



What is the State Senate?

The Ohio Senate is the upper chamber of the Ohio State Legislature. Together with the Ohio House of Representatives, the Ohio Senate makes up the legislative branch of the Ohio state government. There are currently 33 State Senate districts representing Ohio's 88 counties. Each district represents approximately 350,000 Ohioans and is comprised of three House districts.

How long is a State Senator's term? Are there term limits?

State Senators are elected for four-year terms, with a limit of two terms. This means that State Senators can be elected for a maximum of eight consecutive years. All senators are sworn in on the first day of session in the beginning of a new General Assembly, or two-year legislative cycle.

Are State Senators political actors?

Yes, they are partisan officials. Candidates have their party affiliation listed on the ballot.

What are the responsibilities of State Senators?

- **District Impact:** State Senators represent much larger districts compared to Ohio House Representatives in the lower chamber. This results in them needing to understand of the interests and concerns of bigger population and a wider variety of constituents.
- **Legislative Duties:** Alongside the Ohio House, the Ohio Senate moves legislation through creating, amending, and repealing policy within the state. Senators work together to draft and introduce legislation, debate policy, and cast their votes to pass new policies.
- **Override Gubernatorial Vetoes:** To create new policy, both the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate must vote to pass the respective legislation, which then must be signed by the Governor within 10 days. If the Governor decides to veto the legislation, the Ohio Senate has the ability to override the veto in conjunction with the Ohio House through a three-fifths vote of all members in both chambers. This would mean 20 of 33 Ohio Senators must vote to override the Governor's veto.
- **Conviction Authority in Impeachment Proceedings:** Though impeachment proceedings against state officials and judges originate in the House of Representatives, filing articles of impeachment alone does not result in officials being removed from office. In order for an impeached officer to be removed from office, the Ohio Senate must hold a trial on the impeachment articles filed by the House and a vote to convict the officer must pass with a three-fifths vote of all Senators. Once convicted, the officer is removed from office.
- **Committee Membership:** Ohio Senators belong to various committees that focus on important legislative topics, such as education and healthcare, and are responsible for meeting to review new bills or resolutions. Ohio Senators hear testimony from individuals expressing their thoughts – both positive and negative – about new legislation, while having the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussions surrounding potential policy.

What is Session?

Session is the collective meeting where Senators gather in the Senate Chamber to debate and vote on bills, resolutions, and executive appointments. Under Ohio law, the Senate must be called to order on the first Monday in January for each new General Assembly by the **Senate President**, a legislator within the ruling majority party, who presides over each Senate session.

What are committees?

Committees are groups of legislators that focus on a multitude of topics, from education to public health to energy. When a new piece of legislation is introduced, it is assigned to a specific committee. Committee members then hold hearings, during which they hear proponent and opponent testimony from a variety of groups and individuals.

Can members of the public attend Session and committee hearings?

Yes. Members of the public are allowed to sit in the Visitor's Gallery. All sessions and committee hearings, with the exception of the Rules and Reference committee, are broadcast live on public access channels and on [The Ohio Channel website](#). Members of the public can also watch archived videos of past sessions and committee hearings.

Advice and Consent on Governor's Appointments:

Similar to the US Senate, the Ohio Senate holds a check on the Governor's authority to appoint members to state boards and agencies. Some of the state boards and agencies that fall under the purview of the Senate's advice and consent authority cabinet agencies like the directors of the Departments of Rehabilitation and Corrections, Public Safety, and Medicaid, while some of the boards that are subject to Senate approval are the State Medical Board, State Board of Education, and trustees for Ohio's public colleges and universities. However, unlike the US Senate, the Ohio Senate does not have a role in appointing judges as all of Ohio's judicial officers are elected positions.

What are the requirements for running for a State Senate position?

- Candidates must be a resident of the district they are running in and have resided in that district for at least one year immediately preceding the election. Candidates must also be a registered elector.
- To obtain a spot on the [ballot](#), candidates of major political parties require 50 signatures and minor party candidates require 25 signatures. Those running as independent require a number of signatures based on the number of votes cast in the district during the last general election for governor. If there were fewer than 5,000 votes cast, candidates need 25 signatures or .5% of the number of votes cast (whichever is less). If there were 5,000 or more votes cast, then 1% of the votes cast.

Ohio Senate Resources

- Find your [State Senator](#)
 - You can contact your State Senator by phone, email, and mail.
- Find a [Senate bill](#)
- The Ohio Senate [Glossary of Terms](#)
- Ohio Senate [Committees](#)
- Senate Session [Schedule](#)