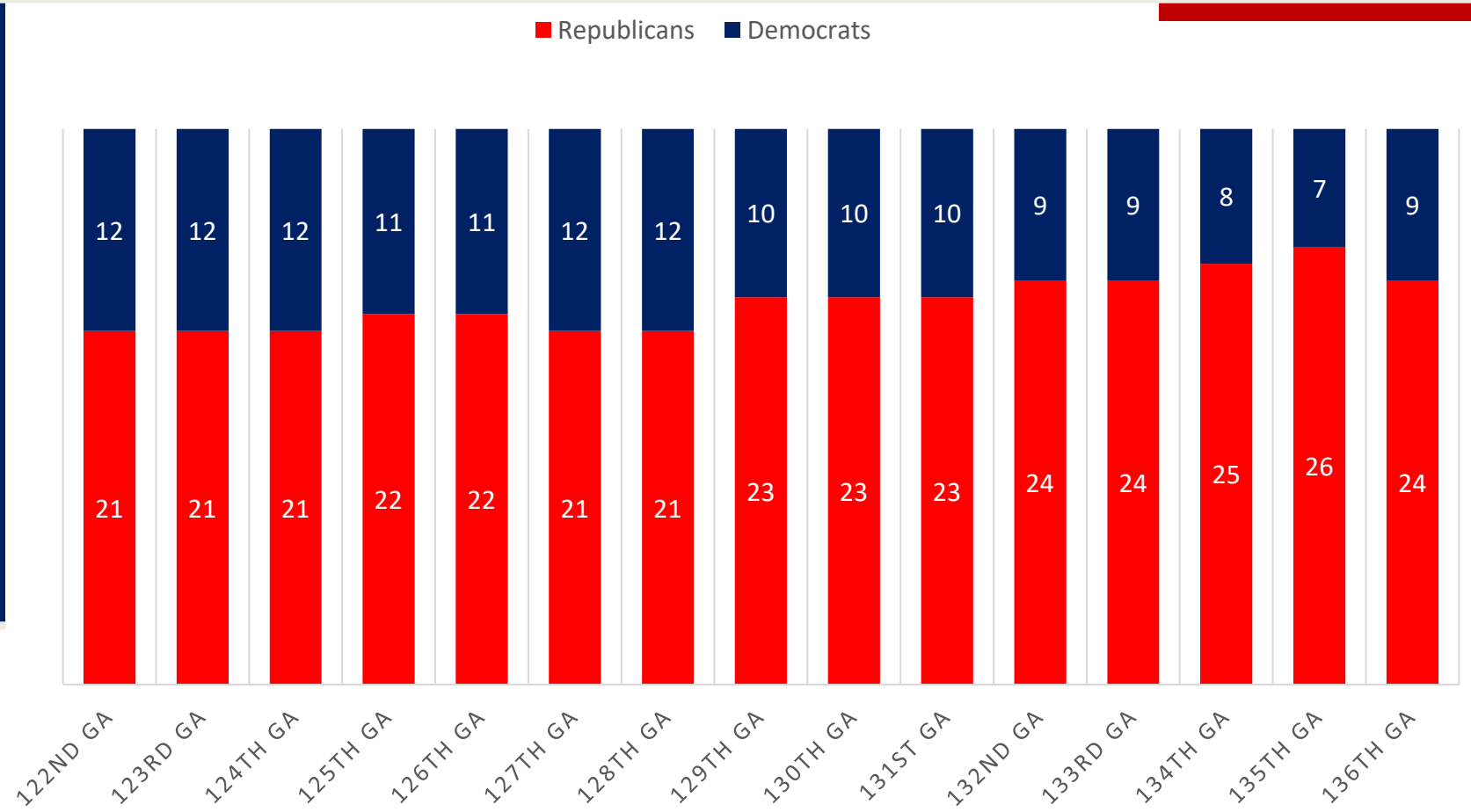
Majority and Minority Caucuses

- A caucus is made up of the members of a house who are members of the same political party.
- The General Assembly has four caucuses:
  - The House Majority (Republican) caucus;
  - The House Minority (Democratic) caucus;
  - The Senate Majority (Republican) caucus;
  - The Senate Minority (Democratic) caucus.
- The leadership structure of the General Assembly is largely based on these four caucuses.
- Legislators sometimes form other types of caucuses based on shared backgrounds or interests.

Composition of the House, 1997-2026



Composition of the Senate, 1997-2026



Speaker of the House

- The Speaker of the House is elected by the entire House.
- The duties of the Speaker include:
  - Serving as presiding officer;
  - Signing all bills and resolutions enacted and adopted; and
  - Performing other duties as required by statute, rule, or custom.



Matt Huffman
Speaker of the House

President of the Senate



Rob McColley
Senate President

- The President of the Senate is elected by the entire Senate.
- The duties of the Senate President include:
  - Serving as presiding officer;
  - Signing all bills and resolutions enacted and adopted; and
  - Performing other duties as required by statute, rule, or custom.

Majority Leadership

- Each chamber elects additional majority leaders:

House Majority Leadership	Senate Majority Leadership
Speaker Pro Tempore	President Pro Tempore
Assistant Speaker Pro Tempore	
Majority Floor Leader	Majority Floor Leader
Assistant Majority Floor Leader	
Majority Whip (4)	Majority Whip

- See House Majority Leadership and Senate Majority Leadership for more information.

Minority Leadership



Dani Isaacsohn,
House Minority Leader



Nickie J. Antonio,
Senate Minority Leader

- The minority leaders elected in each chamber are:
  - Minority Leader
  - Assistant Minority Leader
  - Minority Whip
  - Assistant Minority Whip
- See House Minority Leadership and Senate Minority Leadership for more information.

House and Senate Clerks

- The House and Senate each elect a Clerk, who is not a member of the legislature.
- The Clerk receives bills for introduction and prepares legislative documents such as the Calendar and the Journal.
- During floor sessions, the Clerk records votes and serves as the chamber's parliamentarian, an expert on rules and procedures.



Brad Young
House Clerk



Vincent Keeran
Senate Clerk

House and Senate Clerks (cont'd)

- Each Clerk employs assistant clerks who serve in positions such as Reading & Committee Clerk, Recording Clerk, Message Clerk, Journal Clerk, Engrossing Clerk, and Enrolling Clerk.
- In some cases, the same assistant clerk serves in multiple roles.
- Many of the House and Senate Clerks' duties are described in the Rules of the House and Senate.

Administrative Officers

- The House also elects a Chief Administrative Officer, who reports to the Speaker.
- The House Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for the hiring and supervision of House employees (except those of the Clerk), as well as matters such as payroll, supplies, and equipment maintenance.
- In the Senate, the Chief of Staff for the Majority Caucus is the top-ranking administrative officer, and the Clerk's staff serve as fiscal officers for the Senate.

House and Senate Staff

- Each caucus in the House and Senate employs a Chief of Staff, who serves as the caucus's top policy advisor and oversees its staff of legal counsel, budget and finance directors, policy advisors, legislative aides, and others.
  - In general, each chamber's Minority Chief of Staff is responsible for the staff of the Minority Caucus, subject to the policies of Majority leadership.
- Each chamber has a Sergeant-at-Arms and assistant sergeants-at-arms, who are responsible for maintaining order in all areas under the chamber's control, including the Statehouse, the Senate Building, and the House areas of the Riffe Center.

Time for a pop quiz!

QUESTION 1

True or False?

General Assembly districts are redrawn by the Ohio Redistricting Commission in accordance with provisions of the Ohio Constitution.

Question 1 - Answer

True.

For details, see Ohio Constitution, Article XI

Question 2

True or False?

All members of the Senate are elected in the same general election every four years.

Question 2 - Answer

False.

About half of the Senate is up for election at the same general election. Odd-numbered Senate districts are elected at one time. Then, even-numbered districts are elected at the next general election two years later.

Question 3

True or False?

If a member is appointed to the General Assembly, that member's term limit period begins when the member is elected to that position.

Question 3 – Answer

True.

Not until an appointee is elected to the position does the term limit period begin.

Question 4

Legislators are term limited and may only serve _____ consecutive years.

After being term limited, the number of years a member must wait before running for the same seat is _____ years.

General Assembly districts must be redrawn every _____ years.

A. 8, 4, 10

B. 4, 6, 10

C. 8, 2, 6

Question 4 - Answer

A is the correct answer.

8, 4, 10

Legislators are term limited and may only serve 8 consecutive years.

After being term limited, the number of years that a member must wait before running for the same seat is 4 years.

General Assembly districts are redrawn every 10 years.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS COURSE.

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- Email Training@lsc.ohio.gov if you have any questions or comments about this course